

**A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF
PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FOREST
(A CASE STUDY OF BHIRPATI COMMUNITY FOREST
OF KHAIRA VDC IN PYUTHAN DISTRICT)**

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Recommendation

This Project Report entitled A Gender Perspective Analysis of Participation in Community Forest (A Case Study of Bhirpati Community Forest of Khaira VDC of Pyuthan District) is prepared by Ram Krishna Acharya under my supervision for partial fulfillment of the requirement of Master's Degree in Rural Development. Therefore, this Project Report is recommended for final evaluation.

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Approval Letter

This is to certify that the Project Report submitted by Ram Krishna Acharya entitled “A Gender Perspective Analysis of Participation in Community Forest (A Case Study of Bhirpeti Community Forest of Khaira VDC of Pyuthan District)” has been approved by this Department in the prescribed format of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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Abbreviations

CF	—	Community Forest
CFC	—	Community Forestry Committee
CFDP	—	Community Forestry Development Program
CFP	—	Community Forestry Program
CFU	—	Community Forest User
CFUC	—	Community Forestry User Committee
DFO	—	District Forest Office
DOF	—	Department of Forest
FAO	—	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FUG	—	Forest User Group
HH	—	Household
INGO	—	International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	—	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	—	Nepal Planning Commission
NSCFP	—	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
PF	—	Panchayat Forest
PPF	—	Panchayat Protected Forest
SLC	—	School Leaving Certificate
TU	—	Tribhuvan University
VDC	—	Village Development Committee

Executive Summary

The Research study is on the burning issue of Community Forestry Program with focus on gender participation in community forest. The Community Forestry Program is handled through local users known as forest user group. The main problem of the study is unequal gender participation in forest related activities, because of the social and cultural factors. This has raised problematic issue in community forestry for its continuity and sustainability. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in depth study on the issue of equal gender participation in community forest program. The research topic is particularly based on the problems of community forestry program, which is “A Gender Perspective Analysis of Participation in Community Forest (A Case Study of Bhirpeti Community Forest of Khaira VDC of Pyuthan District)”

The objectives of the study were: to examine the level of participation of men and women in forest related activities like executive committee, group meeting, trainings, Protection and collection of forest products and management work; to find out the factors affecting their level of participation; to trace out the attitude of men towards women in participation; and to assess the impact of the community forest program of Khaira VDC. To meet the objectives of the study, primary and secondary data were collected from the field visit as well as from various publications. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically.

In Bhirpeti community forest, Chhetri caste is dominating user group where as other Dalit and ethnic groups are in minority. Women participation in management, protection, and utilization of forest products is higher than men but their participation is less in planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation process (e.g. group meetings, general assemblies and training, Seminar).

Poverty, illiteracy, social value and norms and others are hindering factors in active participation of people in community forestry. Women users have had grievance about increased extra work load and partiality attitude of men towards women for equal opportunities in all forest related activities. The study found out that women have increased extra workload of forest management and household chores, which even keeps them busy. Therefore, there must be clear policy of equity and equality in forest related activities with balance participation in CF constitution. In overall the studied, the community forest was found a model forest with the active participation of users. Some major changes in community forest should be made to improve balance in participation of all level in community forestry.

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Chapter - I

Introduction

1.1 Background

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

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

To solve the increasing serious problem of deforestation the government nationalized all forest in 1957 to prevent the destruction of national wealth to nationalize private forest for their adequate protection (Regmi, 1978). Unfortunately, the government was unprepared to assume the technical and administrative responsibilities of the ownership. Villager reacted negatively to nationalization, believing their traditional rights to access and use had been curtailed. As a result, local responsibility for forest protection disappeared where as previously there had been communal responsibility for managing the forest, but after nationalization no body took responsibility of managing this resource. Moreover, because there were no land records, villagers had a strong incentive to destroy the forest so that the land could be claimed as a private

property after it was cleared and cultivated. As a result of inadequate government control and adverse local reaction to nationalization, Nepal's forests effectively became common property (Wallance 1997).

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

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

The Community Forestry Program is a largest program among six major programs of forest protection implemented in Nepal. Different International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) and Non-Government Organization (NGO) have great interest in such conservation program. They directly take part and are also involve in funding

the community forestry program. They see this program as a tool in the improvement of environment as well as upgrade of existing livelihood of local people. In this respect, they use community forestry as tool for development of environment and community development (Shrestha, 1999).

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

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

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

1.2 Statement of the Problem

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 Objectives of the Study

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

) To examine the level of participation of men and women in Forest Executive Committee, Group meeting, Training, Benefit sharing, Protection and

Management of the Community Forest Program.

) To find out factors affecting their level of participation in community forest.

) To trace out attitude of men towards women in participation.

) To assess the impact of the program.

1.4 Significance of the Study

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

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

Even though words like "Manager", "Consumer" and "Protector" are used for women, tend to remain at the level of rhetoric only. The local men see Forest management as an important issue, which does not concern women. They think that women mostly being illiterate are ignorant and do not have anything to contribute to it. Earlier provision in the forest Master Plan had emphasized the participation of 33% of women in the User Group Committee. But this policy has not been followed. Numbers of factors are responsible are: socio-cultural norms, values, illiteracy, lack of empowerment, lack of support of household head, lack of information and lack of appropriate knowledge to participate women.

Women are primary users of community forest. They contribute in CF as a labour. However, their participation at meeting, decision-making, planning process and benefit sharing aspect is not being valued (Van Eijhtten, 1988). Both men and women have equal rights and the objective of any development is to increase benefit of socially marginalized groups. Understanding on why women are disadvantaged from these opportunities is an important to increase forest benefit for women. This study mainly focuses on problem of females' participation on two aspects: participation for decision-making and participation for benefit sharing. Therefore, the study deals with the above issues and expected to bring out those issues in policy level. The findings of the study would be useful for decision makers, concern government organization,

Donor Agencies, planner, policy maker, social activators and future researcher to plan similar project better. The study find out issues that could be address in future and benefit those involved peoples.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

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

1.6 Organization of the Report

This report consists of six chapters. The first chapter deals with the Background, Statement of the Problem, Objectives, Significance and Limitation of the study. The second chapter consists of the Review of the Literatures to justify the research problems. Similarly, the third chapter deals with the Methodology adopted to conduct research and method of the data analysis, and the fourth chapter deals with the Introduction of the study area. The fifth is the Data Presentation and Analysis chapter which is divided on Gender Participation in Community Forest Management Committee, Factors Affecting the Level of Participation, Attitudes of Men towards Women in Participation of Community Forest Related Activities and Impact of the Community Forestry Program. In this way, the sixth chapter deals with the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendation to enhance the gender participation in community forest management.

Chapter -II

Literature Review

The study in community forestry is not new. In the present society, many government offices, NGO, INGOs, and Researchers have conducted studies on community forest in Nepal. Similarly, many analytical studies on this sector have also been undertaken in different parts of the world. Therefore, this chapter deals with the review of literature on the theory and concepts of gender participation in the community forest.

2.1 Community Forestry and Forest User Group

Community forestry is a partnership program between government and community organization in which staff play a role as facilitator to identify real user groups to prepare operational plan of forest and constitution of group in implementation of CF activities where as community (user group) is responsible to manage, protect and utilize the forest on the sustainable basis (MPFS 1988). Community forest is a part of National forest that has given to the users only use right but not land tenure ship and there is provision of the back from users if users don't follow the rules and operational plan of the forest. This provision has made some doubt toward the Government from local people (fisher and Gilmour, 1999).

Tamang et.al. clear the concept of community forest that it was being defined and considered as a part of National forest policy for Nepal nearly 40 years ago, well before acceptance of the concept by FAO, or other forests from developed countries from this early stage the concept involved a partnership between the forest department and the villagers in which the management and protection of these forests would be sustained by the local communities and any excess income derived from the forests would be used to improve the community welfare. Indigenous system of protection of the forest by the local's initiative had been prevalent in different part of the country (Tamang 1990, Chhetri and Pandey 1992, Chhetri 1994).

In recent years protection of forests through user groups have been accorded top priority in the legislation. Consequently, many government owned forests in the hill and Terai one being transformed into community forests and the management and protection handed over to its user's community forestry is not a new concept but as a

legal measure it has come only recently. Today the user groups are recognized as the managerial unit of the community forestry program.

Hobley (1987) in defining community forestry notes that is about handing of the forest to the locals for use and protection although the term "Community Forestry" also implies complete and active decision-making of the local people, including women and the empowerment of the poor. Villagers see community forestry of village forestry as the control, management and use of the forest resources. It seeks to increase the level of awareness of local people and to active involve them in all aspects of forestry activities (Fisher and Malla 1987). Gilmour and Fisher (1991) define FUGs are groups of people of use and access. According to the authors in Nepal community forestry is defined as the control, protection and management of the forest resources by rural communities for whom trees and forests are an integral parts of there farming system.

According to Barlett (1996) "Forest user Group refers to a people, generally defined on the basis of settlement and/or households entitled to manage and utilize a specified area of community forest. Generally user groups would include these households which have been utilizing by local agreement, a specified path of forest to meet their basic needs of forest products". From different definitions it is clear that the community forestry refers to the control and sustainable management of local resources by the users. Community forestry is a forest handed over to a users group for its development, conservation and utilization for the collective benefit of the users and forest users are people who are recognized by other as having right s to manage and utilize a communal forest and forest user group are user group organized to manage and utilize a community forest.

2.2 People's Participation in Community Forestry

Barlett and Nurse (1991) stated that people's participation is the most essential features of community forestry. It is the principal aim of community forestry to involve people in all stages from decision making to harvest. Similarly, if goods and services derive from forest resources are made available to people, especially rural poor in and around the forest, those people in turn expected to cooperate in forest protection and management measures. The technique of using participatory rural appraisal to assist with conduct investigation the fieldworker will gradually develop a

positive relationship with the villagers. By involving the users in all stages of information's gathering the collected information is more likely to be relevant to the needs of the users and hence useful for the protection of the preparation of the operational plan.

Kayastha (1991) clears that participation mainly focuses on involvement of people in all aspects of planning, implementation, decision-making and benefit sharing. Women's participation also has been well emphasized.

The term participation is widely used in development literature. The meaning of participation can range from almost complete out side control with the taken involvement of local people to a form of collective action in which local people set and implement their own agenda in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators (Chhetri and Pandey 1992) carried out eight detailed case studies of forest resources in Baitadi and Achham District in Far Western in Nepal. These eight studies suggest that people's participation is key solution to effective participation, management of common property resource particularly, forest. Participation means the people who are the stakeholders and decision makers. Participation must not be induced or co-opted. People must be the subjects not of development initiatives. Participation is the essence of responsible stewardship of natural resource.

2.3 Women and Forestry in Nepal

Women have been taking part in development activities in Nepal, long before international concerns were voiced for including women in development and increasing their participation. In Nepali Socio-economic context, women's workload is believed to be heavier in the rural areas of the country compared to that of their men. However their contribution to development activities at community level and work at household level is never recognized and their status remained unimproved in spite of global efforts in increasing women's participation. There are constraints of women's participation in Nepali society at various levels, which can be eliminated or overcame mainly be awareness generating and training at massive scale for both men and women because neither of the two genders exists in isolation.

Since women are the primary users of forest products, it would be logical that they be given responsibilities for its conservation also. Any activity relating to access and/or

improvement in the condition of forest resources will invariably have a bearing on women as its users women and forestry appear to have a closer link in the rural area of Nepal where life is shaped and dictated by availability and access to basic resources such as water, fuel and feeder. The villagers in general and their women in particular have used and managed forests from the past their participation, therefore, become critical for the success of forestry programs.

2.4 Gender Participation in Community Forestry

The word gender is used to describe men and women which are socially determined by society and it is a learned behaviour therefore gender roles for women and men vary greatly from one culture to another, from one social group to another within the same culture. Gender roles therefore change over the time with the change in socio-economic circumstances. To determine gender, social and cultural perceptions of masculine and feminine roles are taken into account. A function of women to give birth and breast-feeding is a sex role, which women perform universally. However, a function of child rearing is a gender role, which varies from culture to culture. Either women or men can get engaged in child rearing role which is basically determined by a particular culture, socio-political and economic factors. Gender is learnt through a process of socialization and through the culture of the particular society concerned. It is necessary to understand the distinction between gender and sex. As mentioned earlier gender is determined by society whereas sex is determined by biological and physical conditions (such as chromosome, genitalia, hormonal status and secondary sex characteristics) determine the sex.

Gender is a dynamic concept historically and culturally determined socially constructed by men and women to define their relationship with each other and with the environment. Gender bias is a worldwide phenomenon, but it is especially prominent in the third world societies. Gender analysis examines the social differences between men and women. Many researchers have stressed the need to involve gender in development activities. Bajracharya (1993) stressed that the inclusion of a gender perspective in development programs and policies is an essential ingredient in all development processes. Similarly in forestry also, gender participation would be highly beneficial.

Women have frequently taken the lead in forest preservation and management, although these phenomena have been little studied in conventional resource management studies. Women's role in the well-known Chipko movement of Uttar Pradesh is a popular example of how women have contributed to forest conservation. In Nepal also, a self-stared community forest management experience in Dhading district Pandey (1990) discovered that women were the first ones to be inspired to protect the Hattisunde forest against outside encroachment and then actively involved in the enforcement of rules agreed upon by the village to preserve the forest.

In Nepal several studies (Peter et al 1984/85; New Era 1989; Siddiqui 1989) conducted in different parts point out that women's participation in forest resource management is crucial to the success of a forestry program and emphasized the importance of women's participation in forest related activities through the formation of forest management committees. The important role of rural women in forest managements is a result of their indigenous knowledge and skills specific to their ecological niche.

In Rola's view (1979) the participation of women can be described as a process in which women are directly and actively involved in the planning and implementation of rural development program. But, participation of women has in most cases been symbolized by the presence to take representative at user committee meetings.

Shrestha (1992) clears that equally participation of men and women in community forestry is very important because women are the real users of forest resources, they have indigenous knowledge how to manage, protect and utilize forest resource. Therefore women's involvement in meetings of planning, decision-making process then there could be successes of the community forestry programme.

Even though Nepalese women are undermined and considered incapable of participating in the forest related activities, studies have shown that Nepalese women in activities related to forest resources such as fuel wood and fodder collection, grazing animals are equally or more participative than males and they can supervise the proper utilization and conservation of forest resources (Acharya and Benett 1981; New Era 1983; Peter et al 1984/85; Warmoald et al 1986). It is also stated that women's indigenous knowledge with respect to species of vegetation and their use is and reality (1994/1995).

According to Master plan for the forestry sector, community forestry calls for equity in decision-making and forest product use. To make equity in all forest related activities, it had made a provision to include 40% of women in the forest user group committees but this has not been followed in practice. Women, who are the primary users, are often denied rights in decision making, planning, implementation process. Generally, women are the primary user of forest, they have to work as a labour as well as household activities they have workload but nobody care them. But women's right have nobody care, they are dominated by male society, as "What they can do?"

Some simplistic assumptions seem to be prevalent in Nepali society with regard to women and their role in development activities. For instance, as most women are illiterate, they are considered ignorant and incapable of making decisions, women are considered to be the destroyers of the forest so they are not involved in forest management.

Inside of the several studied stressing the need to involve women in forest management and insisting that women are as capable as men in doing so, we find that in most communities women are under respected.

Several studies proved that women are also capable as men if they get opportunities to participate in every development activities.

2.5 Women's Participation in Decision-making

K.C. (1988) defines decision making as the actual involvement of the local people in-group discussion in the assembly meeting. Participation in decision-making is indicated by the people's attendance at the meeting and by assisting whether or not they provided any sort of advice to the committee at the level.

Molnar (1987) stated that participation by women in decision making regarding management village controlled forest is certainly a crucial step in the direction of long term community forestry women need to be involved in decision making regarding community forestry management plans if these plans are to be effective.

Even though participation in decision-making is indispensable, women are not involved in decision-making process. Chhetri and Pandey (1992) in eight case studies from Baitadi and Achham, say that women had no role in decision-making except in

the collection of its products. A study carried out in Kabhrepalanchock and Sindhupalchock districts states that women were severally under represented in the FUG and had little obvious influence in decision making related plantation or indigenous forest. Women revealed a comparative lack of knowledge of FUG activities and decision and attached FUG meeting to a lesser extent than men (Collet et al, 1996).

Bajracharya (1994) writes that the overall women participation in meeting and discussions were negligible as compared to men and points out that illiteracy household workload, lack of confidence and the lower social status accorded to rural women were the reasons for not participating in meeting.

2.6 Socio-cultural Norms and Values

In Nepali society, each and every individual has different sets of roles to perform on the basis of their age, sex, position with the family and status as well as the caste/ethnic group they belong to in some cases. Traditional high-caste Hindu ideals have dictated women's manners and behaviours (Bennet 1988, Gray 1990, Kondos 1990). Men are accorded higher status and importance in the society (Shrestha 1999). As such high-caste Hindu women are put under constant control of their men in different forms at different stages of life. Age and status in the family also determines nature and degree of women's involvement in household work and decision-making (Shrestha 1994 and 1999, Bhatt et al. 1997). Women are believed to have their primary responsibilities in domestic chores, farm activities, collection and utilization of forest products, rearing and taking care of children, as well as looking after the livestock (Thacker 1993; Gurung and Banskota 1993; Pandey 1990, Bhatt et al. 1997).

2.7 Attitude of Men: Social Expectation of Women

Pandey (1990) pointed out that women were rarely consulted in forest related projects because they were seen as "destroyers of forests". This kind of attitude discourages their participation. In Daduwa (The Bahun-Chhetri villages), it was also found that women have limited access to information related to community forestry activities. Men who attend meetings/public gatherings after did not communicate to their women about the important decision made at the meetings concerning forest related activities.

In Daduwa, a predominately Bahun-Chhetri village, there appears to be a strong will among the women for learning new skills and raising their social status. But the male members in their community do not seem to always favour this. In contrast, in a Tamang community (same VDC), the men were found to be supportive of their women learning to read and write, they also had given all the support needed by the women FUG committee for the protection and management of their CF. For these two contrasting cases, we may conclude that the support and motivation from local males and elites plays a vital role in raising women's confidence towards forest management. This could be true for any other programs among at empowering women or working towards a gender-balanced approach in development.

2.8 Women's Role in Decision-Making: How far they are involved?

The previous studies show that women are not directly involved in decision making in development activities at community level. Their participation is limited in labour contribution in the form of pitting, planting, watering, cleaning, thinning, pruning, harvesting etc, in community development activities. Women and children of Daduwa reported that they had participated along with the men in carrying seeding from the road-head, as well as in pitting and plangent work in the CF. But they were not always involved in gatherings or decision making or at management household heads (who are generally men). Women are not invited to the meeting nor are they encouraged to participate in them so long as male members in the household are around.

It may be argued that women's participation in forestry should not be conceived "Mechanically". The belief that their inclusion in the committees translates to their effective participation is faulty. Because inclusion of women in the committees may not necessarily reflect their involvement in the decision making process. In some cases the user groups make decisions and the committee performs an executive role only. In other cases decision are made by the committee where women's numbers are minimal. For example, some women involved in forest users committee in Gaurati Chyandanda FUG of Sindhupalchock were removed from the committee for not being "active" (i.e. not being able to attend all committee meetings) due to their heavy household responsibilities of course, those women did come to the forest management

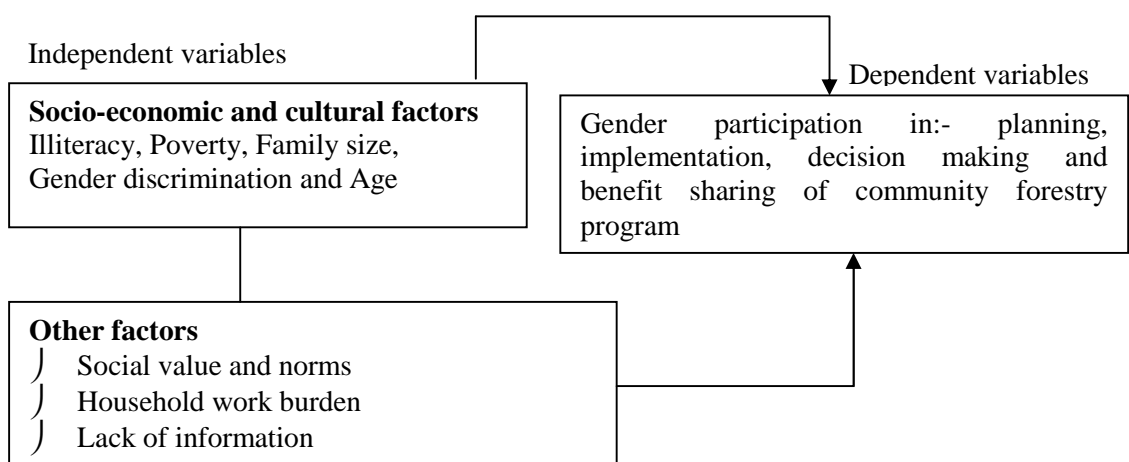
activities (i.e., cleaning of the forest, pruning or branches, or thinning activities in CF). But the male dominated committee and assembly decided that attending meetings was more important.

Women perhaps with ignorance of their own potential or heavier workload or rigid work domain, do not think it necessary to attend meetings or community gatherings. For instance, it seems that woman in predominantly Brahman/Chhetri village in Kavre, neither take initiative by them selves nor are inspired by their family members to do so. A 56 years old Jaisi woman of Kabhre Bhanjyang despite of being de facto household head (husband and sons were away from home working and/or studying in outside) reported, "Why should we (women) go to the meeting? If our men were around, they would have gone to such meetings".

From the case above, it is evident that women's participation in forestry or other development activities is constrained by factors related to the social cultural and economic realities of Nepali society.

The main hindrance or the facilitating factors for women's involvement in public spheres in the villages seems to be manifest in the attitude of men towards women, both at the household level and the community level. The conceptual framework of the study shows the hindering factors for gender participation in any development activities has presented as below.

Figure 1: Factors Hindering Rural Men and Women participation in Development Program



Source: Paudel, Laxmi (2002), *A Thesis on People's Participation in Community Forestry: A Case Study of Kafle Community Forest of Lamatar VDC, T.U. Library, Kirtipur.*

Without equal participation of men and women any development activities cannot be success since, men and women are like the two wheels of a cart and without two wheels, the cart cannot move smoothly.

Even though gender balance participation is often stressed, it is seldom translated into practice. Several socio-economic and cultural factors, such as; illiteracy, poor class, family size, and age are hindering factors in their participation. The relationships of these factors that hinder men and women's participation, which is shown in figure 1.

Chhetri and Pandey (1994) stated that women work more than that of men in Nepalese society. From the early morning till late night, women are engaged in one or the other work. However, they have little time to be engaged to other development activities. In communities where the men members are away from the village and engage in off-farm activities, the women work load is even increased as they have to do the work of their absent men members also.

Illiteracy, household work burden, lack of access in information, family size and age are the major factors to hinder women's participation. Because of illiteracy, women have lack of confidence and awareness that cement to women in household boundary. Mainstreaming gender into development activities is the present need of the society which has been support by many NGOs, INGOs and government organization also.

2.9 Dichotomized Sphere of Economic Activities

Men and Women seem to have culturally and biologically defined sphere of activities in Nepal. For some reason, the work and responsibility out-side the house or "Bahira-fera" and farm production is often considered as a male role (e.g., attending public meetings or gatherings where decisions are to be modes. In contrast, Women's work domain is considered inside work or " Bhitra-Fera" although fetching water, fuel and fodder falls with in their responsibility outside work which requires public contact is taken up by men and inside work, is carried out by women. In other words, men carry out community work whereas women are involved in productive and reproductive works in the households whereas women's responsibility is stretched from domestic chores to farm and forest.

2.10 Constraints of Women's Participation; Field Realities

Women are constrained by various factors to participate in forestry or development activities. The case studies (Chhetri and Rana 1994) revealed that women generally do not appear in the meeting/gatherings because they have heavier workload; are normally not invited do not have say in decision making because of their lower representation, are scared being teased by fellow villagers (people hold such discouraging behaviour or negative attitude towards women's participation); and are not expected to attend formal meetings.

2.11 Heavier Workload of Women in Spite of Development

Acharya et.al. (1981) stated that although men and women in Nepali village have culturally defined sphere of activities, the village women have heavier workload compared to their men (Acharya et. al. 1981, ILO 1986, Mahila Bikas Sangh 1988). Chhetri and Rana (1994) pointed out that work burden of women in Nepal is reported to be much higher than the global average for holiday or overtime payment or any reward. Their workdays are often long beginning early in the morning watching late night movies. But women in Nepali village get up every morning with mouth to feed regardless of the days of the week or months of the year.

Chapter - III

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study has adopted both the descriptive and exploratory research approaches. The study discussed the socio-economic characteristics of a community forest user's and their activities. It also finds out the problems and analyzes those problems.

3.2 Study Area

The selected study site is Khaira VDC of Pyuthan district. The VDC is accessible with a motor able road. Bhirpati Community Forest User Group is selected because this community forest is regarded as one of the best community forests of the VDC. This community forest is also selected as there is existence of participation of both the sexes within the group. This forest user groups has not been studied by any body else focusing on gender perspective.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

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

3.4 The Universe and Sample Size

Khaira VDC of Pyuthan district is selected as study area. Bhirpati Community forest User Group is selected for the study. This community forest consist 129 households. Among them 26 households (20%) were selected as sample units using simple random sampling method. Household respondents are the users of community forest and member of community forest committee (CFC).

In addition to sample household survey, key informant interview were conducted. People of adequate and in-depth knowledge on the research issues were selected

purposively. Those people were school teachers, forest officials, old aged experienced people and local politicians etc. Besides views of women community forest users were also collected through focus group discussion.

3.5 Data Collection Technique and Tools

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

3.5.1 Household Survey

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

The researcher visited user houses and filled questionnaire. Qualitative data has been collected through focus group discussion.

3.5.2 Formal and Informal Group Discussion

During field survey, the researcher met local users, women committee members and formal and informal discussions were held with them. The place of discussions was in the field and other common gathering places of the users.

3.5.3 Key Informant Interview

The Staff of forest office, forest user group committee member, and other educated user were considered as key informants for the study. Key informants were both men and women. Formal and informal discussion was performed with them. Semi-structured questionnaire were prepared to conduct interview with them where respondents were both men and women.

3.5.4 Observation

Direct observation was also applied to get relevant information for the study. In the course of field work, participation of men and women in FUC meeting, especially focus on women, women's raising voice, management of forest by men and women, present condition of forest etc. was collected by observation. Besides, observation was made during rapport building and in formal discussion with women users since this kind of observation was helped very much in understanding the field reality.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation Method

As discussed above, the data were collected through different sources using various data collection techniques and tools. Qualitative data and quantitative data were gathered from field visit. Qualitative data were discussed analytically on the basis of findings. Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed descriptively. Simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage were used to present qualitative data. The details of the data analysis are discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter – IV

Introduction of the Study Area

4.1 Location

Khaira VDC is situated in the northern part of the Pyuthan district. This VDC is bounded by Khalanga and Raspurkot east, Ramdi west, Dakhakyodi north, Ramdi and Dhubang south. The Bhirpati Community Forest is lies in ward no. 6 of Khaira VDC. This VDC is appromaxily 7 KM. far from the district head quarter Khalanga. The Rural road is linked Khaira VDC with Khalanga. This VDC is comparatively back warded than the other Khalanga, Bijuwar, Bijayanagar, Dakhakyodi and Dharmawoti VDC of Pyuthan district. So it is necessary to develop it with priority basis.

4.2 Climate

Climate of the whole Pyuthan district including Khaira VDC is moderate. In winter, temperature comes down to 5-6°c and reaches up to 37°c in summer. Sometime snowfall can be seen in higher mountains from the district (VDC profile 2006). In the summer season, the VDC is comparatively warmer than others VDC's (Village profile, 2005).

4.3 Population

According to the final report of census 2001, the total population of this VDC is 4628. The number of male and female is 2182 and 2446 respectively. The total household number is 829.

4.4 Culture and Religion

Nepal is well known as multi cultural and multi religion country. It is difficult to find homogenous community in Nepal. Similarly, one type of religion i.e., Hindu is found in Khaira VDC. Generally Brahaman, Chhatri, Magar and Dalit belives on Hinduism. All ethnic group speaks Nepali. All Hindu celebrate 'Dashain', 'Tihar' and other religious event. Every clan of Brahamin and Chhetri has their dynasty God. Once in a year all member of a clan gathered in a place and worship their dynasty god. Gorakhnath temple, Shivalaya temple, Bhumeswori temple, Brahama tample, Khadka temple and Kalimuni temple are major Hindu temple in Khaira VDC.

4.5 Education

Among the total population there are about 30% illiterate people in Khaira VDC. Based on Researcher's general observation, it was found that almost young generations go to school and college followed by go to job (army) than they left education. most of female old generation are illiterate than old male. Generally, adult women and men are literate SLC, Inter, Bachelor and Masters degree. Most of the young generations are educated.. Some people go to Kathmandu, Dang, Pokhara, Butwal and Nepalgunj for getting higher quality education.

4.6 Economy

Agriculture and livestock are the main source of economy of Khaira VDC but agricultural and livestock production does not meet the basic requirements of the household. A large numbers of the community people are found engage in different types of occupation. Main occupation of Khaira VDC is agriculture. Some people are engaged in service and business. Business like small shops, vegetable shop, poultry farm, tea shop, small cloth shop etc. Other is doing wage labour and their occupational job. A major crop of Khaira VDC is maize, paddy, mustard, wheat, vegetable, etc. and major fruits of the VDC is lychee, banana, mango, citrus fruit, pineapple, jackfruit etc.

4.7 Natural Resources

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

4.7.1 Land

Land is one of the most exploited and utilized natural resources in the study area. Among the total population 80% people are involved in agriculture although 45% land irrigated only. In the Khet land they grow paddy and wheat in Bari land Maize, wheat, Mustard and vegetable. In the dry land fruits like pineapple, Lychee, banana and Mango etc.

4.7.2 Forest

Another major natural resource of the area is forest. Before ten years, there was very low growing stock of forest. There were no big trees. Every year the jungle fired, the jungle seems bare therefore there were no forest animals. After district forest office

has extended its community forestry program or the district forest handover the forest in to community since than, forest condition has improved. It is estimated that two third of the fuel requirements of the opens and fodder, leaf litter and grass to the domestic animals are fulfilled from own village forest.

There are 8 community forests in Khaira VDC. Which are :

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----|
| i) | Dharmala community forest ward no. | 9 |
| ii) | Bhadrechaur | 3 |
| iii) | Dammudanada | 3&8 |
| iv) | Saunepani | 5 |
| v) | Ripapateri | 2 |
| vi) | Bhirpati | 6&9 |
| vii) | Masine | 1 |
| viii) | Thulabhir | 3 |

Bhirpati Community Forest was the study area of the research which lies ward no 6 and 9 of Khaira VDC, Pyuthan district. Bhirpati CF covers 7 hector area and 129 households are in Bhirpati community forest. The forest was handover to users of Bhirpati in 2057 B.S.

In Bhirpati CF different types of tree species and wild animals are found in the forest with in the VDC. Cheuri, Khayar, Sishau, Kattai, Bamboo, Bakaino, Salla, Srikhanda, Sal,Saj are main tree species found in the forest. likewise, forest animals are Dear, Leopard, Tiger, Rabbit, Jackl, Oath, Goharo, Dumshi birds like kalij, Titra, sparrow, dhobi, chibe, kuteso, eagle, baj, parrot, dove, Peacock, crow, nightingale, battai etc. are found in the forest.

4.7.3 Water

Water is one of the most useful resources of nature. The major water resources of the VDC are Kandra khola and jhimruk river. This source of water is being used for irrigation supply. There are three drinking water supply projects Hingkhola, Jhimruk lift and Juke Khola drinking water supply project for drinking water supply.

4.8 Introduction Of Bhirpati Community Forest

Bhirpati Community Forest User household is 129 and Population is 713. The people of ward no. 6 and 9 are the users of Bhirpati Community Forest. The community

Forest is located in mid part of the VDC, which has a total area of 7 hector. Forest is dominated by almost natural regeneration. From the observation of the community forest has shown that major tree species of the forest are Cheuri, Khayar, Sishau, Kattai, Bamboo, Bakaino, Salla, srikhanda etc. The jungle is very dense where wild animals like Dear, Rabbit, Dumshi, Jackal, Fox, Oadh, Goharo lives there. The different species of birds Kalij, Titra, Parrot, Dove, Crow, Eagle, Dhobi,Cockoo, Chibe,Kuteso, Nightingale, Sparrow are major birds of the forest.

4.9 Social Characteristics of the Forest User Group

Twenty six sampled households (20%) examined social characteristics, economic condition and cultural feature and activities of the forest user groups.

4.9.1 Ethnic Composition of the Forest User Group

Bhirpati community Forest has covered 129 households. There are altogether 713 user members within among these households. They are the primary user of the forest. They are the real protector of the forest.

Table no. 4.1 below shows detail of cast/ethnic composition of Bhirpati community Forest user Group.

Table 4.1: Caste/Ethnic Composition of Bhirpati Community Forest User Group

S.N.	Ethnic/Caste	Number of households	Percentage
	Brahmin	38	29.45
1	Chhetri	67	51.94
2	Dhami (janajati)	15	11.63
3	Giri	6	4.65
4	Kami	3	2.33
	Total	129	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

The above table shows that there are altogether 129 households. The community forest is dominated by Chhetri caste than other ethnic groups/caste. In the forest user group, there are 51.94 percent households of Cheetri. Besides this, ,there are 29.45 percent households of Brahmin 11.63 percent households of Dhami, 4.65 percent household of Giri, 2.33 percent households of Kami of Brahmin.

4.9.2 Age and Sex Composition

In Bhirpati Community Forest User Group, there are altogether 129 households. Among them 26 households were selected as sample for the study. Twenty six sample households covered 129 benefited users. These sampled users are categorized in five age groups in the following table below.

Table 4.2: Age and Sex Composition of Sampled Households

S.N.	Age groups	Male		Female		Grand Total	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	0-5	5	3.40	5	3.40	10	6.60
2	6-19	35	23.50	25	16.80	60	40.20
3	20-39	23	15.41	12	8.04	35	23.40
4	40-60	18	12.10	21	14.07	39	26.00
5	Above 60	2	1.34	3	2.00	5	3.80
Total		83	55.75	66	44.51	149	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

Above table shows that the number of male population is slightly higher than female where female are 66 and male are 83. The age group between 6-19 is higher than other age groups, which is 40.2 percent of the total users.

4.9.3 Educational Status of Respondents

In Bhirpati Community Forest, Chhetri Caste is higher than other castes. So, the data reveals that education level of Brahmin is higher than that of other castes. Both young generation male and female are educated. But the educational level of male is higher than female. Education status of the sample household users is categorized in six levels, which is shown in the table below.

Table 4.3: Educational Status of Bhirpati Community Forest Users of Sampled Households

S.N.	Educational Status	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Baby	4	2.69	3	2.01	7	4.80
2	Primary (1-5) level	15	10.07	15	10.07	30	20.13
3	Secondary (6-10) level	32	21.44	12	8.10	44	29.52
4	S.L.C.	12	8.05	8	5.36	20	13.42
5	Intermediate and above	10	6.70	1	0.67	11	7.39
6	Literate	5	3.35	8	5.36	13	8.73
7	Illiterate	5	3.35	19	12.73	24	16.10
	Total	83	55.65	66	44.33	149	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

The table above shows that in primary level of education where 10.07 percent male and female are equal. Similarly, are in secondary level. 8.05 percent of male are passed SLC and females are 5.36 percent. The 6.7 percent of male are having intermediate and above intermediate level of education where as 0.67 percent of female are having intermediate and above intermediate level of education. 8.73 percent users are only literate and 16.1 percent illiterate.

4.9.4 Family Size and Structure

Generally, family size of Bhirpati community forest users found small. According to sampled households, in 7.7 percent household have 2 to 3 members. Similarly, 77 percent houses have 4 to 6 members. Most of the houses have small family size. Distribution of families respondent's household according to family size is presented in table below.

Table 4.4: Number and Percentage Distribution of Family Size of the Sampled Households

S.N.	Number of Family Member	Number of households	Percentage
1.	2-3	2	7.70
2.	4-6	20	77.00
3.	7-9	1	3.80
4.	10-11	3	11.50
Total		26	100.00

Source: Field Survey 2008

The above table depicts that most of the households in Bhirpati community have 7 to 9 members, which is very small family size in the context of Khaira VDC ward no. 6 and 9 Pyuthan. According to sample, 3.8 percent households have 7 to 9 members. Similarly, 77 percent households have 4 to 6 members, 11.5 percent houses have 10 to 11 members, 7.7 percent households have 2-3 members respectively.

4.10 Economic Condition

4.10.1 Occupation

For livelihood the users of Bhirpati community forest users are mainly based on subsistence agricultural economy. Agricultural production is not sufficient for their subsistence, so some of the users have inside a small shop like vegetable shop, tea shop for extra income to manage household expenditure. Some are engaged in governmental school, and other government offices. Occupational distribution of the respondents is given in the table below.

Table 4.5: Occupational Distribution of the Sampled Household of Bhirpati Community forest users

S.N.	Occupation of Respondent	Household	Percentage
1.	Only agriculture	12	46.15
2.	Agriculture and government service holder	10	38.46
3.	Agriculture and small shop	4	15.39
Total		26	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2008.

The above table shows that major occupation of most of the households 46.15% is agriculture based and has no extra sources for income. They are bound to live in subsistence farming. While, 38.46 percent households have agriculture and government service both as income source for their livelihood. Besides two types of occupation, there are 15.39 percent households involved in agriculture and small business as shop keeping.

4.10.2 Culture and Religion

Though Bhirpati Community Forest Users Group ethnically are heterogeneous but culturally and religiously they are homogenous. The users are all Hindu. The entire ethnic groups celebrate Hindu festivals like Dashain, Tihar and other religious festivals. Dalits like Kami in the community belongs to untouchable caste. Even though constitutionally prohibited, they are not allowed to touch Brahmin and Chhetri. So Dalit caste had separate settlement, which is far from Brahmin and Chhetri community from the beginning.

4.10.3 Use of Forest Products

Bhirpati community forest is a natural forest. Forest products are one of the major sources of livelihood of Community Forest User Group. The main products used by local people on a regular basis are leaf litter, fodder, firewood, and timber. To collect fund they remove old trees and sell them. They use the fund in seedling plantation, to control flood, landslide and community development activities. They have collected community assets like musical instrument to cultural program, cooking utensil, structure etc.

Chapter- V

Data Presentation and Analysis

5.1 Gender Participation in Community Forest Committee

In Bhirpati Community Forest, Forest User Group makes decision through group assembly and committee meeting. General assembly is called twice a year. Group meeting and committee meeting relied on the issue to decide on new agenda. Committee members decide minor issues whereas group user or meetings or general assembly decide major issues.

Usually, secretary calls every group meeting and committee meeting. It is mandatory that all committee members should be present in committee meetings while one member from one household should represent in group or assembly meeting. More than half representative members are needed to decide any agenda or decision in the meeting. Generally, secretary raised agenda and discussed over agenda and every members have right to keep his or her opinion in each case. Group meeting and committee meetings are means of decision-making. In Bhirpati community forest, there are altogether 129 households where, the users are from Brahmin, Chhetri, Giri, Kami and Dhama. However, the community forest is dominated by Chhetri caste. In the Forest Committee, there is low representation from Janajati and Dalit. There is also less participation in-group meetings or general assembly. But women's participation is high in forest committee. The composition of the user group committee is given in table below.

Table 5.1: Composition of the FUG Committee of Bhirpati Community Forest

Position	Name of the committee members	Caste	Sex
Chairman	Resham Bahadur Basnet	Chhetri	M
Vice Chairman	Saraswoti Acharya	Brahmin	F
Secretary	Chanda Bahadur Basnet	Chhetri	M
Vice Secretary	Sita Acharya	Brahmin	F
Treasurer	Kamala Acharya	Brahmin	F
Members	Ishori Prasad Acharya	Brahmin	M
	Amar Bahadur KC	Chhetri	M
	Durga Bahadur Dhama	Dhama	M
	Parbata B.K.	Kami	F
	Bhoj Bahadur Basnet	Chhetri	M
	Pima Basnet	Chhetri	F
	Mana Basnet	Chhetri	F
	Janaka Basnet	Chhetri	F
	Jhaba Gharti	Magar	F
	Jagabir Basnet	Chhetri	M

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table indicates that Bhirpati community Forest is dominated by Chhetri caste. Lower caste and ethnic people are also found in forest committee. Their representation in committee is minority.

People from lower caste are found less representation. In the forest committee, it may be assumed that there is minor participation of these groups of people in decision-making. It can be said that there is low participation of other caste/ethnic caste users than Chhetri in decision-making. Even, women are found large number of participating in forest committee members, but they haven't keep value in decision-making because of their low education lable and capacity. Women's existence role in committee meeting is only to fulfill the required necessary numbers for meeting. Thus other ethnic caste cannot keep their opinion regarding their decision in the committee that automatically affect in implementation.

5.1.1 Gender Participation Level in committee Meeting

Generally, committee meeting is held regularly once in a month. If members feel necessary, a meeting is held more than regular meeting. Usually, the committee, secretary or chairman informs other members for meeting. Usually, meeting is called on Saturday in the beginning of the month. In group meeting or committee meeting participated members recommended agendas for discussion. In Bhirpati community forest women members are high in executive committee but less participation in general assembly.

Table 5.2: Gender Participation Level of Bhirpati Community Forest in Group Meeting and Executive Committee According to Sample Respondents

Activities of Participation of the CFUs	Female		Male		Total	
	No. of participants	%	No. of Participants	%	No.	%
CFU genral assembly	35	38.00	57	62.00	92	100.00
Executive Committee	8	53.33	7	46.67	15	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table indicates that female participation in community forest committee is higher than male where female participation is 53.33 percent and male participation is only 46.67 percent but the general assembly female participant is very low than male.

Generally, due to household work burden women cannot present in group meeting. In this sense, Kharel (1993) stated that women are supposed to be secluded with the household with a minimal role in decision-making. A women member said that "We are housewife, we haven't time to go to attend the meeting although we want to attained meeting. She again added that we are bound in household work burden such as cooking food, child care, fetching water, washing clothes, fodder collection, farming etc." This is the real situation found in Nepalese rural women and also found in Khaira community. The above data shows that there is unequal participation in CFUs general assembly. Due to less participation of women in meeting their voice has not keep value. They do not get chance to keep their opinion. While women members are 38 percent and men are 62 percent.

5.1.2 Group Meeting and General Assembly

From the focus group discussion it is depicts that group meeting and general assembly is called when the user committee feels it necessity. Usually, committee meeting is held once a month and general assembly held twice a year. To pass any decision at least majority of members (more than 50%) must be present. In group meeting, users express the views and decisions are made out by majority voice or majority's agreement. Every member has right to keep his/her opinion in each agenda during group meeting.

Twice a year, user group of Bhirpati community forest called general assembly. Every year users evaluate their progress through general assembly. User committee presents progress report in general assembly. At this time users can raise questions in issues on progress report. Operational plan is made generally for five years. After five years passed, every forest user group and forest office staffs should prepare next operational plan or revise that plan. First Five years operational plan of Bhirpati community forest was completed in 2007. Then other operational plan revised by the users group with the technical help of forest office staffs.

Bhirpati community forest user group formed new user committee through general assembly. All user committee made consensus of the users members. The user group formed committee membership and also consider gender participation.

The level of participation was measured by evaluating minute and asking respondents

to express the frequency of their participation in meetings. Frequencies of participation are divided in to three level always participation for those who participate regularly, sometime participation for those who are not participating regularly and never participation for those who are not participating till now forest management activities. The following table no. 5.3 shows the level of participation (sample 26 HH) of gender and ethnic caste in group meeting.

Table 5.3: Participation of Respondents in Group meeting and General Assembly, by ethnicity

S. N.	Participation Level	Brahman		Chhetri		Giri		Dhami		Kami		Total	Percent
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
1	Always	3	1	4	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	11	42.00
2	Sometimes	2	-	2	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	8	31.00
3	Never	1	1	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	7	27.00
Total		6	2	7	4	1	-	4	1	1	-	26	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table shows that only 42 percent respondents among 26 sample respondents are regularly participated in the group meeting. Among them 9 are male member and 2 are female members. Dhami and Dalits are found irregular in participation in-group meetings. Except interviewing to users about their participation, minute book also reveals that there is poor participation of dalit and other ethnic castes in meeting. The table also reveals that participation of women is less in comparison to men participation. So, it can be said that women have less role in decision-making. However, women have important role in management activities and collection of the forest product, whenever they have no role in planning and decision-making.

5.1.3 Gender Participation in Implementation of Community Forest Program

Implementation is the real practice of operational plan, constitution and other decision are made by user group. It is the main responsibility of the user committee to implement all decisions. It is also the responsibility of the forest users to be involved in implementation of the rules and plan for effective implementation of the community forestry program.

Management, protection, training are major implementation activities of the community forest. Implementation of these activities cannot be successful in the absence of people's participation. So, people's participation both male and female in community forest is essential to be success.

In Bhirpati Community Forest, Women's participation in group meetings, trainings and tour are less, but their participation in management, protection of the forest products etc is high. It is generally known fact that women are the real user of the forest products. But they are busy due to household work burden. Because of this reason they are less participated in forest committee group meeting and training etc. Believing only as housewife or ideal women, they are cheated themselves. They have increased extra workload from the community forestry program on the one hand forest's work and household work on the other hand. Even though, in Bhirpati community forest, there is a women user who was previous forest committee members. But at the time of data collection she had left membership from the forest committee.

5.1.4 Participation in Forest Management Activities

Management aspect is the backbone of community forest. Bhirpati community forest is one of the moderate forests in management aspect but the participation aspect and protection aspect is very good. Forest management is the scientific operation that is applied in forest. Forest management operation includes plantation, thinning, pruning, clearing, weeding of bushes. It needs technical knowledge for the forest management. Without training and equipment forest management could not seem effective. Therefore, management operation needs technical assistance/support from District Forest Office. So, District forest official as well as users often play major role simultaneously in forest management activities. But there is always need to take initiation from forest users group. In Bhirpati, ranger has been providing such assistance support for the community forest. Plantation of seedlings in open area of the forest is one of the most important tasks of the forest management. Every year Bhirpati community forest planted seedlings inside the forest area. In Bhirpati community forest there is high participation of women compared to men in forest management activities. According to woman respondents women are high participation in forest work and in committee member, group meeting, general

assembly trainings, tour and workshop. The table below presents participation level of men and women, dalit and ethnic group during management and operation of community forest.

Table 5.4: Gender Participation Level of Respondents During Management Operation

S.N.	Caste and Ethnic Group		Gender participation in forest management				
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	Total
1	Brahmin	Female	3	2	-	-	5
		Male	2	1	1	-	4
2	Chhetri	Female	3	2	-	1	6
		Male	2	1	-	1	4
3	Kami	Female	-	-	-	1	1
		Male	-	-	-	-	-
4	Giri	Female	-	-	1	-	1
		Male	-	-	-	-	-
5	Dhami	Female	1	-	1	-	2
		Male	1	-	1	1	3
Total			12	6	4	4	26

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The above table shows that there is high participation of female than male in forest management and operation. The data depict that in Bhirpati CF Chhetri dominated in all management activities, where as other brahmin and ethnic groups are less participates in management operation/activities, since they are in minorities. In Bhirpati community forest Brahmin and Chhetri women are highly participating in forest management than extra activities of forest like training, tour because of the household work burden.

According to respondents of this community forest, women are highly involved in forest work like seedling, plantation, fodder collection, thinning, pruning, clearing, and firewood collection. In the forest management activities, there is high participation of the users. Among them women participation is higher than men. The management aspect of this community forest is good but there is no balance in participation of both men and women in forest operation.

5.1.5 Participation in Protection of Forest

Bhirpati community forest user Group has not appointed paid watch keeper for the protection of the forest.

To make effective in protection of the forest, there is system of protection on household rotation basis. To implement protection rules effectively, forest user group has applied same rules.

-) Providing available firewood, fodder, timber to users according to time.
-) Enhancing feeling of "we" in-group.
-) Punish those who disobey the rules and regulation according to forest operational plan and constitution.
-) Clarifying importance of forest in-group meeting time to time.
-) Utilize income from forest products in forest community development activities, forest control and protection like flood control, landslide control, soil erosion control and plantation of the forest.

Above mentioned rules are applied for the users of the community forest. The table below shows the level of participation of respondents in protection of forest.

Table 5.5: Gender Participation Level of Respondents in Protection of Bhirpati Community Forest

S.N.	Caste and Ethnic Group		Gender participation in forest protection				
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	Total
1	Brahmin	Female	3	2	-	-	5
		Male	2	1	1	-	4
2	Chhetri	Female	3	2	-	1	6
		Male	2	1	-	1	4
3	Kami	Female	-	-	-	1	1
		Male	-	-	-	-	-
4	Giri	Female	-	-	1	-	1
		Male	-	-	-	-	-
5	Dhami	Female	1	-	1	-	2
		Male	1	-	1	1	3
	Total		12	6	4	4	26

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table clearly shows that there is high participation of women than men in protection of Bhirpati Community Forest. Other dalit and ethnic group are less participates in protection of the forest but they are ready to paying charge because of their absence in community forest work. They cannot regularly attained in meetings and implementation because to solve the problem of the joining hand and mouth. And other reason, they are in minority. In this Community Forest, Brahmin and Chhetri female found highly participated. There are Dalits and ethnic group who are irregular participation. There is one female respondent with less participation who are from Giri and kami. Like wise two female respondent with less participation is from Dhami.

Generally, women completed their household works early in the morning in working season of community forest and protect forest in daytime. Firstly, they completed household work and looking after the forest, which is the extra workload to women. In Bhirpati community, most of the households are Chhetri and Brahmin. Janajati and ethnic caste group are less. In Janajati and ethnic group people found there is no discrimination to women. Both gender are responsible in household work burden.

5.1.6 Benefit Sharing from Forest

Benefit sharing is an important element of people's participation. If there is no equal sharing from forest products, disadvantaged users may be frustrated with the community forestry program so equal sharing of forest products may make users to realize the community forest as their own.

Benefit sharing includes distribution of the forest products like firewood, timber, fodder, and leaf litter. Firewood, timber, fodders are important forest products needed for the users. In Bhirpati community forest users are satisfied with benefit sharing of forest products. It was found that benefit sharing is equally based on households. Firewood, fodder, dry firewood is equally distributed during the forest management. But timber is not distributed like this; it is distributed only in the October and January by observing their need/problems. Forest user group fixed normal price for the extraction of green firewood and dry firewood. All users accepted this rules except poor people because they cannot pay easily. Green firewood costs Rs. 5 per Bhari in-group and timber Shal's costs Rs. 125 per quefeet, Chilawune per quefeet Rs. 40 and green firewood's costs Rs. 20 per Bhari out of group and Shal per quefeet Rs. 250 etc.

5.1.7 Participation in Other Activities

Participation in trainings, workshop, and tour are the important aspects of community forest management activities. Gender balance participation is essential for effective management protection and other activities of community forest.

5.1.7.1 Training

Forest user committee is authorized in selection of trainee participants. The committee members have already benefited by different trainings. Actually, training are needed for those person who can share the knowledge and skill in group learning after the training, and who can apply practically. A women respondent of Bhirpati community forest said we have rarely got opportunity of training. She added, "Only the committee members get trainings." Krishna K.C., a Ranger of Khalanga Range Post said in Forest Committee, women member must have to be 40% of the total committee members and 50% in trainings. He again added that women are the real user of forest so training is very much essential to women. The table below presents the participation level in training, seminar and workshop of the Bhirpati CFUs.

Table 5.6: Gender Participation Level in Different Trainings

Programs	Kinds of Trainings	Participation in CF trainings program						Utilization	
		No. of Participation	Female	(%)	Male	(%)	Yes	No	
Trainings	Account keeping	1	-	-	1	100	yes	-	
	Group management TOT	1	-	-	1	100	Yes		
	Poor oriented social inclusion	1	1	100	-	-	Yes		
	Group formation, Skill development and facilitation	1	-	-	1	100	yes		
	Advocacy for CFUG	2	1	50	1	50		not satisfactory	
	Forest Management	5	2	40	3	60	Yes	-	
	Women Empowerment	2	1	50	1	50	-	not satisfactory	
Seminar		5	3	60	2	40	yes	-	
Workshop		3	1	33.33	2	66.67	yes	-	
Total		21	9	43	12	57			

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table shows that, male are highly participated in different trainings about forest management, protection and other activities. It is clear that female lay behind male in benefit sharing aspect everywhere. Most of the women respondents said that, "We are limited to household work burden and forest's work but in benefit sharing activities we are keeping backward. It was found from table no. 5.6 that there are altogether 21 users, who are benefited from forest trainings. Among them, only 43 percent female get chances to get training and male 57 percent male get the chance. After getting training, there is provision to apply the learned knowledge and skill in forest management operation. Dalit and ethnic caste group also provided the opportunity of trainings. Most of the users said, "We don't know when and where would held the training."

5.1.7.2 Information Sharing

Generally, secretary calls meeting, members are informed sometime through letter but sometime by oral information for group meeting and assembly. Generally, the household head does not provide information or letter about meeting or social gatherings to his wife due to her household work load. This kind of attitude may bring negative impact in participation level. Many studies show that the household head that attend meeting does not share the decision-making information of the user group meeting to the female numbers. This kind of attitude keeps women back. In Bhirpati community forest, the woman users expressed the same attitude of male towards them.

5.1.7.3 Raising and Mobilizing Fund

Bhirpati Community Forest User Group has a provision of fund collection. The sources of the collected fund are income from the forest products, collected amount from the users, paying charge of users etc. The collective community fund has divided into different activities, such as; 25 % of the total fund to be used to control landslide, soil erosion, flood control, medical plant plantation and others seedling plantation, 40% of the total fund is to mobilize in community development activities and rest is deposited as a community asset in bank account. Two persons from the user committee are authorized to withdraw deposited money from the bank as per the guidelines set by the general forest user group.

Every year, budget expenditure and income is being presented in general assembly.

Every user is informed about their annual budget in general assembly. Users can raise question if they have any doubt in money expenditure. It is the responsibility of Forest user committee to explain and clarify on the raised doubt. Annual auditing is carried out on the expenditure and income.

5.2 Factors Affecting the Level of Participation

Bhirpati community forest is also one of the well managed forest of Pyuthan district. Female participation is higher than male in committee member and forest management operation. But due to some factors, which are very much responsible for the active participation of people in community forest program. These factors are as follows: Socio-economic/cultural factors and other factors.

5.2.1 Socio-economic and Cultural Factors

Socio-economic and cultural factors include poverty, illiteracy, family size, gender, social value and norms. How these socio-economic and cultural factors hinder in participation of male and female and low caste in Bhirpati community forest is briefly described below:

5.2.1.1 Poverty

Poverty is very much effecting factor for participation in community forest program. According to field survey in Bhirpati community forest, dalit and janajati are also users of the forest. But their regular participation in community forest management activities like, protection and meeting is less due to daily suffering from the basic need, though they are being backward or disadvantage group from they need to participate in development program.

Mainly, dalit and janajati are poor. In Bhirpati community, these groups are rarely participating in meeting and social gathering therefore their role in decision making is minimum. They accept what the committee decides. In field survey, a dalit said, "I do not go to regular meetings, social gathering even I wish to go because of daily meal management problem."

5.2.1.2 Illiteracy

Illiteracy is responsible factor in gender participation. Most of the respondents were adult age 35 to 68 years and they are the real user and have indigenous knowledge about forest protection. Most of the respondents were illiterate, some were literate and some were educated. Because of the illiteracy there is no gender balance participation in committee, group meetings, and training, where women are highly participated in forest activities but not in benefit sharing. They have two times more household work load than men. Mostly men do not involved in household work due to traditional attitude of Hindu society. Due to this reason women cannot get time to participate in extra activities like meetings, and social gathering because of illiteracy women lack confidence, power to talk in meeting and gathering and they also lack of awareness. So their participation in meetings is not valued.

5.2.1.3 Family Size

Family size is also responsible factors in participation. From the field survey, it is revealed that respondents of larger family size are participating in different activities. In such households, the families have managed to send one representative from their house. But sometime small families have to face problem in sending there representative in meetings and other activities especially female member. Thus family size influence gender participation. In small family women are busy in household work. Sometime, there may be nobody to participate from the house. In large family all the members do not have workload in the house, so they can participate in different activities of forest.

5.2.1.4 Gender Discrimination

In Bhirpati Community Forest, women are dominated by men. Previous tables prove the above statement where women are busy in household works. Forest work is extra workload to women. In forest training, tour, seminar, workshop, and group meeting, women participation is less, where as they have no role in decision-making. In this regard, studies of Bhirpati community forest women are not directly involved in decision-making in development activities at community level. Their participation is limited in labour contribution in the form of planting, watering, clearing, thinning, pruning, harvesting and fire wood collecting etc, in community forestry activities. Invitation to participate in the meeting and gatherings are often understood that they are for household heads (who are generally men). Women are not invited to the

meetings nor are they encouraged participating in them so long as male members in the household are around.

Everyone knows that Nepal is a patriarchal society where Nepalese women are strictly bound in social norms and values. They are not still carried out from the social boundary, nobody like women being a leader. Because of unable to speak, illiteracy women are cheated from family to community and community to National level.

5.2.2 Other Factors

There are other related factors, which are hindering in equal participation of male and female on community forestry program. These factors are as follows:

5.2.2.1 Social Norms and Values

From ancient time women have been considered as man's slave and given little opportunity to participate in activities outside the household sphere. Nepal is patriarchal society. Hindu social custom in Nepal is strictly governed by caste and the rigidity of the caste system impact falls more severally on women than on men. The cultural norms state that women should stay with in the household boundary. Hindu women are put under constant control of their men in different forms at different stages of life. In this regard Gurung and Banskota (1993) clear that women are believed to have their primary responsibilities in domestic chorus, farm activities, collection and utilization of forest products, raring and taking care of children as well as looking after the live stocks. Not only work spare but also the manners body, language, dressing pattern etc. The Bhirpati community is not out from the above social norms and values. These above maintained norms and values are the main hindrance factors for women's involvement in group meeting or social gatherings.

5.2.2.2 Household Work Burden

A research conducted on Nepali Women state that they work more (11 hrs.) than men do (7 hrs.). In this sense Acharya and Benett stated that women are responsible for all household chores and also for collecting firewood, fodder (Acharya and Benett, 1981). Besides these, women also help in agricultural works and if they have time engage in agricultural works and if they have time engage in government or private service also. From the field survey of Bhirpati community forest revealed that from early morning to the late evening woman are always engaged in work. Thus, they have little time to be engaged in other activities, how important it might be. In this

sense Ojha (1989) clearly states that also agrees that Nepalese women's work is harder than men. He further stated that the most tiring jobs i.e. Collecting fodder, cooking food, fuel and other products have traditionally been performed by women. Thus, women also avoided meetings and social gatherings because they do not wish to be bothered, as it would mean additional burden to their workload.

In Bhirpati community forest, most of the men users are farmers, some are retired from government service and some are engaged in government service. Even they have free time, they do not support to women in household work. They spend free time in teashop with chatting, playing card and talking in common hall. From the field survey, it is proved that every time they are talking in common hall with tea. Thus, the rural women have no time for extra activities like group meeting, social gatherings, and forest related activities.

5.2.2.3 Lack of Information

Field survey revealed that in Bhirpati CF, women's representation in meeting, social gathering about forest related activities are minimal because of the lack of information to them. In this regard, Chhetri and Pandey (1997) stated that lack of information is another responsible factor in participation of men and women in any development activities. Women often lack access to information of the meetings, which also counts, for their low participation. A study of Sindhupalanchok CF shows that in Daduwa (The Bahun-Chhetri village), it was also found that women have limited access to information related to CF activities. Men who attend meetings/public gatherings often did not communicate to their women about the important decisions made at meetings concerning forest related activities. In this sense, Shrestha (1992) reported that a similar finding in Nala village (Kabhre district) where she found that majority of women including wives of UGC members were not aware of user committee, their meeting dates and time. This study found out that the information sharing system is not effective because women don't get information about training, tour and meeting through they are actively participated in forest management activities. A woman user of Bhirpati community forest said that most often we do not get message about the meetings and trainings.

5.2.2.4 Age

Age is one of the major responsible factors in participation. From the field survey, it is revealed that the young generation users below the age of 35 years who are mostly busy in their study and service. They have limited time to contribute in community forest activities. They contribute their free time for community forestry activities. In Bhirpati community, most of the young are students and service holder (in Nepal and India) who are outside from the community. The respondents between ages 35 to 69 years are real users of the community forest whose participation and contribution in community forestry is found higher than other age group users. Users above 65 to 70 years age are unable to contribute due to their physical weakness. Due to age factor, many old users left user committee. However, the elderly users are placed in the position of advisor.

5.3 Attitude of Men towards Women in Participation of Community Forest Related Activities

In Bhirpati community, women are active in the participation of management, utilization, plantation and protection operation even they have household work burden. In working season of the forest, they wake up early in the morning to complete household work and then go to forest work. After returning from forest they work till late night. Their participation in forest operation is higher than men but low participation in-group meetings/social gatherings. Because of their lower participation, they have no role in decision-making. Men make decisions. Women's voice is not keep valued due to men's partial attitude. This is the real situation of the women Bhirpati community forest users. In this regard, Chhetri and Rana (1994) stated in case study that Nepalese society by its nature characterized as a male dominated society. In most of the community women are still deprived of basic right, which also implies they do not get benefits from most development activities. Men are main beneficiaries in every community/society. They again pointed out that women generally do not appear in the meetings/gatherings because they have heavier workload; are normally not invited in meetings; do not have a say in decision making because of their lower participation.

In this community, men have free time after finished outdoor activities: farm or office work. But women haven't leisure time at list to sit. They have heavier responsibilities of household chores like firewood collection, fodder collection, fetching water,

cleaning pots, washing cloth, kitchen work, looking after baby, farm work etc. Even men have leisure time, would not support/share in household workload to women. According to woman respondent "We are not free from household workload because we haven't got support in household work even from husband."

Women of this community are imposed by men in forest implementation work but hardly invited in meetings/social gatherings. In this sense, Van Eijhatten (1998) depicted that women are often excluded from the decision making process for various of means. This may be the inter alia, their work burden, their exclusion from committees their contribution at meetings not being value and domination by men at meeting.

It is generally recognized that women have an important role in to play in the "conservation and utilization" of the forest in terms of their labour. From the field survey revealed that we do not say day and night to do household work and forest management work but hardly invites in meetings, planning, decision-making process.

Analysing from the field survey data of this community, women expresses their feelings as generally, women are not invite in meetings/social gatherings because it is think by men that they are not representation at planning, decision-making level. They cannot provide decision contribute in planning and decision making due to this kind thought women haven't develop courage to participate in social gatherings.

5.3.1 Women in Decision Making of Bhirpati Community Forest

In Forest Executive Committee of Bhirpati, women members are high than men but women members are only 50% participate in monthly regular meeting which indicate men dominated committee. There are one dalit and one janajati members are kept in committee. Generally, their participation in committee meetings is low even they are user of the forest. Women participation in meeting is not keep value because of the low representation and capacity of women member. They have no role in decision making in meetings, their voice is not keep value.

5.3.2 Men's Attitude Presence not Emphases to Women in Group meeting and Social gathering

The research had been finding out that men do not emphasis/encourage women to go meeting. Woman also revealed that most of their men do not work at home, farm, and

forest because they work in office or farm. Men prefer to wander out side rather than staying home, share household work to women. This kind of attitude towards women would not encourage them to participate in meetings and social gatherings. In monthly meeting of forest user committee, women keep their voice/argument but men members do not keep value of their argument. The men members do not think, women also can do something, if we provide them an opportunity by empowering them.

Generally, the Secretary of forest user committee invites to participate in the meetings is often household head (who are generally men). Women are not invited to the meetings nor they are encouraged to participate to them so long as male members of the household are around.

5.3.3 Household Head's Attitude on Women in Meeting/Social Gathering

Bhirpati Community Forest user Committee meeting held once a month and they decide to call group meeting according to their needs. Generally in our society, it is the concept existing that head of the household are invited to attend meeting and public gathering, not invite to women.

According to male respondent, women are housewife. They don't have external knowledge, which is the thought of men that if they gathered at a single place, in meeting, they spend their time chatting, quarreling, and whispering each other. So, household head would not send their women in public gathering and meetings. It is generally know that household head would not share information decision made by the meetings in his house, the decision may be essential to listen every body. The study of this Community find out that household head would not provide information to his wife if she was invited in meetings. This kind of attitude of men towards women may be barrier for the development of community forestry program.

5.4 Impact of the Community Forestry Program

Bhirpati community Forest has brought great impact after the handed over in community forest. These are as follows.

5.4.1 Increased Workload to Women

From the field study of the study area Community, the data revealed that women have great contribution in management work. They have highly courageous participation in forest work, although they have household work burden. In this regard Acharya et.al. (1981) stated that men and women in Nepali village have culturally defined sphere of activities. The village women have heavier workload compared their men. Thocker et.al. (1993) also pointed out that women in Nepali village wakeup early morning and work at late night. Women are believed to have their primary responsibilities in domestic chores, farm activities, fuel wood collection, fodder collection and utilization of forest products, rearing and taking care of children, as well as looking often livestock, cooking, washing cloth, fetching water and engage in other business or service also.

Before the community forest program in Khaira, women have only household work and farm work and inspire time they were involved in other activities but often the community forest program. But now, they have extra workload added in household work like forest management works; Pruning, thinning, cleaning, fodder collection and protection also. A woman respondent said that "we women are dominated as a labour, we haven't time to rest also in working season. Even they have increased workload, they felt very easy to collect forest products like firewood, fodder and timer because of the thick forest. These products are easily accessible according to their need.

5.4.2 Changed in Forest Condition

Before handover the forest into user Group, condition of the forest was going to destroy day by day. Nobody showed attention to protect the forest. In every summer season the jungle was fired so the jungle was bare. According to a user respondent said that forest was so bare that grazing in the forest was seen far from village. At that time, to bring firewood and timber two hours walking distance from the village. Water catchments of the community were reducing day by day. Every year in the rainy season, the villagers suffer from flood and landslide due to bare jungle.

After hand over the forest in to community, the forest condition is so good. Now, the people understand the value of forest due to previous event. The management aspect of the forest is well because of the high participation of the users.

Table 5.7 Condition of the Forest Before and After the Community Forestry program

Before the Community Forestry Program	After the Community Forestry Program
) Forest was so bare therefore to bring fire wood and fodder two hours walking distance) Now, easily accessible firewood, fodder and timber.
) Increased soil erosion, landslide and flood) Soil erosion flood and landslide controlled.
) Water catchments was decreasing) Water catchments protected /increased.
) Wild animals and birds were decreasing in the jungle) Conservation/increased wild animals and birds
) Species were decreasing in the forest) Increased species in the forest.
) Medical plants were decreasing) Increased medical plants
) Forest becomes thick and beautiful.
) Increased grass due to increase forest.

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table indicates that before and after the condition of the forest. A woman respondent said before, the jungle was bare. During these days firewood, fodder, grass was limited, because of the open forest. Nowadays, the forest seems very beautiful and thick because of the strick rules and has developed the feeling of belongings in all users.

5.4.3 Available of Pure Drinking Water Supply

Before community forestry program, drinking water sources were reduced due to the forest bare. There was no water taps but there were small Kuwas in summer season, there was lack of water for drinking. A male respondent said that before the forest was dense, we were suffering from drinking water but now there is availability of clean drinking water. Now a day, sources of water are increased because of forest thick..

5.4.4 Institutional Development

The users of Bhirpati community forest are organized in a group. The major income source of the group is user's raising money, and forest products. The users are tied in rules and regulation. Users are engaged in community development with active participation. The inter relationship among the users build 'we' feeling notion. The forest user group used the collective fund according to their group decision. The group assets utilize in different field like forest management work, to buy equipments, plantation, to control soil erosion, landslide control, flood control and community

development activities. Institutional condition of Bhirpati Community forest is as follows

5.4.4.1 Office

CFUG have no own office building. They manage by rent. The office of the community forest is the central of the community. Committee meeting held in the office room and other group meeting, general assembly and other meetings are held in community building and open lawn. In these activities, active participation of the community people.

5.4.4.2 Group Property

Bhirpati Community forest users group has group assets. They collected the common property in fund. They use this fund in various activities. They collected group property like cooking utensils, streture for sick people carrying into hospital, tent, furniture etc. This is one of the drastic changes of community.

5.4.4.3 Bank Balance

Bhirpati community forest users are organized in a group. The income source of the user group is the forest products, users raising money and paying charge by the users etc. According to focus group discussion they use this fund in different activities and deposited in bank account. According to community forestry rules, the collective fund divided into various activities by percent wise. 25% of the total fund is used in forest to control soil erosion, flood and landslide control, seeding, plantation, 40% of the total fund mobilized in community development field and rest of all is deposited in bank.

Chapter- VI

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

In Nepal, community forestry describes the situation where forests are controlled and managed as common property by groups of rural people who agree to use them to support their farms, households and communities. Groups of people who have mutually recognized rights to use a particular forest, known as forest user group (FUG) negotiate agreements with the department of forest (DOF) about how the communities forest will be manage. The forest user groups are given ownership of the forests; they can take responsibility for protecting, managing harvesting and regenerating forests.

Community Forest is a participatory approach in which the local users of the forest are involved in planning, decision-making, implementation, protection, management and use of the forest resources. Some researcher has pointed out problems in community forestry program with related to gender participation level and participation of poor people in community forestry. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct in-depth study on these issues of community forestry program.

The main objectives of this research study were: to examine the level of participation of men and women in forest executive committee meeting, group meeting, training, utilization and management of forest, to find out the factor affecting their level of participation, to trace out the attitude of men towards women in participation and to access the impact of the community forestry program. For this study, Bhirpati community forest of Khaira VDC of Pyuthan District was selected as a research area. Twenty-six household members of Bhirpati community forest were taken as sample and other key informants, like teacher, ranger, forest officiar and local leader were consulted. Tools like observation, formal and informal discussion, were use to collect the necessary information. For more information primary as well as secondary data were collected. Qualitative data's were analyzed based on descriptive design. Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed with simple statistical tools.

Bhirpati Community Forest User Group consists multiethnic caste group where Brahmin, Chhetri, Dhimi (janajati), Magar and Dalit are working together. However, Brahmin and Chhetri are in majority and dalit and janajati are in minority.

Bhirpati Community Forest is also known as one of the best community forest in Pyuthan where people's participation in management protection and utilization is satisfactory. Women participation in executive committee, management work, protection and utilization of the forest is higher than men but women are less benefited from community forestry program.

The major finding of the study has shown that the level of participation of group meeting, social gatherings, tour, workshop, management and in protection work is not satisfactory. However, womens participation in the activities like executive committee, management, protection, and utilization is high but low in group meeting, tour, and training. It is proved that women are imposed as a "labour" not keeping in planning, decision-making and monitoring and evaluation level. In Bhirpati community forest, women's participation in meeting/decision making, training, tour, and workshop is less due to household work burden. They haven't get free time as men for social gathering and meetings. Their participation in meetings, social gathering and decision-making process is not keep valued by men. So women members have had grievance about practical attitude of men towards them to provide equal opportunities in the decision-making activities of community forest.

The finding reveals that several factors are hindering to participate rural men and women in participation of community forest related activities. Lack of illiteracy, poverty, family size, age, gender, social value and norms household work burden, lack of information are the major hindering factors in participation of rural men and women in CF program. Dalit and janajatis are unable to pay nominal price for firewood and timber due to poor economic status. So dalit and janajati lacks access to participate in community forest.

After the implementation of community forestry program, the community people of study area realized some positive changes in forest condition. However women's workload has increased after the CF program because they have to engage in both forest management and household work. They haven't get time to participate in other activates. They do not get support in household work so they have extra workload.

The forest became thick. Verities of plant species are increased. Wild animals and birds are increased in the forest. With the active participation of the users there is drastic change in forest condition. The income from the forest products are collected as fund and deposited in bank. Users are organized in a group and mobilize the income in tree plantation. Soil erosion, flood and landslide has been controlled and the collective fund by the users mobilized in community development activities From the collective fund, they collected group property like cooking utensils, tents, stature.

In conclusion, in Bhirpati community forest women are not treated equally as they do not get equal opportunities in planning, decision making and training activities of community forest. Women are realized increasing extra workload after the community forest program. Therefore there is lake of balance participation of men and women in each activities like planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation (Seminar, tour and training), which is very important for the development of community forestry program.

6.2 Recommendations

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

-)] Bring out the clear policy, rules and act in community forest constitution about the equal participation from women in planning, decision-making, benefit sharing, monitoring and evaluation process.
-)] Reduce women's actual work burden and sensitize men the role of women in community forest and sensitize them about women's workload to allow better equal right.
-)] Need of gender equity and equality concept to the users and provide training opportunity to women so that women would be empowered and skilled.
-)] More extensive awareness and communication training should be conducted by the District Forest Office to make active to passive users. Lower caste and ethnic group should be given priority to participate in user committee to avoid caste discrimination
-)] Forest user committee, forest user group and assemblies should change the existing rules and regulation of one representative from one household to the compulsory participation of all users in group meetings or assemblies for higher participation.
-)] Forest user group should develop their relation with other NGOs, cooperative

working in Khaira VDC through which they can get support in forest development activities.

-) It is necessary to provide trainings like leadership empowerment, account training to women so that they can come forward in development activities, they can mobilize community people if they get chance.
-) District forest office staffs must be conscious in gender issues. Office staffs should promote to women users for extra activities of community forestry like social gatherings, group meetings, tour and trainings.
-) The forest office should evaluate the social problems that are hindering to participation to rural men and women.
-) Sustainable of CFD materialize with gender equity and among the members/users of CF.

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Annex - I

Questionnaire for Household Survey

A Gender Prespective Analysis of Participation in community Forest (A Case Study of Bhirpeti Community Forest of Khaira VDC in Pyuthan District.).

Section- One General Information

Date:

- 1.1 Name of the respondent:
 1.2 VDC:
 1.3 Age: 1.4 Ward No:
 1.5 Sex: 1.6 Name of settlement:
 1.7 Religion: 1.8 Name of household head:
 1.9 Name of community forest:

Section: Two Educational and Demographic Status

2.1 Give information of you and your family about educational status.

S · N	Name of member of househo ld	Age	Sex		Relation to household head	Educational Status							Type of School Attendant	
			M	F		I L	L I	P	L S	S	H E	If continue to study (Level)	Boarding school	Public school
1														
2														
3														
4														
5														
6														

F= Female, M= Male, IL= Illiterate, LI= Literate, P= Primary, LS= Lower Secondary, S= Secondary, HE= Higher Education.

2.2 Has any member of household received any non formal education ?

Yes () No ()

If yes

a) Name of the member:

b) Type of non formal education:

i) Women education program

ii) Adult literacy program

iii) Others.....

d) Can you read and write? yes () No ()

Section Three (Economic Status)

3.1 How much land does your family have?

a) Below 5 Ropani

b) 6-10 Ropani

- c) 11-15 Ropani
 d) 16-20 Ropani
 e) Above 20 Ropani
- 3.2 Who owned the land?
 i) Male ii) Female iii) Both
- 3.3 For how many months was your family supported by food of your own agricultural production?
 a) Less than 3 months b) 4-6 months c) 7-9 months
 d) 10-11 months e) Whole 12 months
- 3.4 If your agricultural production is insufficient for whole year, How do you manage for the rest of months?
 (Please specify)
- 3.5 Give an information about livestock and poultry of your family.

Type of livestock and poultry \ Ownership	Cows	Oxen	Buffaloes	Goats	Sheep	Duck/ Hen	Pigs	Others
Self ownership								
Ownership provided to others								
Ownership of others								
Total number								

Give the information about occupational status of your family members

S.N.	Name of member	Sex		Type of occupation	Employer	Income per month	Nature of occupation	
		Male	Female				Permanent	Temporary
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								

Section Four (Community Forest)

4.1 Is your family member elected as a member of executive committee of community forest?

If yes

Name of member.....

Sex: a) Male (b) Female

post :

4.2 Is your family member regularly attended in monthly meeting?

a)Yes b) No

If no

Please specify the generic reason.....

-
- 4.3 Is your family member regularly attended in General assembly/Group meeting?
 a)Yes b) No
 If yes: a) Male (b) Female
 If no
 Please specify the generic reason.....

- 4.4 If female member of your family participated in general assembly and executive committee meeting, what are the main role and responsibilities of her in planning, decision making, policy making etc.? Please specify

- 4.5 Who involved from your family in different training related to community forest?
 Name of training.....
 Sex: a) Male (b) Female
 if male
 why not female? please specify.....
- 5.6 Is member of community forest sharing the knowledge to others after attended the training/seminar related to community forest?
 a) Yes b)No
 if no why ?
- 4.6 Have your consumer group organized plantation program in your community forest
 a)Yes b)No
 if yes
 who participated in program?
 a) male b) female
 if male
 why not female? please specify.....
- 4.7 who participated in forest management activities like –thinning, pruning, clearing and weeding of bushes?
 a) male b) female
 if male
 why not female? Please specify.....
- 4.7 In your opinion what are the hindering factors for participation of women in various community forest activities?
 Please specify.....
- 4.8 How many times in a day a female member of your family involved in household chores ?
- 4.9 How many times in a day a male member of your family helps to female in household chores ?
- 4.10 What are the male’s attitude towards the female participation in various activities of community forest?

- 4.11 What are the main production of your community forest?
 a) b) c) d)
 e) f)
- 4.12 Have you consumed these productions?

- a) Yes b) No
- if no why?
- a) due to poor economic status
- b) not needed
- c) any other reasons
- 4.13 what are the income sources of community forest?
 - a)b).....
 - c)d).....
- 4.14 Do you know how many rupees have been collected in your fund?
 - a) Yes b)No
 - if yes how much money.....
 - if no why?.....
- 4.15 What is the provision of fund mobilization?
 -
- 4.14 What are the selling provisions of forest production within consumer group?
 -
- 4.15 What are the selling provisions of forest production outside the consumer group?
 -
- 4.16 What is the rule of community to care the community forest?
 -
- 4.17 What are the major impact of community forest on your family and community?
 - a) b) c) d) e)

Check list for focus group discussion/ Key Informant Interview

1. What is the area of community forest with it's boundary?
2. When did your community forest handover to your community?
3. When did community forest action plan was renewed?
4. What is the meeting schedule of executive committee?
5. What is the meeting schedule of general assembly?
6. What is the female percentage in executive committee?
7. What is the female participation in regular executive meeting?
8. What is the female participation in regular general assembly?
9. How many people attended in general assembly?
10. What are role and responsibilities of female in planning, policy and decision making?
11. What are role and responsibilities of female in forest protection and management?
12. What kinds of animal, birds and plant found in your forest?
13. What are the main income sources of community forest?
14. What are the sectors of fund mobilization? And what are their percentages?
15. What are the major impact of community forest in community and environment after it's protection?
16. Has your community forest received sufficient support form District Forest Office?
17. What is the rule of your community to care forest?
18. What is the condition of office management?
