

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal occupies 0.09 percent of earth surface but it provides home for 2.7 percent of birds and 4.5 percent of mammals of the world (GoN\MFSC2002). It is estimated that about 29 percent of the total surface area is under forest cover which includes 35 different forest types. (DFRS, 1999 and Stainton, 1972) Functional role of forest in rural areas includes producing basic household consumptive goods, factor of production and basic life supporting services. Out of total forest area, almost two-third forests are being managed as state managed and remaining is managed by local institution under participatory forest management regimes. Rural people believe that their rights in resource is more secured if it is owned by them as a common property. Nepal is one of the least developed countries in the world. It is characterized by its mountainous terrain which makes basic infrastructure and communication development difficult. A forest resource in Nepal is an integral part of life supporting system. Forest resources of Nepal has been playing vital role in the daily life of people with 96 percent of the rural population by using fuel wood, timber, wood fiber, medicine and compost manure. About 85 percent of the energy need of people is being provided by fuel wood from forest of Nepal. (Nepalese Journal of RD,2009)

Forest is one of the important natural resources for raising socio-economic status of the local people. Forest directly fulfills forest related substitutions needs of women, poor and backward people. Forest has been providing inputs for agriculture, livestock and it supplies medicinal herbs, timber and non timber forest products. It also conserves watersheds, improves the conditions of the soil, and provides recreation for tourists through forest based eco-tourism, and national parks and wild life reserves. Similarly, it is providing a habitat for

flora and fauna. Furthermore, it has been providing raw materials for forest related industries. (Acharya, KP,2001)

Community forest is protected, managed and utilized by local forest user group. It has been realized that users are the key managers of forest resources. Among them, women have main responsibility in implementing and managing the community forest activities. The participation of women in the utilization of forest product is usually more than male. After the participation of women in community forest management, there have been many changes in this sector. Thus, women are the key players in flourishing the management of community forest in Nepal. (Acharya, KP,2001)

Nepal is very rich in terms of forest resources and biodiversity. A vast majority of the population, about 90 percent of total, is directly involved in managing forest as part of their everyday life. The forest resource has made a significant contribution to economic and social development of the country. At the beginning when the size of population was small as compared to the vast area of forest, felling of trees cannot produce any adverse effect on environment and the socio-economy. The rapid growth in population resulted multifarious impact. The rapid socio-economic changes in Nepal have placed a new demand on forest resources. People are cutting trees for expanding their agricultural land. So Nepal's forests are gradually disappearing causing a major ecological crisis. (The Tenth Plan, HMG Nepal/NPC,2002)

Nepal's forest is decreasing (approximately by 35 – 29 percent out of the total land area of 1, 47,181 sq. km of Nepal) in both quantity and quality over the last two decades. Considering the rapid declination of forest, then HMG/N implemented many forest programs since 1978 to date. The Community Forestry and Forestation Division (CFAD) were initiated in 1979. Nowadays the community program is received highest priority in the forestry sector in Nepal. Thus sustainable use of forest resources has become a great concern in

Nepal for socio-economic development as well as ecological balance of the region. (Master Plan for Forestry Sector, 1998)

Community forest is the control, management and use of forest resources by the villagers for their own benefit of the society as a whole. It aims to ensure equitable access to forest products without over exploiting the forest resources. A community forest is the section of national forest that is handed over to a group of user households for control, proper management and sustainable use for the group benefit. The villagers can either use the products or sell them without damaging the forests. The income derived from the sale of forest products will go the Forest User Group's fund. Decision about the management of forests resources within the community forest is made by the user's committee. The forest department gives only technical and financial support. (HMG Nepal 1997, Forest Development)

After the hand over of National Forest to local people, they have the full authority to use, protect and manage the forest in their own way so that they can fulfill their basic needs for firewood, timber and other forest products in a sustainable manner. Although, the forest resources offered livelihood security and earning opportunities for many people in the terai, the aspect of women's participation in community forest management remain an important issue because women are basically the collectors, managers and users of the forest in the rural society. (Bista , S. 1997)

Community forestry in Nepal devolves management and use rights of forests to local groups of users. Access to forests is important because they are central to farming systems and more than 80 percent of Nepal's population of 23 million is dependent on agriculture. Fuel wood supplies over 75 percent of the country's energy requirements (CBS 1995). Moreover, forests play a critical role in the agro ecological cycle of cropping patterns, animal husbandry and forest products that sustains agricultural production. Community forest in Nepal was formally introduced in 1978 AD. Community forest has been

defined as "Control, protection and management of local forest by local communities known as user groups." The main objective of the community forest is to achieve sustainable forest resources by converting accessible national forests into community forests in stages.

"Green forest is the wealth of Nepal" (Hariyo Ban Nepal KO Dhan) was a popular slogan in Nepal before 2036 BS. because forests, the renewable natural endowments of Nepal were and still are important for the country, state and the people. Till 1950, the commercial exploitation of hard wood from the Terai forest was a major source of revenue for the state. The revenue collected from the sale of forest products was estimated to have amounted to about 40 percent of the national income during the nineteenth century. (Bajracharya,1993)

Since, Community forestry program is people oriented program and its success depends on the active people's participation, there is need for more research both on technical and social aspects. The technical aspects include forest user group and their culture, social norms, interest, religion, need etc. Both aspects should be considered equally because they impact each other and consequently reflect the success of community forestry. In this regard study of people's participation in community forestry is very important, which allows to evaluate the success rate of the program. In this respect, people's participation in community forestry which considers the institutional and decision making processes, affecting factors of participation of users was studied in Ratuwa Mai community forestry of Topgachhi VDC of Jhapa district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Male and female are the two wheels of any development model. In the context of Nepal, female occupies more than 50 percent of population and even they are excluded in the participation in development activities. Similarly, this problem also exists in community forest. Many case studies and literatures

reveal that the participation of female in community forestry is negligible and without participation of women, development activities become top down. The researcher recognizes the importance of equal participation of male and female in community forest management. In Nepal, more than 81 percent of total population is involved in agriculture in which more than half are women. As forest and agriculture are closely interrelated, more than half of the populations, female are involved in agriculture. Thus participation of women in community forest is unavoidable. (The Tenth Plan, HMG/NPC, 2002)

Almost every rural household in Nepal is dependent on wood for cooking and heating, and on forestland for feeding their domestic animals. The infinite variety of combinations of culture, caste, personalities and traditional forest management practices found in Nepal produces unpredictable results. This means that an effective forestry solution from one area can't automatically be applied to another situation without adaptation. Having such a major concern in the appropriate forest management, a community forestry intervention was a very effective way to reach out the mass population of Nepal. Our social-norms and system has shaped women as the final and ultimate users of forest product. The management of firewood, fodder, litters, etc. has been managed by women. For enhancing the present management system and to achieve sustainable management of the women's role can't be overestimated especially in rural Nepal.

Research on the participation of women in community forestry is a relatively recent thrust in community based forest management. In the context of women's participation in CF management only since few years back. Women users face several difficulties, particularly lack of faith in their own activities, ineffective penalty, enforcement and delay in effective forest management works. Similarly insufficient resources can't meet the demand of women. In male dominated society females are always dominated by male for their participation in CF management.

Not only participation of ethnic group but also the participation of women users may help in the success of community forestry as they are the major collectors of forest. However, most of the women are not directly involved in decision making and their involvement is found not satisfactory. In this respect, women in executive committee are kept just to fulfill the government norms. Thus, they are not actively involved in major decision making meeting.

A micro level analysis of women's participatory approach in development efforts must be placed emphasis. By promoting self- dependence of the people and mobilizing active participation of women in managing forest resources is vital. In this context, to examine the women's role in community forest management and development including their constraints and management are the major problems of the study.

Thus, to solve the problem of declining forest, only government efforts are not sufficient. For this, women should be made aware and conscious for their active participation in community forest management. In Nepal, about 84 percent of the fuel wood is collected by women and children (FAO, 1991). Thus, the participation of women can play a vital role in forest management, as they are the main users of forest product.

There are still many problems seen in community forestry program. Most of the researcher pointed out that the ignorance of local factor of presence of different ethnic composition with different interest, lack of their role in decision making and less or lack of awareness of the interest groups in community forestry development are main reasons for the less participation of users in community forestry.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to analyze the women's participation in forest management and their role in managing forest resources. However, the specific objectives of the study are:

-) To identify the process of Community Forest User's Group (CFUG) formation and development.
-) To find out the effectiveness of women's participation in decision making process in community forest management.
-) To find out the factors affecting in women's participation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is based on the participation of the women in community forestry. Because women are the active users and members of most of the community forests. Thus, women are playing an important role in sustainable development of community forests. However, their role is neither properly identified nor explored. This study has attempted to explore and analyze the women's role in community forestry for its sustainable development. Further, it also highlighted the constraints on maximum female participation community forestry and focuses on possible ways for solving it. In the context of Nepal, women's participation, People's participation and Dalit's participation are popularly used terms in these days. To enter in the main stream of the development and for equitable development people's participation, especially the female participation is essential.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study basically attempts to access the participation of women and their role in community forestry. This study is based on and limited to the forest users group of Ratuwa Mai community forest of Topgachhi VDC of Jhapa District. Thus, study will focus on the theoretical and practical aspect of

community forestry, women's status, and their role. The conclusions and findings of this study might not be generalized and applicable to the other parts of the country. So this study has some limitation as mentioned below.

1. This research was concentrated only on Ratuwa Mai community forest among many community forest of Jhapa Districts.
2. This research has done by student researcher for the partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. degree in rural development. So it has limited economic source, limited time and limited manpower for the extensive study.
3. In this study primary and secondary data have been used to analyze but primary data is given more priority than the secondary data collection.
4. The respondent were only those who were involved in community forest activities.
5. The outcomes and recommendations of the study may not be applicable to all cases all over the nation.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This thesis paper has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introductory part of the study in which the researcher has tried to explain some basic facts about the introduction of community forestry in Nepal, its emergence and development etc.

Literature reviews have been gathered in chapter two where some of the literatures regarding concept and development of CF in Nepal are mentioned as well as its growing popularity and importance of CF and people's participation in CF has been elaborated.

The third chapter is basically focuses on the methodology of the study. In the beginning, an attempt has been made to describe the study district itself including its geography, population, infrastructure, climatic situation etc. Right after that a quick description has been presented on the study site that is located in Topgachhi VDC-8 of Jhapa district. At the end of the chapter, nature and source of data has been put here also sample selected for the study has been explained.

In fourth chapter of the study, tabulation, pie-diagram and data analysis has been made mostly based on the primary data as well as secondary data and statistical tools like mean, mode, medium etc are also used to analyzed the data. Some tables namely major benefits that the users get from the CF; women's role in CF management; participation of women in CFUG and CF executive committee; factors affecting the active participation of women; how often women participate in CFUG meetings and at last key informant's view on women participation in CF activities have been presented in this chapter.

At the end, of the chapter five it deals with the conclusions, findings and recommendations of the study in which conclusions, findings and recommendations are presented in different sub-headings.

CHAPTER - II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Situation of Forest in Nepal

The first scientific measurement of Nepal's forest resources often called the "1964 Survey" where was carried out at the beginning in 1963 by the forest resource survey office of the department of forestry assisted by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID). The result of the 1964 survey must be regarded as rough estimates at best. This survey was based on aerial photograph taken over a 15 years period 1953 to 1967 and adjust by strip photographs covering 10 percent of the surveyed area. The main objective of the survey was to assess the forest area of Nepal .

Wallace, M. B. (1981) said that based on the result of the 1964 survey, the total area of the forest (excluding the high Himalayan area) was estimated to be 6.4 million hectare these were 1.8 million hectare in Terai and 4.6 million hectare in hills. 1,88,00 hectare reduced the forest of Nepal during the period of 1978 to 1986 which comes 0.5 percent annual rate during this period. The master plan for forestry sector (1998) described in regard of deforestation causes in Nepal that increasing numbers of people and their corresponding needs of fuel wood, fodder, food, and timber are prime factors of deforestation.

According to Forest Department (1997), since 1978 HMGN has been implemented community forestry program and the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, 1998 has placed it as major program in forestry sector. There were 61 percent (35, 61, 600 hectare) of the total forests of Nepal under potential community forests. Also the community and private Forest Division of the Department of Forests reports that 3, 45,914 hectare of forests has been handed over to 5,277 forest user groups which include 5,52,034 households as beneficiaries by July 1997.

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, 1998 primarily aims to supply forestry related basic needs, firewood, timber and fodder and to conserve environment and genetic resources. The Plan set up the physical targets of the Community and Private forestry program includes firewood, timber and fodder production by establishing community and private forests through public participation and distribution of improved stoves.

According to Forest Rules (1995), Government forests are being handed over to the forest user groups as community forests with the constitution and operational plan. Forest Department has produced Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Community Forestry. The Guideline allows field staff to work closely with the local community in identifying forest users and support to prepare constitution, preparing operational plan, handing over the responsibility of managing community forests, implementing the plan and review.

According to Jackson, W. J. and Ingles, A (1995), the operational planning processes are divided into 4 phases, investigation, negotiation, implementation, and review. After collecting social bio-physical about the local forest, field workers and forest users negotiate to prepare operational plans.

2.2 Concept of the Community Forestry

Community forestry Programs is being implemented in Nepal over the last 2 decades covering 74 districts. In the present context it is the most focused and prioritized program of the forestry sector. Various donor agencies are providing financial and technical assistance to community forestry program through the government of Nepal.

Community forestry is an approach to forest management intended primarily to benefit the local users of forests. The main objectives of the community forestry program is to involve and participate community members in the conservation and management of natural resources in a sustainable manner in-

order to fulfill the daily requirements of fodder, forages, bedding materials for animals, firewood and timber. The community forestry program is aimed at community development and particularly at meeting the household needs. Irrespective of socio-economic status of the community members those who are traditional users of forest and are willing to manage it are regarded as legal forest users and the forest area adjoining the settlement is formally handed over to them.

Despite of fulfilling the basic household requirement from the forestry, it has also been encouraged to user groups to generating income from the sale of forest products. In this program, all the activities are carried out by the forestry users group through its long term forest operational plan. Operational plan for forest management is prepared in consultation with district forest office. Community forestry user groups are needed to be registered in the district forest offices under the community forestry act. The legal hand-over of the community forestry to users group is undertaken after the legal registration process is completed. Moreover, after the legal registration of community forestry user groups these groups are independent legal institutions for managing community forest resources according to the needs of the users. As institutions, forestry users group should have their own goals, plans and activities to fulfill the needs, with monitoring and evaluation as a crucial function to assess progress and make plans accordingly.

According to Gurung, G. P. (1995) The Forest Nationalization Act (1957) led to the shift of the ownership and control of forest resources from the people to the government and accelerated the loss of bio-diversity. Maharjan, M. R (1998) said that In order to empower the FUGs to manage community forests on an equitable and sustainable basis, the government has introduced progressive New Forest Acts (1992) and By- Laws (1995). The planning and development of community forestry is a complex process governed by socio-economic, political, ecological, technical and administrative factors.

Shrestha, N. Kazi and Charla Britt (1997) opines that Community forestry in Nepal is a model program for the forestry sector throughout the world. According to Maharjan, M.R. (1993), Community forestry was the control and sustainable management of local forest resources, by those who use these resources in multidimensional ways for their welfare on an equitable and sustainable basis.

According to Bajracharya, Deepak (1983), People need fuel-wood for cooking and heating, poles fencing and timber for house construction etc. In the same moment, they also need to clear forest land for producing food grains as rice, millet and maize and fodder for livestock. Gurugharana, K. K.(1990) opines that the demand of such forest products excess the supplying capacity of the forest due to the diminishing regenerating process of the forest due to heavy pressure of population over it. Gurugharana also opines that changing perceptions of the parameter of community forestry activities in Nepal have emerged in four main phases – to date: firstly, in terms of realizing the primacy of people in relation to management interactions with forest and trees, secondly, through acknowledging the importance of the farm forest cycle of resource generation and use in meeting basic needs for household subsistence strategies; thirdly, by recognizing emerging income generation activities, and the need for equity in distribution and remuneration between individuals, households, and markets; and fourthly, by endorsing steps to increase communication between forest users, and to use new emerging forest user networks as platforms for communicating new ideas, disseminating information, sharing productive material and collectively voicing concerns about resource related policies and activities.

According to Development Alternative Nepal (1992), indigenous forest management systems have become the basis for the present day community forestry program. Officially, Community Forestry program has launched in 1979/80. All the 75 district forest offices prepared the District Management Schemes in 1988/99 to fulfill the requirement of the master plan, the objective

of the plans were to increase productivity of the forests. In 1994/95, many of the offices revised the updated and prepared five-year plan; these objectives can meet basic needs and reducing poverty, which come under socio-economic goals of sustainable development. Based on field experience, Jackson and Ingles (1995) suggested introducing planning at the range post level. The authors mentioned that the aim of the range post planning is to link the capacity and interest of local people with national objectives for forest development.

The Community Forestry Program in Nepal is an innovative program being used by HMG to build capacity within communities to manage local forests in a sustainable way for their own development. In this program there is a direct link between community development and forest conservation.

The community forest user group prepares an Operation Plan (OP) to fix the rules of the management of their community forest. This OP is an important document to ensure sustainable development of the forest. The Following conservation measures are commonly found in the operation plans.

- Conservation of depleting plant and animal species in community forest.
- Prohibition to wildlife hunting.
- Forest encroachment control.
- Conservation of soil erosion inclined area and source area of drinking water.

Besides these common measures some especial provisions are made by users in their OP in order to conserve forest resources to maintain bio-diversity indirectly. The forest management practices are evolving from protection oriented to production-oriented management with diversification of species.

2.3 Importance of the Community Forestry

Some of the important features of community forestry policy are as follows:

- All the accessible forests can be handed over to users (no area limit)

- The forest user groups (FUGs) have to manage the forest as per the approved constitution and operational plan.
- Any National forests suitable to be converted into community forest (CF) will not be assigned to other such as leasehold forest.
- District can use surplus funds in any kinds of community development works.
- The FUG can fix the price of forestry products irrespective of government's royalty.
- The FUG can plant long term cash crops without disturbing the main forestry.
- FUG can transport any forest products simply by informing the DFO.
- FUG will not be disturbed by political boundary while handing over the forests.
- The FUG can establish forest based industries.
- FUG can punish miss-users who offend against the rules of OP

(Adopted from Joshi, 1997)

Community Forestry programmer was formally launched in Nepal in 1978 with the enactment of Panchayat Forest Rules and Panchayat Protected Forest Rules (Mathema et al 1999) . The Community Forest policy and legislation has been continuously reformed over time. These reforms have been recognized the use rights of the local people in the management of forest resources and established them as manager. The Forest Act 1993 provides full authority to the users for management of forest resources and the resources managing institutions to the users. It can be regarded as the top end of the continuum in the scale of co - management spectrum between the Government and the users. It recognizes the dominant role of local people in decision -making process and provides grounds for benefiting local people for forest management. The spirit of the new CF legislation in Nepal is the development of a partnership between the organized local communities and the Government. The community institutions called Community Forest Users Groups (CFUG) represent the

user's community and are legally authorized to take management decision. (Bartlett 1992).

Nepal is regarded as one of the pioneer countries to embrace community forestry in its national forest policy. This programme has received highest priority within the forestry sector in Nepal and is regarded as one of the most successful programmes in Nepal (Nightingale 2002; NPC 2001; Springate-Baginski et al 1999). By the end of December 2008, about 1.3 million hectare forest area has been handed over to 14500 of CFUGs involving 1.7 million households (DoF 2008). This represents about 30 percent of potential community forest area of the country (DoF 2008). Recent studies have claimed that CFUGs have been established as a grassroots level institution for managing forest resources to improve livelihoods of forest users of Nepal (Sharma 2008).

However, at the same time many believe that community forest management is protection-oriented where the main forest management activities are limited to the removal of dead, dying trees and leaf litter. As a consequence the users are getting sub-optimal benefits (NPC 2001; Shrestha 2000; Branney 1996, 1994 and 1994; Showering 1994; Chhetri and Pandey 1992; Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Recently, it has been estimated that active forest management could increase forest products supplies and take-off level of wood for example by 100 percent (FFMP 2000) and in this situation community forest management will reduce the pressure on deforestation and degradation of forest resources. In addition, the dominance of local elite and wealthier families in decision making process and benefit sharing process has marginalized the rights of weaker section of the community (Timsina 2002; Malla 2001). Many studies have been conducted on various dimensions community forestry focused on social and policy aspects. Study on assessing overall impacts of community forest management on Nepal is lacking. Realizing this, the Department of Forest Research and Survey (DERS) initiated a study to identify the impact of community forestry on environment and rural livelihoods.

Community forestry was originally conceived to protect forest and fulfill the basic needs of forest products for the local population (Shrestha and Shrestha, 2000). Conservation and protection of the forest can be taken as major success of community forestry. Forest status and condition need to be assessed for better management of the forest. It is needed to ensure that the productivity of community forests does not decline further, but is maintained or even improved. Users have requirement of particular forest products of specific quality and quantity (Varughese, 1999). Community forestry has made substantial progress in terms of handing over of forests since its inception. By 7 April 2004, over 1.065 million hectares of forest area had been handed over to 13,125 forest user groups (FUG database, CFD, 2004).

Adhering to the policy of the community forestry programmer, all accessible forest can be handed over by District Forest Office to the legitimate users in the form of community forest, in order to manage and use such forest according to a simple operational plan. The Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is officially recognized and authorized to sell and distribute the forest products by independently fixing their prices. Therefore, Forest Act 1993 empowers local people for their participation in decision-making and sharing of benefits in terms of forest resources. Nowadays, CFUGs are showing great concern and interest to protect, manage and utilize their forest. The condition of the forests, which are handed over to, CFUGs is therefore improving considerably (Lamichhane et al., 2000). Varghese and Ostrom (2001) pointed out that forest condition is strongly associated with collective activity. A study done by Branney and Yadav (1998) revealed that there are significant changes taking place in forest condition following handover to CFUGs. From their study, it was found that forest condition is improving particularly in relation to the number and growth of young stems, which, if present trends continue, will serve to regenerate the forest. Several studies argue that community forestry has been successful in improving the conditions of the people and the forests in the Nepal middle hills (Gautam, 2002). Rapid improvement in the forest to the

local communities, which can be exemplified from the fact that species compositions of flora and fauna, and crown coverage significantly revived in the community forests (Kanel and Kandel, 2004; Sigdel, 2004).

Community forestry programmer is moving progressively in Nepal with satisfactorily. The forest act 1993 and regulation 1995 has been helping to promote and consolidate the progress of community forestry through concern users. At present CFUG database show that 14500 user groups are managing 1.3 million hectare of Nepalese forest land as community forest through involvement of 1.7 million households. It has been estimated that 3.56 million hectare of forest land of Nepal can be put under Community Forestry.

2.4 Women's participation in Community Forestry

Women's lives are the most seriously affected by environmental damage and the shortage of forest products. Women, together with their children, are main collectors of fuel and other forest products such as animal fodder and leaf compost. They also take primary responsibility for herding family livestock, including cattle, sheep and goat. Women's roles in the collection of forest products must be seen in the context of their other household responsibilities. While women are not as active in the cash economy as men recent studied employing data on family time allocation have realistic estimates of rural women's overall contribution to the household economy. In study carried out in 8 villages, women's total time in village work was found to be approximately 11 hours daily, as compared to approximately 8 hours for men. Looking at wage earning and household subsistence production, women contributed 50 percent to total household income with boys and girls contributing 6 percent and adult males 44 percent.

Several factors explain the differences between male and female workloads. First, in addition to agricultural and animal husbandry responsibilities, women have primary responsibility for food processing, fuel and fodder collection and domestic chores, including cooking and child care. Second, in many

households men have migrated to other parts of Nepal or to India in search of wage labor and temporary employment to supplement household's income. The women then must assume a greater proportion of the agricultural tasks as well. After participation of women in Community Forest management there have been sincere for their work. After their participation, protection and development of forest was found good. So women play a vital role for management of forest.

Bista, S. (1997) opines that women users have main role in implementing community forest activities. Participation of women in the utilization of forest commodities is usually more. Therefore, new rules and regulation of community forestry of HMG/N has made a provision to include at least one third of women member in community forestry. Pandey, T.R says that participation of female members in decision-making activities was rather low even among the active groups of forest users.

In rural village, the deforestation exacts it is exaction in time and food, villagers who once spent 1 or 2 hours a day collecting and carrying firewood must now devote the whole day to this arduous task. The estimates suggest on average of about 77 days per household per year in fuel-wood collection and the average time required for collecting 25-30 kilograms of fuel-wood in the hills is about 5 hours which is twice the amount of time spent 10 years ago.

According to Gurung, D. ICIMOD (1997), the local socio-cultural practices and men dominant society marginalized their input on the community forest management role. The 'heavy work burden of village women that they get very little spare time to participate in community and village level development activities on a regular basis. In general, their participation is limited to labor such as carrying seedlings, pitting, planting, weeding and forest clean-up activities; few women have the time to attend user group assemblies and meeting during the day time. Although, major decisions among are made not by the FUG committee alone but by the assembly of users, in many places

women are still marginalized in discussions at FUG meeting and assemblies where decisions are made.

Not only low representation of women in the FUG, there is also very low representation in the professional work force in the natural resource management. Family pressure, safety considerations, and unwillingness of male bosses allow to work in the field are special factors that inhibit the performance of women working in bio-diversity related sectors.

Women are often the most active members of user groups, particularly in thinning, pruning and civil cultural practices, and 25-30 percent of all CFUG members, actively joining in and speaking out in public meeting. Siddiqi (1989) indicates that women's participation will help the forests first and the women second, women will have to give to forestry before gives to them. Siddiqi further writes that it is essential to involve in developing and implementing workable management plans, there has to be targeted effort to draw them. Because of the nature of Nepalese society and the position of men and women in it, other strategies are unworkable.

According to Chhetri, Community Forest program has to date concentrated mostly in the middle hills of Nepal where the protected area (PA) system is under represented. Given the fact that most of the forests in the middle hills would be handed over to communities, the options of conserving bio-diversity in such ecological zones need to be explored and realized. Community Forest program's main objectives are to meet the basic needs of the hill farmers for forest products as well as to ensure conservation of the forces resources by seeking people's participation.

Prasai (1987) presents a case study on women's participation of forest committees "which is an attempt to understand what kind of factors influence the effectiveness of forest committees and encourage women to be involved. In the strategy developed to improve the effectiveness of forest committees, the following aspects are discussed:

- Discussion prior to formation
- Election committee members
- DFO supports
- Motivation
- Defining the role of women
- Improving attitudes
- Motivating women

CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Brief Description of Jhapa District

Jhapa district is one of the plain districts of Mechi zone. It is one of the part of seventy-five districts of Nepal. It is a landlocked country of south Asia. Chandragadhi is the headquarters of Jhapa district. The area of Jhapa district is 1606 square km and it is divided into 8 constituencies. It borders Illam district in the north, Morang districts in the west, the Indian state of Bihar in the south and east and India's West Bengal state in the east. It consists of 47 Village Development Committees and 3 municipalities, i.e Bhadrapur in the south, Mechinagar in the east and Damak in the west. The main cities in Jhapa district are Chandragadhi, Bhadrapur, Birtamod, Kakarbhitta, Damak, Dhulabari, Surunga, Charali, Budhabare etc. It is one of the developed district among other district in Nepal. It is the home to many indigenous tribes such as the Rajbanshi, Satar, Meche, Koche, Gangain, Dhangad, Uraon, Dhimal, Rai, Limbu, Magar, Gurung and many others, besides the Brahmnins, Chhettris and Newars. The main rivers in Jhapa district are Mechi, Kankai Mai, Ratuwa, Biring, Deuniya, Hadiya, Krishna Khola, Gauriya, etc. These all rivers provide water for irrigation purposes. Due to its alluvial soil, it is suitable for agriculture. It has been the largest producer of rice and wheat; not only this it is also one of the largest producers of jute, tea, supari (beetle nut), rubber and other cash crops. So, it is a boon of farmers in Jhapa that they can earn their living with the help of agriculture alone too. It also has vast areas of forests like Denia, Charali, Charkose Jhaadi, Sukhani, Jalthal etc. It is also known as the district of sunrise in a beautiful district of eastern part of Nepal. Its name is derived from the Rajbanshi word "Jhapa" meaning "canopy", which proves that the area was a dense forest in the past. It was such a dense and dangerous forest that it was called Kaalapaani and prisoners were sent here to die of malaria and other diseases in the jungles. Though the forest area has decreased in recent

times due to ignorance, people were waking up to the fact that forests area necessary. Consequently, community forests can be seen in the district these days also CFs are the most important sources for the future preservation of the forest.

3.2 Description of the study area

The major natural resources in the VDC are land, forest and water among them land is the major one. According to the VDC record, more than 85 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture and livestock rising. The rest 10 percent of the population is engaged either in government jobs, school teachers, overseas jobs, business, higher study etc. Since land is the major resource they exploit, most of it is used as either *khet* or *bari* or public land. Food grains like paddy, wheat and maize are cultivated in the *khet* whereas maize, mustard, vegetable and beans are cultivated in the *bari* as major crops. Most of the public land is either used for grazing or community forest from which the community people get fodder, firewood, grass etc.

Forest can be categorized as private and public forest. Some of the rich people in the community own their private forest land whereas majority of the people depend on the public forest that is managed by the community people as community forest. Sub-tropical vegetation is prevalent in the forest in the VDC.

In Topgachhi VDC, almost all households have drinking water supply system that was established with the initiation of some local leaders with the help of District Drinking Water Office, *Kamal khola*, *Ratuwa khola*, *Kankai Mai*, etc are the major sources of water in the VDC from where people get drinking water as well irrigation facility.

3.3 Research Design:

Explorative research has been used for this study. The main concentration of research is to find out women's participation in community forestry. So,

surveying with CFUG have generated for required information. This information reports in terms of the majority study variables and finally have to obtain the conclusion.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

In this research study the researcher has been dependent on primary as well as secondary data. Primary data was collected by the researcher during 2010. The secondary data was collected through various literatures and concerned authorities in the district. District Development Committee (DDC), District Forest Office, Village Development Committee Office, CFUG Committee, Central Bureau of Statistics, TU Central Library books, other related thesis topics, and district profile of Jhapa district were the major source of secondary data for this study. But much emphasis was given to the primary data. Primary data were collected through:

-) Questionnaires
-) Focus Group discussion (FGD) with the users
-) Key Informant Interview with local community leaders, user's committee members etc.
-) Personal observation
-) Discussion with Group's leaders.

3.5 Universe and the Sample

All the 50 households within the CF area in ward number 8 of Topgachhi VDC in the Jhapa district were taken into consideration as the sample of the study. A census survey was conducted among all the household heads of Ratuwa Mai Community Forest Users Group.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Basically primary data was collected for this research study, however secondary data was also collected and used to analyze the CFUG situation in

the study area. Primary data was collected by the researcher during 2010 and secondary data was collected from CFUG, VDC office and District Forest Office, related thesis of CF e-mail and internet, district profile of Jhapa district during the time of study. Some focus group discussions and key informant interviews were also conducted during the period of study to get in-depth idea about the dynamics in the community forestry. The primary data collected was categorized and classified on the basis of the major activities of the Community Forest Users Group. Information was tabulated and analyzed as per the study objectives. Both quantitative and qualitative tools were used to analyze the data and the results were presented in descriptive forms of tables and diagrams with the help of statistical tools like mean, medium, mode etc.

CHAPTER – IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETAION

The primary data collected from the field was tabulated in the first stage. Based on the data tabulated, other statistical tools like mean, mode etc were used to analyze the data. Finally, on the basis of the tables and pie charts detail analysis was done at the end.

4.1 Major Benefit that the Users Get from this Community Forest

Ratuwa Mai Community Forest is one of the source of forest recourses to the people of ward number 8 of Topgachhi VDC in Jhapa district. They are managing this forest as community forest for last 8/10 years. Before it was managed as community forest, people used to have many problems to fetch fodder, firewood etc. During the course of study the researcher was interested to know the main benefit that the members of CF are getting from the forest. Out of 450 households, 50 sample houses size were interviewed in this regard and asked what benefit they are getting from this community forest. The table below shows the details of responses of the respondents.

Table: 4.1

Major benefits of the community forest

SN	Particular	Number of Respondents	Percentage
01.	Fodder	14	28.00
02.	Firewood	18	36.00
03.	Building Materials	06	12.00
04.	Tree, leaves and litters	08	16.00
05.	Others	04	08.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

From the above table, it can be conclude that majority of respondents (36.00%) revealed that they have easy access to firewood from the community forest. The second majority (28.00%) of the respondents are of the opinion that they are benefited by getting fodder from the community forest. Like wise 16 percent of the community people are benefited by tree, leaves and litters, 12 percent of the people are benefited by timber for building materials and finally 8 percent of the community people are benefited by others. By this table we can say that the highest benefits of the CF to FUG to is firewood.

The above result has been shown in a pie chart below to make it easier to understand.

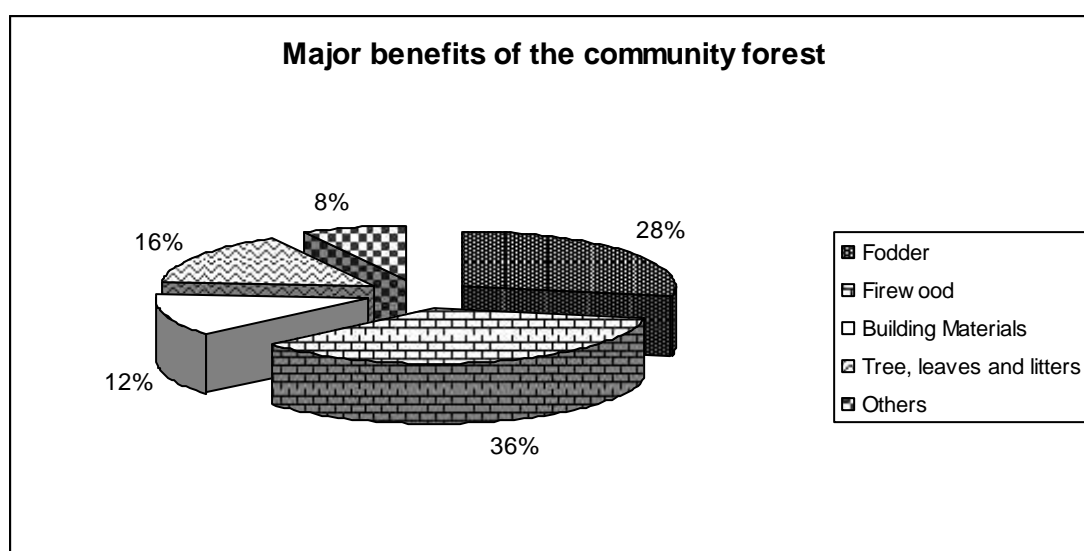


Fig. 4.1

4.2 Women's Role in Community Forest Management

Traditionally most of the communities in Nepal believe that women have limited role within the household cores and any activities outside the house are the responsibilities of male counterpart in the family. During recent years because of educational development women exposure to outer world through media, the traditional role of male and female has drastically changed. Women have moved out from the limited arena of household activities and come to the public sphere. They are involved in many social activities like politics and

other activities. In the changing context of the rural community, the researcher was particularly interested to get some in-depth insight about the changing role of women in public sphere like community forest management. Among 50 respondents/household heads including male and female (40 males and 10 female respondents) were asked several questions regarding the role of women in various steps of CF management. For example, the respondents were asked who has the major role in nursery preparation, seedling plantation, thinning, cleaning, guarding the forest etc. The responses received from all the respondents have been tabulated below.

Table: 4.2
Women's Role in Community Forest Management

SN	Description	Male	Female	Jointly	Total
01.	Nursery Preparation	15 (30.00%)	17(34.00%)	18 (36.00%)	50 (100%)
02.	Seedling Plantation	20 (40.00%)	20(40.00%)	10 (20.00%)	50 (100%)
03.	Thinning	21 (42.00%)	24 (48.00%)	05 (10.00%)	50 (100%)
04.	Cleaning	15 (30.00%)	25 (44.65%)	10 (20.00%)	50 (100%)
05.	Guarding the Forest	39 (78.00%)	08 (14.28%)	03 (06.00%)	50 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2010..

By the above table we can say that, while asking the question of major role during nursery preparation, majority of the respondents (36.00%) said that male and female have equal contribution to perform this activity jointly where as 34 percent of respondents said that female have the major role while nursery preparation and 30 percent of respondents revealed that male have the major role in this activity. From the above discussion we can summarize that nursery preparation is the joint activity most of the time.

Regarding seedling plantation, from the above table it was found that male and female has the equal role as 40 percent of the respondents said that both have the equal role and 10 percent have jointly role to seedling plantation. During thinning process, female have 48 percent, male have 42 percent and jointly they are 10 percent. By this we can say that women have the major role in this activity than others. Likewise, during cleaning process, it was again found that women have the major role as majority of the respondents (44.65%) said that women have the major role in cleaning process but male have 30 percent and jointly they are 20 percent only. But interestingly while asked to all respondents about the major role of guarding the CF, majority of the respondents (78.00%) revealed that it's the responsibility of male but women have 14.28 percent and jointly they are 6 percent. By this above table we can conclude that women have majority in the thinking process as 48 percent then after in cleaning process as 44.65 percent but male have much more higher than all process in Guarding the forest process.

4.3 Participation of women in CFUG and CF Executive Committee

There are altogether 50 households in the study area of Ratuwa Mai Community Forest of Topgachhi VDC-8 in Jhapa district. Out of 50 households 10 were the female headed households and rest of the 40 were male headed households. Since the household head is the member of the community forest user's group formally, it is obvious that the number of women in the group is 10 that is 20 percent of the CFUG members were the female members in this case.

There is a committee called community forest users executive committee having 15 members. The researcher was interested to know the participation of women in this executive committee where there is decision making role of women as well. The number of women members in the executive committee has been tabulated in the following table.

Table: 4.3

Participation of women in CFUG and CF Executive Committee

SN	Description	Executive Committee	CFUG
01.	Number of Females	05 (33.33%)	10 (20.00%)
02.	Number of Males	10 (66.67%)	40 (80.00%)
Total		15 (100.00%)	50 (100.00%)

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

From the above table it was known that out of 15 members in the executive committee of Ratuwa Mai Community forest User's Group, 5 members (33.33% of the total members) were the female members and rest 10 members (66.67% of the total members) were the male members. From this scenario, it can be concluded that women have still less participation in the decision making mechanism where as national census suggests that the male-female ratio is almost fifty-fifty. Despite of women's presence in the executive committee as a minority, it has been seen from the record that they have very active participation during the meetings and decision making processes. The CFUG Committee has its monthly meeting in every month where the members of the users' executive committee participate. During the study, it was revealed that all five female members of the committee out of fifteen members were the one who were regularly present in the monthly meeting during last six months that has not seen in case of men participants. From the meeting minute that was maintained by the CFUG, it was confirmed that women are more active participate than the male counterparts.

4.4 Factors that Affect the Active Participation of Women

The researcher was keen to know that the major factors behind the active participation of women in any social activities in the rural community. During this research, an effort was made to identify the major factors that would be helpful or hindering factor for active participate of rural women in community forest management. An attempt was made to ask all the 50 respondents that

what would be the major factor that motivates the active participation of women in community forest management. The responses received from all the 50 respondents have been tabulated as follows.

Table: 4.4
Factors that affect the active participation in women

SN	Description	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01.	Education	20	40.00
02.	Family Support	12	24.00
03.	Social Support	08	16.00
04.	Personal Willingness	07	14.00
05.	Others	03	06.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

While asking a question what would be the major factor that would be helpful to promote the participation of women in the CF activities, the majority (40.00%) of the respondents said that education has the major role to make anybody confident that is equally implies to the women. Based on the information received from the key informants, more women are educated these days compared to past time. They have developed confidence to participate more in the public sphere. According to the respondents the next major factor that helps women to participate in public sphere is the family support. In this context out of 50 respondents 12 (24.00%) respondents revealed that family support has the vital role to promote women's participation in public activities. Likewise, 16 percent of the respondents said that social support is the major factor that promotes women's participation in public activities like CFUG activities, 14 percent of respondents said that one's personal willingness has the major role that helps him/her to participate in the public activities and at last 6 percent of the respondents said that there are other factors that guide one to participate in the public activities. By this above table we can conclude that the most important and major factors that affect the active participation in women

is education. For more clarification the data has been presented in a pie chart as below.

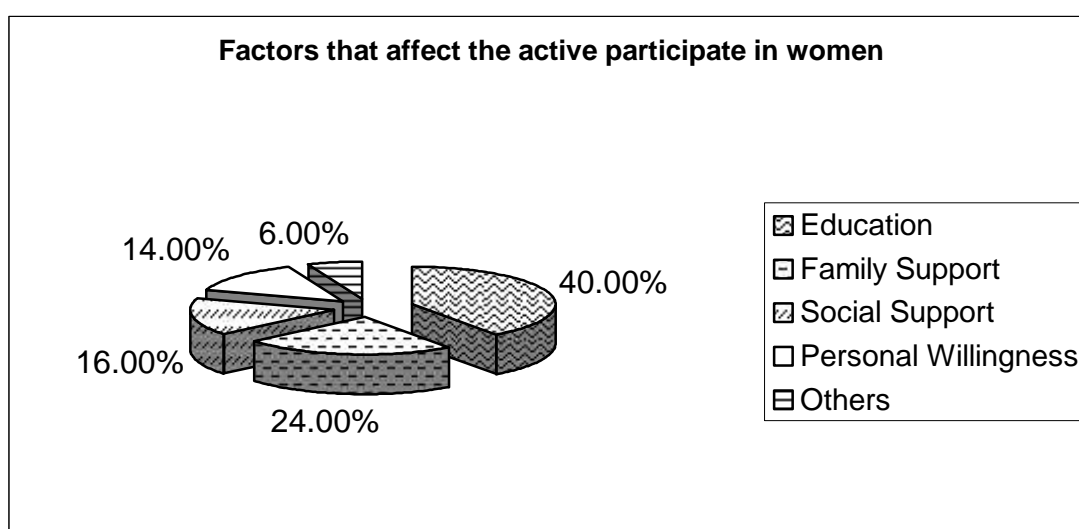


Fig. 4.2

4.5 How often Women Participate in CFUG Meeting

In order to find out how often women members of the CFUG participate in meetings, a question was asked to all the respondents of the study. There was a kind of mixed response from the respondents for this question. Majority of the respondents said that women are the most regular attendance of meeting while others said that it was not true. It has been tried to tabulate the responses received from the respondents in order to make it clearer.

Table: 4.5

How often women participate in the meeting

SN	Description	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01.	More Frequently	40	80.00
02.	Less frequently	06	12.00
03.	Occasionally	04	08.00
Total		50	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

From the above table it is seen that majority of the respondents 40 out of 50 respondents (80.00% of the total) said that women participate in various meetings related to CFUG quite frequently. Very few i.e. 6 and 4 percent (12% & 8% respectively) of the respondents revealed that women have less frequently and occasional participation in the CFUG related meetings. From the above table we can conclude that women have very much active participation in the CFUG meetings in which they participate quite frequently. By this conclusion we can say that women are most punctual in this part.

4.6 How Women Participate in CFUG Meeting

During the course of research in the community, the researcher tried to dig out how actively women participate in CFUG meetings. In Nepalese society it's a prevalent phenomenon that women are good listener instead of active participants in any outdoor social activities. Also, in some communities it is thought that women should not speak outside the family and we can see male dominance in outdoor affairs. Being a female, the researcher was particularly interested how much women are empowered and how much they can put their voice in community affairs. All the 50 respondents were asked a question that how women participate in CFUG meetings. Four options were given to the respondents and were asked to choose the options. More than one option was chosen by the respondents in this question. The following table shows the details of the responses received from the respondents in this regard

Table: 4.6
How women participate in the CFUG meetings

SN	Description	No. of responses	Percentage
01.	With active discussion	49	32.89
02.	With making suggestion	55	36.91
03.	With decision making	25	16.78
04.	As a silent observer	20	13.42
Total		149	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2010.

From the above table it is found that majority of the responses (55 out of 149 responses received from 50 respondents) which is 36.91 percent of the total responses revealed that women have the suggestive role during the CFUG meetings. The second majority of the responses (32.89%) revealed that women participate in the CFUG meetings with active discussion. The third majority of the responses (16.78%) revealed that women participate in the CFUG meetings with decision making role and the rest 13.42 percent of the responses revealed that women participate in such meetings as a silent observer.

From the above data we can conclude that women have major role in discussion as well as providing suggestion rather than decision making during the CFUG meetings. It does not mean that women do not participate in decision making activities but they do more suggestive and discussion role during the meetings than that of decision making role.

The above data has been presented in pie diagram for more clearance.

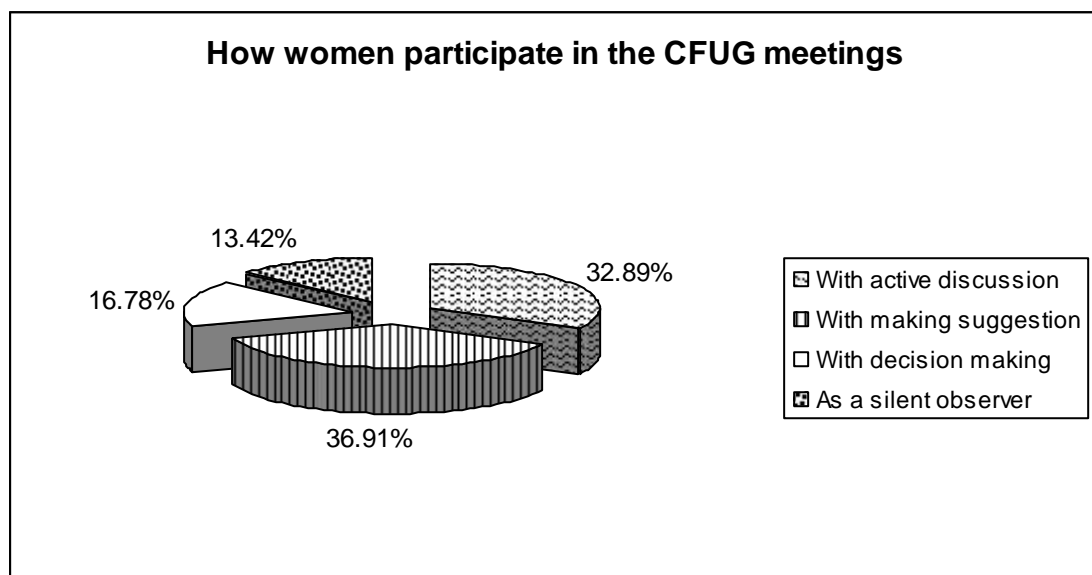


Fig. 4.3

4.7 Key Informant's Views on Women Participation in CF Activities

During the course of the study, the researcher conducted some focus group discussions with the key informants available in the community to dig out the

in-depth of community dynamics in community activities especially such kind of natural resource management activities i.e. community forest management. During the key informant's interview, very interesting ideas and thoughts were revealed that were useful to understand the community dynamics in the rural parts of the country. Local teachers who are supposed to be the intellectuals of the community, local community leaders, ex VDC officials, members of political parties were some of the key informants of this study.

During the course of key informant interview some interesting facts were revealed about the participation of women in the CF management, limitations of women in the community, some positive and negative views of the community people on the participation of women in the community activities etc. Some of the facts that were revealed from the key informant interview have been listed below:

- J The male members of the committee try to give more and more chance and priority to female members to participate in CF activities. But according to them, women do not show much interest in the activities. It may be due to lack of time, load of household works etc. Due to the conflict in the country, most of the youth male members are absent in the village and women have to take all the responsibilities of their household tasks.
- J The income of CF is spent in the management of the forest and some money is spent in giving loan to the needy people. According to the key informants the priority is given to the women. Most of the women take loan for the purpose of agriculture, micro entrepreneurship, goat rearing etc.
- J The management of forest has been drastically improved after the female's participation. The encroachment and other illegal activities are stopped in these days.

-) Women are more illiterate than male in the study area. Illiterate women have problems to read and write the rules, regulations and minutes of the CF meeting. Due to the illiteracy they have problem to learn forest management skills also. Illiteracy is one of the major obstacles of participation.
-) Involvement of women in child rearing, feeding household members and livestock, agricultural works makes them busier. If they participated in meeting and other development activities, they have to leave their household works. So, lack of time is also major obstacles for women's participation.
-) Females feel a kind of humiliation; they feel less competent than male counterparts while discussing, decision- making and forest management activities. Such kind of inferiority complex has hindered the women from active participation in the community forestry.

From all above sayings, we can conclude that above mentioned any single cause is not responsible for the low participation of women in CF management activities in the study area. The combinations of all of the causes are main problems for women participation.

Also during the focus group discussion (FGD) with the key informants some positive as well as negative views of the participants towards women's participation into the CF management were noted. The researcher has listed those comments into two groups as positive and negative views towards the women in the community that would be interesting to know.

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

-) Women are helping the men to manage community forest.
-) Women have very cooperative role with forest watchman to rear forest.
-) Women are strict to respect and follow CFUG rules and regulations
-) Women can be active if they have chance to do something.

) Women participate in CFUG meetings and they share their ideas actively.

According to the key informant's view, there are some local people who have somehow negative comments towards women's participation in the CF activities. They think that women cannot play effective role in community forest management activities. Some of those views collected during the time of research have been listed below:

-) Women do not want to participate in CF meeting.
-) Women have no idea and ability to manage forest.
-) Women don't care about public concerns.
-) It is not a duty of women to attend meeting and be active in social development activities.
-) Women have no creative roles even they have chance to do something.
-) Women do not have wider vision to manage public affairs.

CHAPTER - V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

By the end of the research study, the researcher came to a list of interesting facts about the CFUG management and role of women in this context. The major concern of the researcher from very beginning of this research was to identify some facts that play major role in participation of women in the management issues. Also the researcher was keen to dig out some facts about the changing role of women in the public sphere. However, there are some points that came as the findings of the study during the study of Ratuwa Mai Community Forest User's Group that have been listed below:

-) The major benefit that the community people are getting from the CF is availability of firewood in their proximity. Almost 36 percent of respondents took it as the major benefit of CG followed by fodder that was responded by 28 percent of the respondents.
-) Regarding the role of women in CF management, 36 percent of the respondents revealed that male and female have an equal contribution in CF management activities.
-) Regarding the participation of women in CFUG and CF executive committee, it was revealed that 33.33 percent of women are directly participating in those committees. It can be concluded from this fact that still women have less participation in such decision making process compared to their population ratio in the community.
-) While digging out the major factors that affect the active participation of women in such activities, it was revealed that education has the major role that was supported by 40 percent of the respondents followed by lack of family support i.e. 24 percent of the respondents pointed it out.

-) One interesting fact that was found during the study that women are the one who are the most punctual in various meetings etc that was supported by 80 percent of the respondents. It means that women have more sense of responsibility compared to men in the community.
-) While asking about the role of women in the meetings etc, it was revealed that they have more suggestive role than any decision making role which was supported by 36.91 percent of the respondents. But at the same time it was also revealed that women participate in active discussion.

5.2 Conclusions

Forest is one of the major sources of rural livelihood in Nepal. It is the sources of food, firewood, timber, fodder, leaves and litters etc. The rapidly increasing population growth and its subsequent effects on natural resources particularly forest resources has been noticing since long. For the better management and enhancing the forest resources the concept of community forest was emerged during 1970s in Nepal. The community forest is the forest handed over the local community on which they have the full authority to use, protect and manage community forest in their own way so that they can fulfill their basic needs for firewood, timber and other forest products in a sustainable manner. Forest is managed and used mainly by women in rural Nepal and their role is increasing in their society. Thus, the ultimate managers and users of the forest are women.

Ratuwa Mai Community Forest lies in ward number 8 of Topgachhi VDC of Jhapa district. It was formed on 2001 and 156 households are directly involved at present within this CF whose economic activities are subsistence farming with livestock. This community forest is used mainly for firewood, fodder, grasses, leaf litter, and timber. The forest products are collected for domestic purposes: general rules for using forest products are outlined in the FUG constitution and forest operational plan. Based on some focus group discussions, women's roles are socially identified for caring family members, livestock, which have provided them with an extensive knowledge of the uses

and usefulness of the forest. Therefore, they are the key actors for managing forest products and agricultural resources.

Women's participation is important in almost all aspects and activities of community forest management. The female members of the Ratuwa Mai Community Forests Executive Committee are actively participating in the meetings and other activities of the CF. They are punctual also than the male. But only 33.33 percent of women's participation is still less participation in the decision making mechanism where as national census suggests that the male-female ratio is almost fifty-fifty.

The location of the FUG committee, size of the community forest area, issues of gender equity and participatory orientation play a vital role in the nature of women's participation in CF management. The process of forming FUG and executive body plays important roles on the degree of women's participation.

When a rural woman became the member of FUG Committee then her new developmental role will be started. Groups meet to discuss community forestry rights and responsibilities. Women's participation also depends upon how many villagers understood the rights and authority of the FUG Committee members. The frequencies of meeting, assembly and people's participation also affect the women's participation.

The level of supports given to the women by male counterpart determines the participation of women. Poor attitudes of male towards female made the situation worse. Traditional norms, powers in decision making roles and benefit sharing also affect their participation. Thus, the greater support from family, greater would be the chances of active participation of women in CF management.

Educational status of people plays a vital role for better involvement of women. High educational status of the women, higher would be the participation of the women. The outcome of the study suggested that education has the vital role in active participation of women in public activities like CF management.

5.3 Recommendations

Since this research was a part of academic fulfillment of the study, it was also an interesting opportunity for the researcher to get some interesting facts as well as in-depth insights of the community dynamics in rural setup. As this study was focused on women's role in CF management, the researcher was particularly interested on what types of factors are basically responsible to influence the participation of women in public sphere like CF management issues. By the end of study, after series of discussion with the community people, empirical facts that were collected during the study as well as some focus group discussions with some key members of the community, the researcher came up with some recommendations that would be useful for policy makers, development activists as well as those people who are fighting for empowerment of women.

-) Education of women was found as the major factor that played major role in participation of women in public arena. As the level of education among women is still very poor compared to men, it has become a major factor that is affecting women to come out of the house. Because of lack of education, women have less confidence to deal in public activities. Once a woman is educated, she educates a whole family and that is a major tool for her as well.
-) There should be some compulsory legal provision that compels the community organizations to participate women in certain percentage in community activities. For example if there is a legal provision of at least 50% of women participation in CF activities, women's participation would automatically increase.
-) The women's participation in these CFUG is very encouraging. The present FUG consists of several women members. More than half of the harvesting groups in each year are lead by women in Mid - hill where as it is slightly minimum in Terai. The women are organised within the umbrella of the CFUG forming a group calling various name (Ama,

Mahila and other), which are being involving in natural resource extention activities, sanitation works as campaign and income generation activities .

The economy of Nepal is predominately characterized by a large rural sector where subsistence farming is mainstay of household economy. There is a strong dependency on forest resources for basic needs fulfillment and additional income opportunity. Forest decentralization and globalization rural economy has created tremendous opportunity for rural development through forest products and services the paper highlights the contribution of community forestry in rural development, which is based on the out-come of research with sets of criteria such as active involvement of users in the community forest management availability of recorded and accessibility. Bio-physical, Socio - economic and environment impact in rural development are studied in the Community Forestry. Nepal represents rural country with 86 percent rural population lived in rural area. Rural areas population pre-ever suffering from appropriate development due to the pressure on land and forestry resources is being a basic factor in the rural development of Nepal. Rural development does not imply only economic change in per capita income or increment in growth. It is important to give stress to social phenomena as the focal point of rural development. Forestry resources is always and everywhere being a key factor, it has both vertical and horizontal relationship to socio- economic and environment development. The problems faced by community forestry in the socio- economic and environment context of the rural area in general and in particular are also discussed. The plight of community forestry in such area is explained in terms of the principles of property rights. Based on the conclusion that action research on CF and pasture land management may fulfill present gaps, the paper makes several recommendations for better management of Community Forest.