

**Factors Affecting the Participation of Disadvantaged Group  
and Women in Community Forestry: An Analytical study  
from two Community Forest User Groups in Kaski, Nepal"**

**A Dissertation submitted to  
The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
The Department of Sociology/Anthropology,  
Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara  
Tribhuvan University**  
*In the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the  
Master Degree in Anthropology*

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## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

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## LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

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## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My success in this study is the result of the support of many individuals. I wish to express my sincere thanks to all of them, who directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this study. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all general as well as committee members of Pandanda simle and Puranochaur CFUG, who, despite their business in agricultural works, were very generous, hospitable and co-operative and provided me with valuable information.

I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Mr. Sarad Kumar Paudel, Teaching Assistant ,Sociology/ Anthropology Department, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara for his continuous encouragement, guidance and thorough comments during this work. Many thanks to Bir Bahadur Khanal, lecture in I.O.F Pokhara, and Mr. Madhav Prasad Baral , Assistant Forest Officer, for their kind help in different aspects when I was busy in my study. I'm equally grateful to Mr. Sarad Kumar Paudel Teaching Assistant, PN Campus for his continuous support in collecting data, entering the data into the computer and writing this dissertation.

Similarly, my sincere thanks go to my classmates for their nice company during my study in Prithvi Narayan Multiple College, Pokhara. Tek Raj Lawati and Sujan Babu Paudel, deserve special thanks for their encouragement to undertake this study.

Love and affection of my family and relatives always encouraged and inspired me to perform any work intensively. I am grateful to them. The greatest thanks go to my wife Meena Sharma and brother-in-law Pradip Thakur and my friend Parsuram Biswakarma for his constant support and encouragement in each step of my life. Last, but not the least, my deep appreciation goes to our sons Bijay and Anand for their noble patience during the study period.

Chandeshwar Sharma

Date: 10-04-2010

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## **ACRONYMS**

CBNRM Community Based Natural Resource Management  
CBS Central Bureau of Statistics  
CF Community Forestry/Forest based on context  
CF UC Community Forest User Committee  
CFUG s Community Forest User Groups  
DDC District Development Committee  
EC Executive Committee  
FAO Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations  
FECOFUN Federation of Community Forest User Groups of Nepal  
GoN Government of Nepal  
HHs House Holds  
ICIMOD International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development  
MFSC Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation  
MOPE Ministry of Population and Environment  
NPC National Planning Commission  
UN United Nations  
UNDP United Nations Development Program

## **ABSTRACT**

Community Forestry in Nepal has been acknowledged as the most successful, most innovative and truly community oriented program. However, it is criticized for not being able to address the needs of women, low caste and poorer segment of the society who are the real users of forest although it has been successful in terms of institutional capacity to get people organized, form capital at group level and arrest trends of resource degradation. Major problems being encountered in community forestry program are due to the lack of inclusion of poor, deprived communities (DAGs) and women at various activities of community forest management. In this preamble the study was carried out to fulfill the gap in research endeavors to better address the importance and implication of DAGs and women participation in community forest management which is expected to contribute to a better understanding of DAGs and women's role in community forestry. The study was carried in two CFUG s of Kaski district with the aim of assessing DAGs and women's participation in various activities of community forest management, exploring the perception and attitude of the users towards community forest management and suggesting room for improvement to better involve them in the community forestry process. Both primary as well as secondary data relevant to the study were assembled and analyzed using statistical tools with the help of computer software MS Excel and SPSS.

The participation of DAGs and women in the group is low during the identification of users and committee formation, which shows lack of sufficient involvement of DAGs and women in important preliminary stages of community forestry process. It is also low in case of decision making process and monitoring and evaluation of FUG activities. Average level of participation in forest protection activities, resource utilization and fund collection implies that their roles in such activities are somewhat satisfactory compared to others but still this needs to be elevated. However, lower level of DAGs and women's

participation in fund mobilization activities suggests that there isn't sufficient involvement of DAGs and women in mobilizing funds collected for different forest as well community development activities. Educating DAGs and women, motivating male members of the family, providing them authority/responsibility, charging for absence and efficient information dissemination system could be effective ways to improve DAGs and women's participation in the long run.

**Key words:** *Attitude, community forestry, participation, perception, Kaski, Nepal*

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1 Background**

#### **1.1 Community Forestry**

Forest is the common property and open access which is being utilized by human beings from very beginning of the human society and culture. Traditionally common property analyses the overexploitation of the scarce fixed resource. Theoretical ground of resource utilization and management with anthropological perspective can be established with contemporary philosophies behind the fields of culture- nature relationship, micro-macro nexus and people oriented paradigms. It is socio cultural and cognitive factor not technical and administrative factors that determine user groups thriving participation at all levels of resource management specially community forestry and other development related activities. Forest protection, management and utilization depend upon the sustainable and scientific management of the forests. Natural resource management is also closely related with human resource management.

Community Forestry, as an approach based on collective action, has been increasingly accepted as suitable approach for sustainable management and utilization of forest resources, particularly in developing countries (FAO 1978, Shepherd 1985, Arnold 1991, Mallik & Rahman 1994, Victor et al. 1998, Arnold 2001, Brown et al. 2002). Essentially, it is a participatory approach that has evolved as dominant priority policy of the government. Community Forestry approach has been acclaimed as a pioneer strategy in the country and is appreciated all over the world (Pokharel 2003). Community forestry is most accurately and usefully understood as an umbrella term denoting a wide range of activities which form an integral part of livelihood earning of rural people contributing to link rural people with forests, trees, and the products and benefits to be derived from them (Maharjan et al. 2004). Community forestry in

Nepal is a participatory approach of forest management, which aims at fulfilling basic needs of local people together with sustainable management of forest resources of the country. It recognizes the participation of local people as a mandatory pre-requisite for empowering people in the control and management of forest resources. Nepal's community forestry program has proved to be a very encouraging endeavor in the development of a constructive partnership between the community forest users and the government (Mahat 1998). The CF is a bottom up approach where the people of grassroots level are involved to satisfy their daily needs of forest products. Forest resources are major natural resources directly influencing the livelihoods of rural people in Nepal. Large numbers of rural households of Nepal are still subsistence users of forest products, and community forestry program has emerged to address the needs, of the poor people who depend on the forestland to fulfill their basic needs like timber, forage and fuel wood.

Nepal's setting is a complex structure of social systems consisting of hierarchical social structure that includes different economic and social classes, oppressive castes system and gender discrimination, which is developed from feudal, bureaucratic and caste and gender biased interests (UNDP 1998). Nepal's social structure is based on caste system, with prevalent discrimination on gender and wealth. The differences between rich and poor people, upper and lower caste, men and women create situations for social conflicts and discrimination to have access and control over the resources. Upper caste people have historically oppressed lower caste communities. Major problems being encountered in community forestry program arise from the lack of inclusion of poor, deprived communities and women in various activities of community forest management (Lachapelle et al. 2004; Pandey 1995).

At present, there are problems of auditing, revision of Operational plan and constitution yearly reporting and inclusions of humans, DAGs and women and poor in main stream. The word disadvantaged group (DAGs) indicates to those

people who are not sufficiently enjoying the opportunities and services provided by the state to all citizens in equitable manner. This also points to the group of people having very less approach to education, health facilities, employment opportunities etc and are socially, mentally, physically and economically depressed by rich, well educated and elite group of the society. Depressed women and people under the scheduled caste e.g. Kami, Damai, Sarki have been taken as disadvantaged group\_for the purpose of study. Participation in community forest management activities is dependent on various social, economic and bio-physical factors. Community forestry issues have now been associated with wider socio-economic, environment and political concerns (Timilsina et al. 2004). In communities around the world, both women as well as men have their respective roles, responsibilities, opportunities and constraints in managing natural resource base both within the household and community. Most of the Nepalese women have close relationship with forest in our country. Their involvement in forest products extraction for domestic household as well as farming purposes is quite important as they keep practical knowledge about forest and forest resources. However, it was only in the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-1997) that strong emphasis was placed on women's participation in community forestry (Hobley 1996).

In the context of community forestry program in Nepal, women's participation is not at satisfactory level because the voices of the poor and socially backward i.e disadvantaged (DAGs) people are not heard and elite people capture the executive positions of the forest user group in managing forests and benefit sharing. Furthermore, the majority of the women, landless, poor and disadvantaged group remain silent observers and listeners of community forestry processes.



## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

About 93% of the total populations of women in Nepal are involved in collection and use of firewood, fodder and household activities (CBS 1993). In most Asian countries women spend significant portion of their time in forest related activities such as farming, collecting fuel wood and fodder, grazing animals, fetching water and cooking (Castillo 1983). Women are taught to subservient and leadership qualities are discouraged. They are not encouraged to exist with independent identity, besides the one attributed to their relationship with a man, i.e., daughter and sister (NARMSAP 2003). Women represent half of the population of Nepal but they are socially, economically disadvantaged in the society. In every aspect of life women are subordinate to male. Women in Nepal have limited access to market productive services, education, and healthcare and local government (Adhikari et al. 2004). Although women work much harder and for longer hours than men but their contribution to the national economy isn't properly accounted yet. Women have an important role to play in conservation and protection of forest in terms of their labor. With the exception of tree felling, most of the management activities i.e. planting, breeding, cleaning, thinning, singling etc in CF are conducted by the women. They can also know what the type of fuel wood products that give less smoke and the types of palatable fodder plants, etc. Most of development specialists realize that women can play a vital role in forest management but their heavy involvement in household chores, illiteracy and socio-cultural norms and values make them unable to participate in others development activities (Acharya and Bennet 1981). Nepal is a pluralistic society with diverse ethnic, caste, linguistic and religious communities. Poverty is wide spread in Nepal where 38% of the population is living below the poverty line (NPC 2002). There are wide variations in poverty levels based on rural –urban divisions, geography, ethnic groups, gender and occupational castes. Poverty is more severe and deeper among women, ethnic groups and disadvantaged groups (DAGs). Nepali society is patriarchal where social systems and the state policies are formed in favor of men. Consequently,

women are excluded in most of the collective decision making processes. Women's participation also seems very low in development programs related to common concerns in many of the villages. Caste system is also a dominant factor to suppress the *Dalits*.

Community forestry may be an effective strategy for sustainable forest and rural development if the participation of the users is secured at various stages. For the participatory strategy to succeed, communities must be partners with forest agencies, other forest users and stakeholders in the management of forest resources. For the partnership to be successful communities must have security of long term rights to the forest so that they are assured that they will receive the benefits from protection and improvement of the forest resources. The link between benefits and sustainable developments appears to be strong one, with improvements due to shared forest management seen in the quantity, variety and security of the forest. The organization may be FUG or any other must ensure compliances of women and disadvantaged members as they form fifty percent of the bulk of population of the globe. However it is not so easy to secure female participation and Dalits participation in development works because of social, cultural, economic, gender and other issues. It is reality that community forestry resource management practices cannot go long away in the in the absence active participation of both sexes as community forestry embraces the principle of helping the left behind mankind. It is accepted that in common property resources management practices, gender and DAGs distribution is a challenging option. Gender redistribute strategies seeks to redistribute more evenly the divisions of resources, responsibility and power between men and women, elite and DAGs seeks to transform existing condition, existing gender relations, not through channeling resources and decisions making to women and DAGs.

People's participation is a basic strategy of the CF program. It aims at involving people in planning, implementation, and decision making aspect of the forest

management. Various reviews have shown however, that despite continues efforts towards promoting the level of participation, active participation of the disadvantaged group in the program has been quite below. But none of these have pointed out of any specific reason for the emergence of such disappointing situation, not any proof has been forwarded in the empirical manner.

DAGs and women are presently unable to take benefits from the CF to that extent up to which they have right to achieve. Some are disappointed from the village due to disturbance of their profession by CF, e.g. Goldsmith and Blacksmith. Forest is the common property and open access .So the traditionally property analyses demonstrate over the exploitation of the scarce fixed resources, the average product of the variable inputs its marginal product, is equated to the inputs rental rate when access is free and the numbers of exploiters is large. These two situations are however essentially different so far as in a common property. The blacksmiths and goldsmiths use the timber in a considerable amount to make charcoal that is unscientific use of forest resources in perpetuity.

Community forestry itself is a dynamic process has realized the issues on DAGs and women are vital and these need to be addressed as a priority in order to strengthen the community forestry resources. The rural women always busy in off- on farm e.g. in Nepal women collect 84% of fuel wood and carry several tones of fodder for buffalos every year.

All development interventions are mainly focused on the empowerment of women, poor and disadvantaged groups. In general, majority of the forest user have less access and opportunity to social, natural, financial and physical capitals resulting less participation in decision making process. They have lack of confidence to influence the decision affecting their lives.

Existing situation observed in community forestry:

- Lack of access to information and equitable distribution to women and DAGs.
- Access and control over resources among women and DAGs
- Lack of orientation of Operational plan and constitution
- Lack of democratic decision making among FUGs
- Lack of confidence in women and DAGs 's participation
- Lack of affirmative discrimination to the women and DAGs
- Elite domination/ relationship among the forest user group
- Dynamism of changing role and work division and sharing at house hold at community level.

The present study is to attempt to explore this research question from a case of study of Community forestry from western part of Nepal. The present study focuses the questions which are included in the questionnaire headings.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

This study was carried out with the general objective of assessing the factors affecting against the active participation of Disadvantaged Group and Women in Community Forestry management and studying people's attitude towards this system of management.

Specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify existing Participation of Disadvantaged Group and Women in various activities of CF management
- To identify the problems for the active participation of Disadvantaged Group and Women in CF management activities
- To find out the way to increase the participation of DAGs and women in CF management activities.

#### 1.4 Conceptual framework of the study

The attitude of the people towards community forestry program and Disadvantaged Group and Women's participation in forest management activities are determined by several factors which can be grouped into socio-economic factors, institutional factors and structural factors.

Understanding their relationship with these factors provides us the ways to intervene in the program in order to improve the desirable change. The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1.

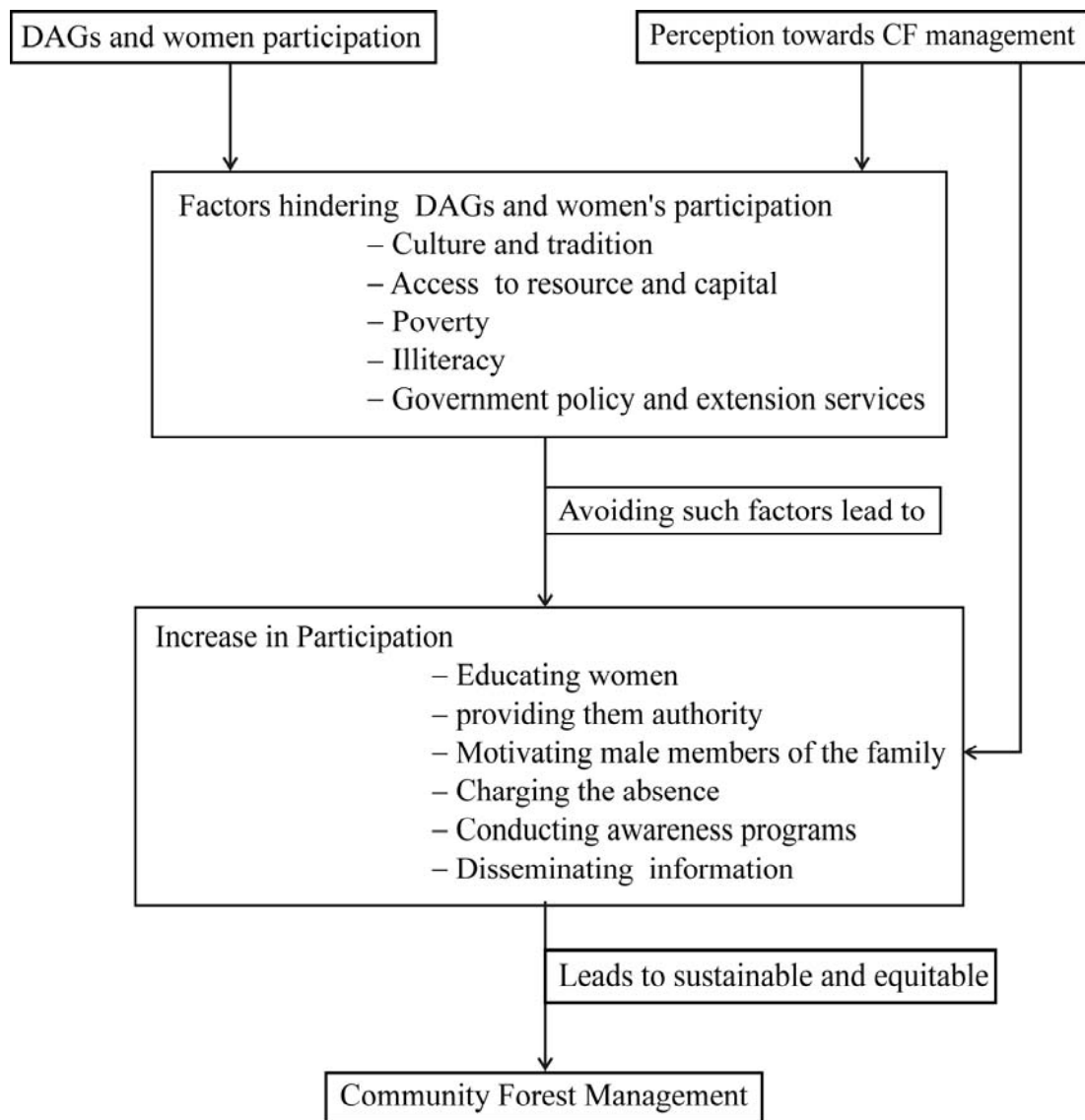


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

The study attempted to evaluate Disadvantaged Group and Women's participation as an important dimension in community forest management. It studied the perception and attitude of users towards community forest management. It also studied the factors that hinder the Disadvantaged Group and Women's participation in community forest management were also examined during the study. In general, as presented in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), the study explored the gender dimension as an integral component of community forest management as an example of common property resource management.

### **1.5 Justification of the study**

It is believed that the CFUGs can function effectively and be self reliant only if women's participation in forest management and decision making process within the CFUGs is strengthened. Among 13000 CFUGs of the whole nations, there are only few hundred CFUGs which practice transparent, participatory, inclusive decision making. Poor and disadvantaged groups are neglected from decision making processes, and their needs are not considered in management discussions (Tiwari 2002). Shrestha (2004) argued that good presence of women in the Executive Committee (EC), assembly and committee meeting is an indication of women's increasing awareness about CF. But just being the executive member and physical presence in assembly might not suggest increment in women's role in decision making process. Detailed investigation on their actual participation in these meetings or assembly should be carried out. They should actively participate in the meetings and play a decisive role in decision making process. This will make women empowered in every aspect of social life in addition to CF.

Community Forestry in Nepal is criticized for not being able to address the needs of women, low caste and poorer segment of the society who are the real users of forest although it has been successful in terms of institutional capacity to get people organized, form capital at group level and arrest trends of

resource degradation (Hobley 1991; Baral 1993; Timsina, 2001). The Community Forestry Program has significantly contributed towards improving the forest condition, utilizing democratic processes in decision-making and promoting local development activities (Acharya 2002; Kanel 2004). However, emerging evidence indicates that the decision-making process in most of the CFUGs was captured by wealthier and upper caste male and the interests and concerns of poor, women and minority section of the society, who depend more on common property resources for their livelihood, were not adequately considered in decision-making process (Bhatta 2002; Chhetri et al. 2001; Tiwari 2002). Poor, lower castes and women, who are more dependent on common forests than others for livelihood, have been excluded from the process of community forestry and their interests have been consistently overlooked (Hobley 1996). In spite of huge attempts, making CF more accountable and responsible towards poor, disadvantaged groups and women is still the main challenge in community forestry.

Significant improvement in the lives of those who are dependent on local forest resources such as poor, women and disadvantaged groups, is yet to be seen across most community forestry user groups. The poor, women and deprived section of the society have still been socially, economically, and politically suppressed. They have not been included in many development processes because the practice has several implications on inclusion.

This study was in line with the above mentioned gap in research endeavors to better address the importance and implication of women participation in community forest management which is expected to contribute to a better understanding of women's role in community forestry.

## **1.6 Limitations of the study**

This study attempted to assess all the determinants of participation of Disadvantaged Group and women in community forest management.

However, rigorous statistical analysis couldn't be performed due to limitations of respondents, time and budgetary aspects. Being an academic study, it was conducted as per the academic schedule prescribed by the university. The findings presented by the study might not reflect the situation and consequences of all the community forest user groups of the district and might not be generalized for other cases of community forest management.

### **1.7 Definition of important terminology**

**Community Forest Management:** Community Forest Management is accepted as one of the high priority programs of Nepalese forest management policy in which traditional users of any part of national forest of Nepal are authorized with devolution of authority of management, conservation and utilization of the forest resources.

**Participation:** Participation means active involvement of users in the management, conservation and utilization of the forest resources. It also denotes the representation of all levels of stakeholders in decision making about the community forest management.

**DAGs :** In Community Forestry Kami, Sunar, Damai and etc have used as disadvantaged groups i.e. from Dalits caste.

**Women:** Genetically female members of the society generally involved in community forestry.

In this thesis, the involvement the DAGs and women in Community forestry are going to be studied.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Community Forestry**

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) encompasses a diverse set of approaches and practices that broadly share a concern for integrating social and environmental goals by devolving power and authority in resource management from central government to the local people (Mahanty et al. 2006). Advocates promote community based natural resource management as a means for improving the socio economic conditions of the rural poor, improving sustainable resource management and increasing the power and participation of hitherto marginalized groups (Kellert et al. 2000).

Community Forestry, a participatory approach based on collective action, has been increasingly accepted as prominent example of community based natural resource management. Community forestry is most accurately and usefully understood as an umbrella term denoting a wide range of activities which form an integral part of livelihood earning of rural people contributing to link rural people with forests, trees, and the products and benefits to be derived from them (Maharjan et al. 2004). Essentially, it is a participatory approach that has evolved as dominant priority policy of the government. Community Forestry approach has been acclaimed as a pioneer strategy in the country and is appreciated all over the world (Pokharel, 2003).

CF of Nepal has been acknowledged as the most successful, most innovative and truly community oriented program (Hobley, 1996; Acharya, 1999; Pokharel, 2004). CF is not just a special technology rather a process of socio-economic change that requires continuous participation of community in planning, implementing and problem solving (Kayastha 1991). CF in Nepal has

evolved as one of the most promising forest management practices for sustainable community development. The approach paper of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) has also emphasized on community and leasehold forestry for the management of about 3.0 million shrub and rangeland forest in order to improve the environmental condition and to create employment opportunity for the poor (NPC 2002).

### **2.1.1 Historical background of community forestry**

The concept of Community Forestry (CF) has been attributed partly to the failure of the industrial forestry model and partly to the alarming rate of forest destruction and forestland degradation (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Although there were several indigenous arrangements to manage the forest mainly in the hills of Nepal for a long time, CF has been officially recognized in the 1970s (Tamang 1990). CF was formally embraced in the Nepalese forest policy with the realization that sustainable management of forest resources is neither possible nor practical through the government efforts alone; it requires collective efforts of all the people in the country. It took a decade to develop policies, legislation and to find an appropriate institution for forest management; the handing over of forest management authority to local community was efficiently implemented after 1990 (Gilmour and Fisher 1991).

Learning from the failures of past attempts, such as the nationalization of forest lands in 1957 by government in managing the forests of the country. Community Forestry was introduced in Nepal in 1978 in Kabhre district by Nepal Australia Community Forestry Project by amending the Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest framed in 1978 and by enforcing Decentralization Act in 1982 and passing of new Decentralization Act in 1992. In the initial stage, community forestry approach used to be defined and interpreted in Nepal as community-resource relations, commonly known as indigenous system of forest management (Fisher 1989), which was widespread in the hills of Nepal. During 80s and beginning of 90s, community forestry was

further conceptualized and internalized, new policy framework was crafted (GoN 1988), legal instruments have been established (GoN 1995), various procedures, methodologies and tools have been developed, modified, re-modified and experience gained. During this period, community forestry was understood and recognized as government's priority program. The role of forest bureaucracy in the hills drastically shifted from policing to facilitating communities leading to evolution of a triangular interface among community, resource and government bureaucracy (Pokharel 2003).

The third national workshop on Community Forestry held in 1998 drew a new vision – poverty alleviation through community forestry, based on four pillars- social justice, equity, gender balance and good governance (Kanel 2004). Fourth national workshop held in Kathmandu drew the conclusion that Community Forestry is a dynamic and adaptive program and emphasis now should be made on livelihood promotion, good governance and sustainable forest management. These are the second generation issues. Redirecting the focus of community forestry program on these issues can lead to the attainment of the MDGs set by the United Nations (Kanel 2004)

## **2.2 Women and Community Forestry**

The Chipko (hug the tree) Movement , a popular initiative to stem deforestation in the Uttarakhand Himalaya, is possibly the best-known ecological movement in the world. As a grassroots movement it has an authenticity somewhat lacking in purely intellectual appraisals of the ecological implications of modern industrialization. A token genuflection to Chipko has as a consequence, become a ritual in both Indian and international debates on development alternatives.

In these circumstances the absence of detailed scholarly studies on the movement is noteworthy. The present chapter, distilled from a much longer dissertation on the subject (Guha 1985a), situates Chipko in its social and

historical context and assesses its wider significance. It will continually shift between these two levels. Clearly, Chipko must be viewed as a constituent element of an overall history of peasant protest in Uttarakhand. At the same time, one can hardly underestimate the movement's significance in lending popular support to environmental critiques of the development process. Women's survival and that of their household and communities depend on access to and control of natural resources, such as land, water, forest and vegetation. They perform majority of the world's agricultural work, producing food for their families, as well as other goods that are sold in national and international markets. Women are traditionally the prime participants in both the agricultural and the forestry components of agro forestry production systems. They have learned to manage the forest resources in order to preserve them for future generations. Yet, women's access to and control of these resources are far from guaranteed (Pearl 2003). Women suffer most from environmental disasters and reduced availability of forest products. It is the women and children who collect fuel wood, animal fodder, decayed leaves and other forest products. Furthermore, they are held responsible for tending sheep, goats and other domestic animals owned by their families (Fortmann and Rocheleau 1984; Molnar 1987; Boo and Wiersum 2002; CF AN 2005).

Women are also increasingly gaining attention in the forestry profession since they have entered all levels of forest related work. Their role is quite often different from that of men, and they may have different interests and roles in a participatory process (Anonymous 2000). Although this does not necessarily translate into an equal opportunity and maybe women's views have not yet been heard, it has empowered many women and given them the chance to interact with their male counterparts (Anonymous 1999). Traditional gender roles assign different responsibilities to women and men. This has resulted in political, cultural and economic barriers that restrict women's access to natural resources. For example, women are frequently excluded from decision-making.

Community leaders may not invite women to meetings related to resource use, or expect only the men to present their concerns. Lower levels of literacy and education among women may further restrict their participation. Government and institutional policies often fail to recognize the importance of women's access to natural resources. While research has shown that agricultural productivity increases significantly when female farmers have access to land and technology, women own less than 2% of all land (Pearl 2003). In addition to the development level of the region and type of the settlement (rural or urban), gender and socio-economic groups also affect individual's access to basic services. The same is true for the rest of the world: women, the disadvantaged group and poor have less access to basic services than men and the rich. This low access makes both women and the poor disadvantageous. Yet, the disadvantages aggravate when the individual is a woman, poor and lives in rural areas, since a poor rural woman resides at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder with respect to accessibility to basic services (Toksöz and Sen, 2001).

The CF aims at sustainable management of forest resources through the active participation of local communities to meet their basic needs (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001). Women and forestry have a closer link in rural areas where life is shaped and decreased by availability and access to basic resources such as water, fuel, wood and fodder (Siddiqi 1989). According to Yadav (1980), participation means participation in decision making; participation in implementation of development programs and projects; participation in monitoring and evaluation of development programs and projects; participation in sharing the benefits of development. According to Regmi (1992), the major factors facilitating women's participation in committee work are the clear prospects of the benefit sharing; family support; the small size of the committee and the compact area in which they work; personal characteristics such as marital status and age; local people's support. Throughout Nepal across ethnic & caste groups, women are heavily involved in the collection of the forest

products needed to maintain the economy (Wickramasinghe 1993). Furthermore depending on the geographic and socio-cultural conditions, women contribute 50 to 80% of total agricultural labor (Bajracharya 1994).

The role of women is crucial for sustainable biodiversity conservation. (Smith et al. 2003) concluded that women's participation in the CF has so far been mostly in terms of labor contribution. They are not often involved in decision-making or when plans are formulated. Brahmin & Chhetri women in particular are not expected to attend formal meeting. Invitation to meeting is often aimed at gathering the household heads, who are generally man. Pandey (1995) has stated that though women are involved in forest related day-to-day activities, they appear much less than men in the public affairs. A strong FUG is supposed to have all its members, men and women rich and poor to participate actively in decision-making. Generally the female participation in assemblies and meeting is found less.

Lachapelle et al. (2004) has observed that the number of women engaged in self earning activities is obviously low; this is not unnatural as women are lagging far behind men even in literacy. Siddiqui (1989) writes that women's participation will help the forest first and the women second, women will have to give to forestry before forestry gives to them.

ICIMOD (1988) has concluded that factor related to women's self esteem and confidence are influenced by many things including gender ideologies, stage, ascribed roles, cultural taboos and expectation education world, case earning abilities, role in decision making and their own inner sense of autonomy, identity and strength, etc. Nelson (1979) has reported in many cultures through out the world it has been a traditional system to plan and decide many developmental activities by men only. The planning scheme made by men seems to be entirely gender blind in which neither women's needs nor women's roles are mentioned.

UN (1995) reported that the women's issues of career and job opportunities in the forestry profession and related decision making area may not have the same significance as the issues facing rural women in developing countries. They are still in important position of finding lasting solutions to the world's forest crisis. Speaking in 1995 on development issues Ugandan Vice-President Speciosa Wandira Kazibe put it well, when she said what we need "The achievement of a critical mass of women at the decision making and managerial levels, in the political fields and the public service that effects change at all levels."

### **2.3 Women and Disadvantaged Group's participation in community forestry**

Women's actions from the local village to the global policy making arenas are a driving force for change. From the 1975 United Nations (UN) International Year of Women, through The Decade of Women (1976–1985) and the global conferences and summits of the 1990s, women participated actively to shape economic, social, political, and sustainable development. Throughout the 1990s, women's organizations struggled to put gender on the global policy agenda at key UN International Conferences, including the UN conference on Environment and Development(Rio-1992) the International Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, Austria, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development(Cairo-Egypt-1994), and the fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing-China-1995).

At the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, 191 governments reaffirmed their commitment to women's empowerment and adopted the Millennium Declaration, agreeing to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and stimulate development that is truly sustainable.” The Declaration also addresses “the equal rights and opportunities of women and men” and pledges to “combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (Pearl 2003).

There are some international agreements emphasizing and supporting the importance of women's participation in forestry too. In this context, in Principle 20 of Rio Declaration, it is stated that "women have a vital role in environmental management and development, and their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development".

In Forest Principles it is stated that "the full participation of women in all aspects of the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests should be actively promoted" (UN 2005). Also, the Final Statement of XIth World Forestry Congress in Antalya calls countries "for promoting participatory forest planning and decision-making processes by all interested parties, and enhancing training of forestry professionals and field staff, with particular attention to the role of women and youth" (Anonymous, 1997). Similarly, the Final Statement of XIIth World Forestry Congress in Quebec calls countries "to encourage collaborative partnerships involving women, forest owners, indigenous people, nongovernmental organizations, local communities, industry and public agencies" (FAO 2005).

Women's participation in community forestry is important for the empowerment and equity issues. Empowering women is a means to ensure a better use, management and control of resources, which is vital for sustainable forestry development. CF programs will get more success if women actively participate in the decision making process since women are the principal workers of the forest. Participation in public decision-making such as 'forest protection committee' helps to increase women's bargaining power within and outside the household. Thus empowering women in forestry ensures greater control over the resources. Similarly, women's involvement is necessary for achieving equity in terms of benefit sharing and access to and control over resources. If women participate equally with men in forest management they are better placed to claim equal benefits and thus will improve the welfare of their whole household. The Master Plan for the Forestry sector (GoN 1988) has



recognized the participation of women in community forest management. CF guideline has indicated that there should be at least 33% women in FUGC. The FECOFUN has been also advocating for compulsory provision of 50% women in executive committee in each FUGC. Many studies (Khadka 2000; Upreti, 2000; Timsina, 2003) have reported that the women's participation in community forestry in the villages is increasing. There are now altogether 376 all-women 20 CFUG s which have managed over 9000 ha of forests. Furthermore, about 21% of the total committee members in CFUGs are women (MOPE 2001). Because of knowledge and ideas of good governance, self-confidence and empowerment, community forest users have been greatly promoted and ultimately accounted to have greater participation. Participation was found to be most in capacity building and natural resource management programmes, Involvement of DAGs in working groups was noticeable. There were respectively 37.04% and 34.22% women and 8.77% and 7.44% disadvantaged group's representation in executive committees and key positions.

Prioritization and inclusion of disadvantaged groups, ethnic groups and women in newly formed and renewed operational were most. Particularly, increment of women and disadvantaged groups in renewed plans was important. Similar observations were noted by Pokhrel and Nurse (2004), Maharajan et al(2004), Bhatta and Gentle(2004),Chaudhary (2004) and Dhital et al (2004) from different areas of Nepal. Such adequate and increasing trend of representation of women and disadvantaged groups in committee and key positions were noticeable (Kunwar and Parajuli (2007).

#### **2.4 Factors affecting women and DAGs's participation in community forestry**

There are several factors affecting women DAGs 's participation in community forestry. Social norms, gendered perceptions, household endowments/attributes and imperfect rules/regulations are some of the major factors hindering their

participation in CF management. A study of seven FUGs in eastern Nepal by Dahal (1994) found that only 3.5% of the users in the FUGs, were women. Similarly, In India, women usually constitute less than 10% in the general bodies (Agarwal 2001). Major factors affecting women and DAGs's participation in community forestry management in Nepal can be described as follows.

#### **2.4.1 Culture and tradition**

In general practice, male members represent their family in most of the outdoor activities and social meetings because of the patriarchal Nepalese culture and tradition. According to traditional perceptions, women are supposed to work inside the house and take care of children that hinder women to participate in the public domain. According to Dahal (1994) forests belong to the public domain in which females rarely participate. Many authors (Hobley, 1996; Britt and Shrestha, 1998; Agarwal, 2000) reported that male perceptions are the main constraint on women's participation in community forestry programs. Such perceptions usually keep women away from opportunities to participate in training, study tour, workshop, etc. Moreover, the class and caste system affect the position of women in the society and likely to matter the dominance of the upper caste. The lower caste and poor women have low bargaining power and they cannot better deal within a predominantly upper-caste community. Furthermore, lower caste women are subjected to seclusion, restricted mobility, and soft speech as compared to upper caste women.

Agarwal (2000) reported that in the CFUG meetings the interests of DAGs and lower caste women were almost entirely ignored. Nightingale (2003) found that it was the main constraint to the equal participation of women from all walks of the society. In addition, gender issue is prevalent within the females in the society. Lower opportunity is given to daughter in-laws and widows compared to daughters and women with husband. Daughter in-laws are usually confined in household work while widows are considered as symbol of misfortune (Acharya 2003).

### **2.4.2 Access to resources and capital**

Women's access and control to resources is important for their socio-economic empowerment (Agarwal 2003). Women neither own nor directly control arable land, which is the private source of supplementary products such as firewood, crop waste for fuel, and fodder. They also have less access than men do to employment and other sources of income (Agarwal 2002). Even there they need their husband's approval and signature in order to obtain a formal loan from the bank (Acharya 2001). All these show subordinate position of women that hinders their active participation in community forestry program.

### **2.4.3 Poverty**

Poverty is seen as a problem in the participation of poor and landless women (Dahal 1994). For the poor people, forest products are the only option for their income in daily lives. Women from poor and Disadvantaged Group families need to spend much more time in forest searching for fuel wood and fodder. Hence their participation in CF management is practically a hindrance to their livelihood since they cannot spare time for attending community forestry meetings and other activities (Chhetri and Rana 1995).

### **2.4.4 Illiteracy**

Education level of the users is important for the smooth administrative functioning of the committee. However, the female literacy rate in Nepal is only 42.5%, which is the main barrier of women's participation in community forestry (Dahal 1994). Illiteracy usually hinders Disadvantaged Group and women from knowledge and lack confidence to be involved in community forest management activities. Its consequences can be seen in forest protection and management. For example, in rural area of Nepal, most of the DAGs and women are illiterate there is severe depletion of forest resources (Bhattarai 1997; FAO 1992). Dahal (1994) has noted that most of the illiterate adult women in FUGs are unaware of their legal rights or are unwilling to exercise them. Thus illiteracy hinders the DAGs and women's participation in community forestry.

#### **2.4.5 Government policy and extension services**

Government's policy, rule and regulations regarding forest management influence the participation of women in forest management. In Nepal, GoN (1988) had provision of at least 33% women members in the FUG committees according to its MFPS. However, several CFUG s have less than 20% women members in the FUGs (Agarwal, 2001). Most field workers, extension workers and the employees of forest department are men and only few women are working in the forestry extension services. Women members of the FUG feel easy to talk with women extension workers. Thus, the insufficiency of women's extension workers is a constraint for women's participation in CF. Moreover, many users are not clear about the government's forest policy and they believe that the forest has been given to them temporarily; when it becomes dense it will be snatched away from them. The provision of the Forest Act 1993, section 27, "Resumption of community forest" is another hindrance in the way of ensuring people's participation in community forestry in Nepal (Dahal 1994).The DAGs and Women are prioritized to hand over the community forestry to raise the livelihood as in LFP project the accessible forests of nearby.

## Chapter Three

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Overview of the study area

##### 3.1.1 General description of the district

The study was carried out in Kaski district. It has 201700 hectares of total land area, 380527 total population and 37.31% of forest cover. It is one of the mid-mountain districts of Nepal where community forestry has been practiced for more than 25 years. The district has a subtropical climate with relatively high humid weather. Some parts of the district receive the highest rainfall in Nepal, with more than 5000 mm per annum. The mean maximum temperature is 33°C in April and May, which declines during the monsoon period and falls to a minimum of 5-6° C during December and January (DDC 2002). About 65% of the total area of the district is relatively intact natural area, of which 45% is forest and 20% shrub land. Agricultural land covers 24% while 11% of the area is under human settlements (CBS 2003). The major tree species dominating community forests in the district are Katus (*Castanopsis indica*), Chilaune (*Schima wallichii*) and Salla (*Pinus roxburghii*). According to the District Forest Office (DFO 2004) Kaski, 553 community forests have already been handed over to the local communities, covering 17.05% (14,499.83 ha) of potential community forest area, and 37,113 households are involved in community forestry activities. The district is a meeting point of societies of multi-caste people belonging to the different caste/ethnic groups such as Brahmin, Gurung etc. and some other occupational castes; Kami, Damai, and Sarki. The average literacy rate in the district is 56.8% (CBS 2003). Figure 2 presents the map of Nepal showing the study sites.

### 3.1.2 Criteria of the selection of CFUG s

Two CFUGs: Pandanda Simle CFUG in Arva bijay Village Development Committee and Puranochaur CFUG in Lekhnath municipality formally handed over by District Forest Office to the local communities were selected for the study by consulting with advisor and DFO, Kaski. These two FUGs are selected because they have the representation:

- Two CFUGs both male-headed CFUG and mostly DAGs and Janjati.
- Both CFUGs have the representation of multiethnic group.
- Both CFUGs functioning for at least one full period of the operational plan (5 years).
- Both CFUGs have meeting point of societies of multi-caste people belonging to the different caste/ethnic groups such as Brahamin, Chhetri, Gurung, etc. and some other occupational castes; Kami, Damai and Sarki .
- Both CFUGs have Kharsu, Chilaune, Katus, Rakchan and Salla species.

### 3.2 Sampling Census

In the current study , the universe of this study was of 120 forest user households who are the members of the two different forest user committee. They have been first identified and a sampling frame developed . The universe of this study was of 120 forest user households who are the member of the two different community forest user groups: *Pandanda Simle and puranochaur*. Firstly, all the households which are the member of these two CFUGs, were listed out forming the universe of 120 households. The sampling method has been designed and determined by Census method. From the total of 120 households, informants from the all households were selected following the total sampling procedure i.e. (Table 1). Executive committee members of the respective CFUG s were also interviewed as key-informants.

### **3.3 General descriptions of the selected CFUG s**

#### **3.3.1 Pandanda Simle Community Forest User Group**

Pandanda Simle community forest is located in Arva V.D.C ward no.6 in Kaski district. This forest was registered as Pandanda Simle community forest at District Forest Office Kaski on 2051 B. S. The number of household in this CF is 61 with ethnic composition of Gurung, Kami, Sarki, Damai, Sunar as described by rules and laws related to our country. The total area of this community forest is 60 hectares.

The forest was destroyed excessively from 2035 B.S. to 2037 B. S. because of heavily used by local people. After that there was no ground cover and from 2037 B.S. to 2042 B.S. the forest was totally destroyed due to heavy landslides. People became aware about the conservation of forest and in 2047 B. S. conservation of forest was done by villagers with the help of District Forest Office, Kaski. Later, in 2051 B.S. the forest was registered as Pandanda Simle Community Forest Office. In 2053 B. S. but there was the great debate of the inclusion of real forest users so on the request of Forest User Committee it was renewed after two years. Then in every 5 years it is renewed by District Forest Office Kaski due to duration on handover time is finished on the written request of Forest User Group.

#### **3.3.2 Puranochaur Community Forest User Group:**

Puranochaur CF which lies in Lekhnath municipality ward number 4, Kaski district was registered in 2050 B.S. The number of house holds in this CF is 59 with many kind of caste composition especially of Brahamin, Kami, Sarki, Damai and Sunar (Dalit,) etc. The primary caste groups of this community forestry user groups are Brahmin, Janjati and Dalit. The total area of CF is 2.5 hectares (Table 1). In the past, this forest was openly accessible to all; there were no rules and regulations for forest protection and management. As a result it was much more degraded than before the hand over. This forest was

managed by committee members which were all males. According to the latest Community Forestry Operational guidelines there is the provision of 50% inclusion of women is must. According to new guideline the propionate inclusion of all the caste is mandatory. Later villagers started becoming aware of the need for protection of this forest, so the people became serious towards forest protection and management and put many female members on the committee. After the hand over, the condition of the forest has been improved.

Table 1: Year of handed over, area and the total and sampled number of households of the selected CFUG's

Name of the CFUG	Year of handed over	Area of CF in hectares	Total no. of households	Sampled house holds		
				DAGs	women	Total
Pandanda Simle	2051(2056)*	60	61	30	31	61
Puranochaur	2050(2058)*	2.5	59	22	37	59

\*Renewable date in parentheses

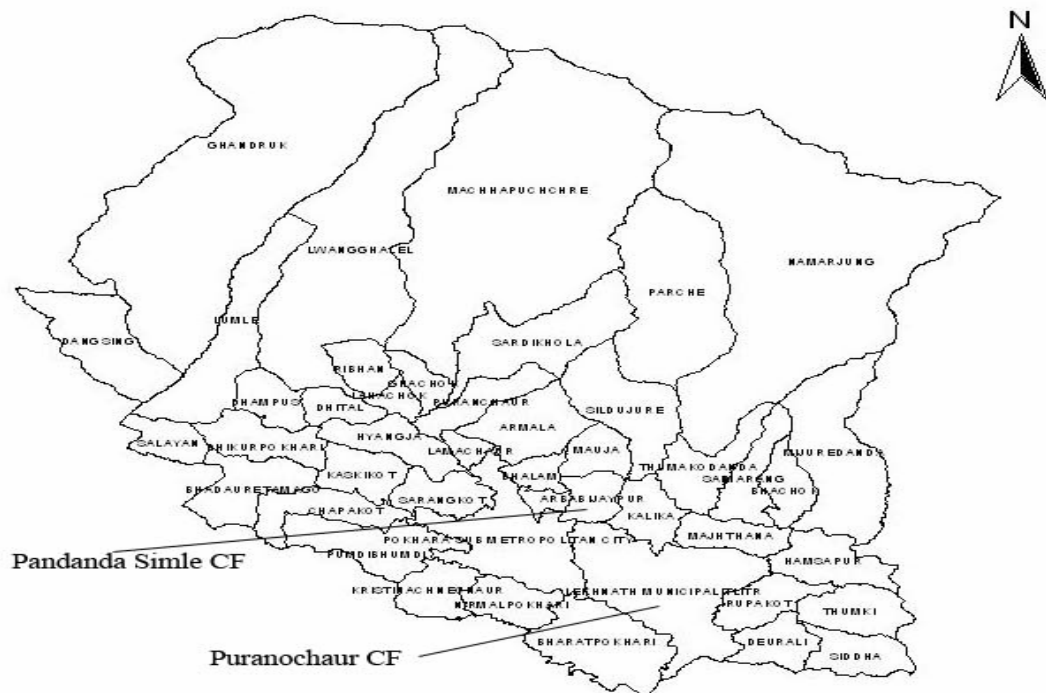


Figure 2 Location map of study area



### **3.4 Research design and the research process**

The study follows the descriptive types of research design. Participation of DAGs and women in various community forest management activities, factor affecting their level of participation and overall perception of the forest user households toward their participation in Community forest management are described based upon the primary data collected from the field. The descriptive research design has described the sociological impact on the participation of women in various forest management activities and made some suggestion in improving their participation.

### **3.5 Data collection techniques/instruments**

#### **3.5.1 Primary data collection**

The data relevant to the study were collected through field research which was carried out conducting small focus group discussions, household survey, key informant interview, and direct observation. In many cases, multiple sources/persons were asked the same question in order to triangulate results.

##### ***a. Key informant interview***

Interviews with committee members of CFUG s and with some other local leaders were conducted to collect specific community level information. The issues dealt with them were mainly DAGs and women participation in CF management, the sorts of activities they were performing in their forest, what were major factors that prevent the DAGs and women participation in different activities and people's perception and attitude towards CF management activities.

##### ***b. Focus group discussion***

Focus group discussion was carried out to explore the overall community forestry functioning system, major problem faced by women, major hindering factors that affect the performances of women

in CF management to make some recommendations for improving DAGs and women's participation in CF management activities.

**c. *Household survey***

A self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. Once the draft questionnaire was developed, pre-testing of the questionnaire was undertaken in one CFUG, which is situated out of the sampling frame. The responses of pre-testing were incorporated and modified into final questionnaire for surveying.

**d. *Direct observation***

During the field study, direct observation was made for examining the condition of forest with local people, people's reaction during focus group discussion, and other events going on in the field in order to get an idea about how the local people are managing their forest and what sort of activities they are conducting in the forest and the role of women in each of the stated activities.

**e. *Interview method:***

Questionnaire schedule was prepared and at least 10% information was collected by according to questionnaire schedule.

### **3.5.2 Secondary data collection**

The secondary data were collected by published and unpublished books, journals, research reports, operational plans, minutes and semi-confidential records of CFUG s and unpublished official records, maps and other relevant recent literatures on CF management.

### **3.6 Reliability**

Reliability of the instrument was ensured from careful planning of the questions in the schedule. Data were taken from relatively large sample to ensure the reliability. While developing the data collecting instruments, a great care was given on consistency, accuracy and dependability of the instruments.

### **3.7 Methods of data analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as median, maximum, minimum etc. Further, users were categorized on the basis of different characteristics such as sex of the respondents, education, income group etc. Data were presented in tabular as well as in graphical form. Computer software such as Excel, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was also used for data analysis.

## Chapter Four

### Socio-economic attributes of sampled households

This chapter describes the socio-economic attributes of the respondents selected for sampling. This covers caste, age, occupation, sex and other attributes of the sampled respondents.

#### 4.1 Caste of the respondents

Caste system is deeply rooted in Hindu society based on the four primary divisions. These are *Brahmins* (considered as priest and religious leaders), *Chhetries* (warriors), *Baisya* (artisans, like *Gurung*, .) and *Sudras* also termed as *Dalit* (occupational caste like *Kami*, *Damai*, and *Sarki*, etc., are traditionally considered as untouchables. Distribution of the respondents according to caste is presented in Figure 3.

Name of the cast	Number	Surveyed respondents	percentage	Remarks
Brahnan	36	36	30	
Gurung	32	32	27	
Dalit	52	52	43	

Note: Dalit refers to Kami, Damai, Sarki, Sunar, Gandhard etc.. Around 43% Dalits were sampled and they provided key information.

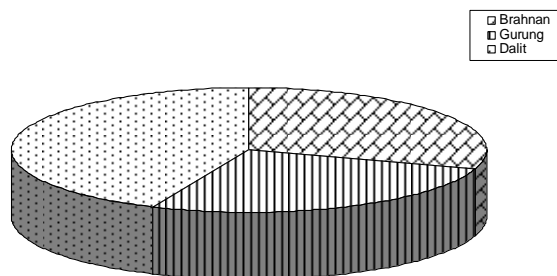


Figure 3: Caste of the respondents. Source: Field survey, 2009

Figure 4 shows that the respondents involved in the survey belonged to different castes. Brahmins were 30%, Baisya(Gurung) were 27%, Dalits were 43 % .

#### 4.2 Sex of the respondent

Many rights in any society are granted only to the males. For the purpose of this study, "sex" is usually preferred as the determining factor because it refers to biology rather than socially constructed norms which are more open to interpretation and dispute.

100% of total respondents selected for sampling design of the study were females.

#### 4.3 Education status of the respondents

Education is one of the major factors influencing participation of the users in community forest management activities and their attitude and perception towards it. 35% of the sampled respondents are illiterate, 25% have primary schooling and at least i.e., 31% of them have secondary schooling, and 9% of them have college degree (Figure 4).

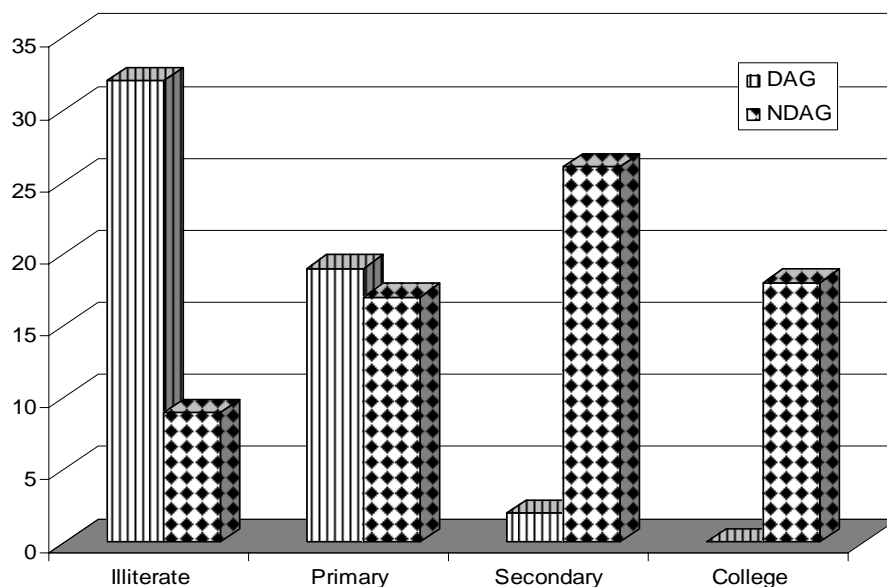


Figure 4: Education status of the respondents (DAGs and NDAGs)

Source : Field survey, 2009

#### 4.4 Occupation of the respondents

Occupation refers to self-care, productive work (ie. job, volunteer work, parenting, etc.), and leisure. That is, it is meant to encompass all activity that gives meaning to daily life.

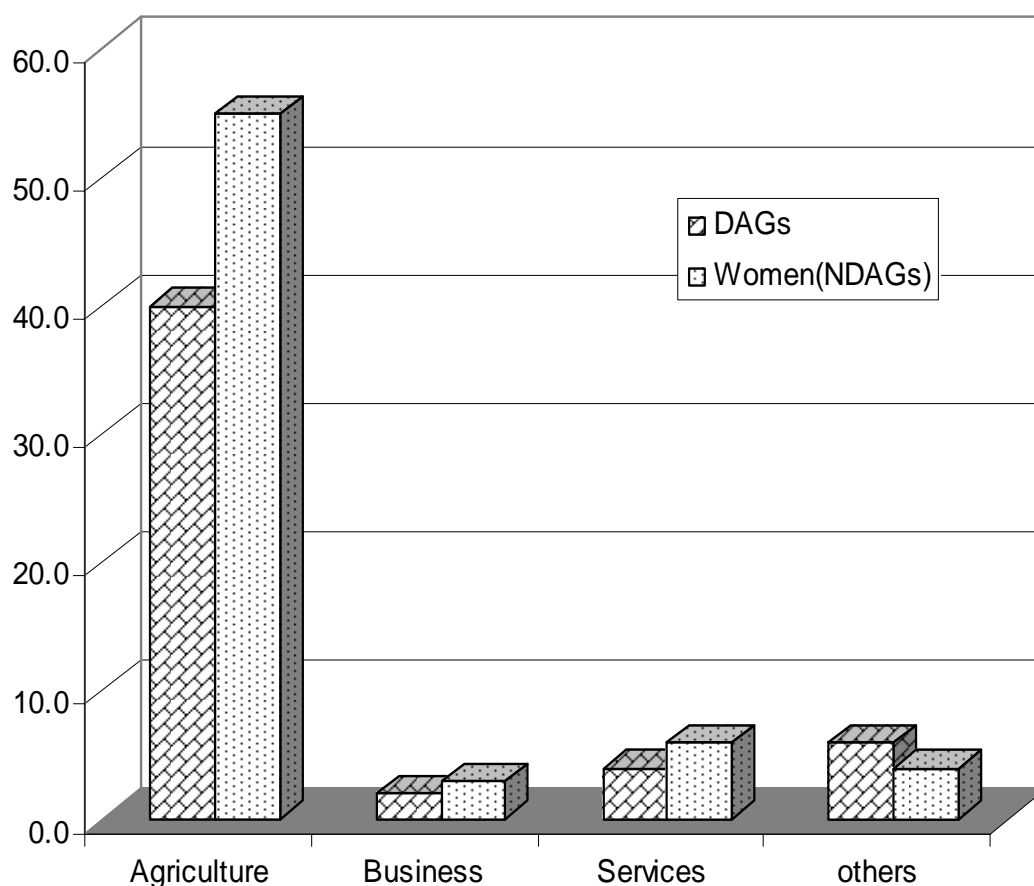


Figure 5: Occupational status of respondents. Source: Field survey, 2009

Agriculture (79.17%) is the main occupation of the respondents in the study area. Government service (8.33%) comes to the next. 8.33 % of the respondents earned their livelihood by others and business followed by others 4.17% (Figure 5).

#### 4.5 Average household size of the respondents

Table: 2 Average household size

Family member size /numbers	Frequency	Total family members
1	6	6
2	7	14
3	15	45
4	24	96
5	29	145
6	20	120
8	1	8
10	15	150
12	3	36
	120	620

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The household survey indicates that majority of the respondents belonging to the sampling design of the study had an average family size of 5-6 individuals per household. The average family size was 5.17 in the study area with minimum 1 and maximum 12 members .Family size of the surveyed population was found smaller (5.17) than national; average family size of the country is 5.4 (CBS 2003).

#### 4.6 Age of the respondents

Table: 3 Age of the respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
15-20	38	31.67
20-25	23	19.16
25-30	12	10
30-35	5	4.17
35-40	8	6.67
40-45	3	2.5
45-50	7	5.83
50-55	18	15
55-60	6	5
	120	100

Source : Field Survey ,2009

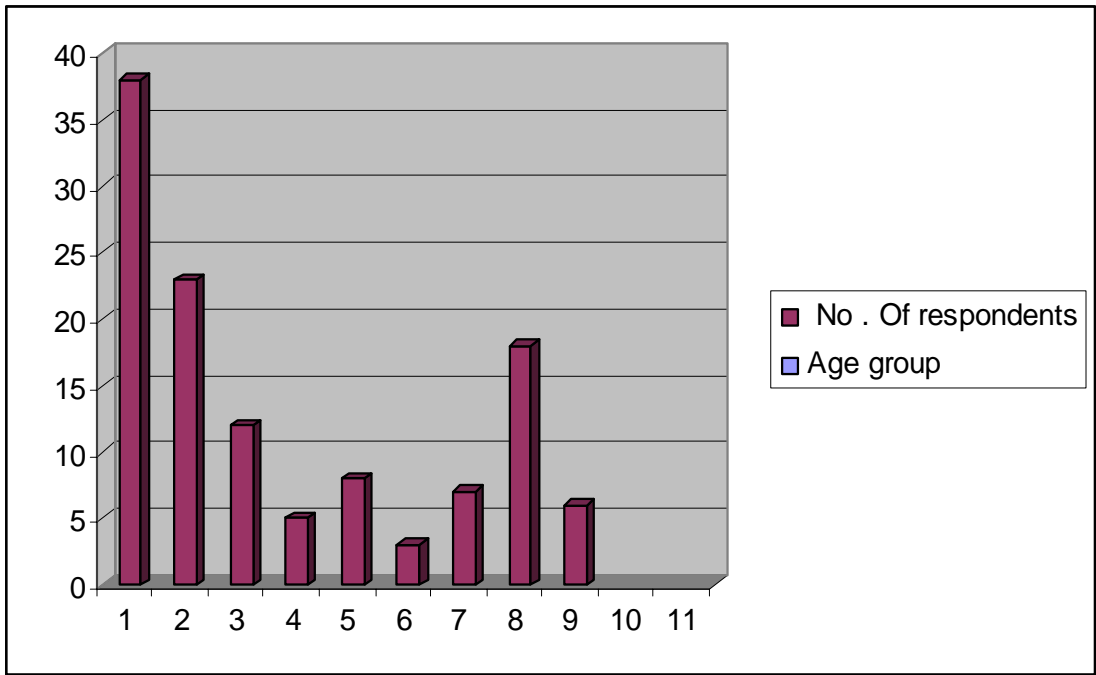


Figure 6 Age of the respondents

From the table, we came to know that there are different nine age groups. The respondents from age 15-20 years is 31.67% is , age 15-20 years is 19.16 %, age 50-55 years is 15 %,and the age 40-45 years is 2.5 % that was the least respectively. .



## Chapter Five

### Participation of DAGs and women in Community Forest management

This chapter deals with the level of participation of women in the community forest management activities of the forest user group. Level of participation of women in forest management, resource mobilization and development interventions has been measured in terms of high, average, low and none.

The effort had been made to make the validity and reliability of the information. As the researcher worked in DFO Kaski district during the period of research, which is itself the reliable source.

#### 5.1 Participation of DAGs and Women in different FUG activities

Participation of DAGs and Women in different FUG activities is presented in Figure 8. Majority of the respondents stated that DAGs and Women's participation in the identification of users was low (52.5%) followed 47.5 % was not participating. 55.83% of the sampled respondents agreed on the statement that level of participation of women members of the forest user group meetings were participating and 44.17% was not participating.

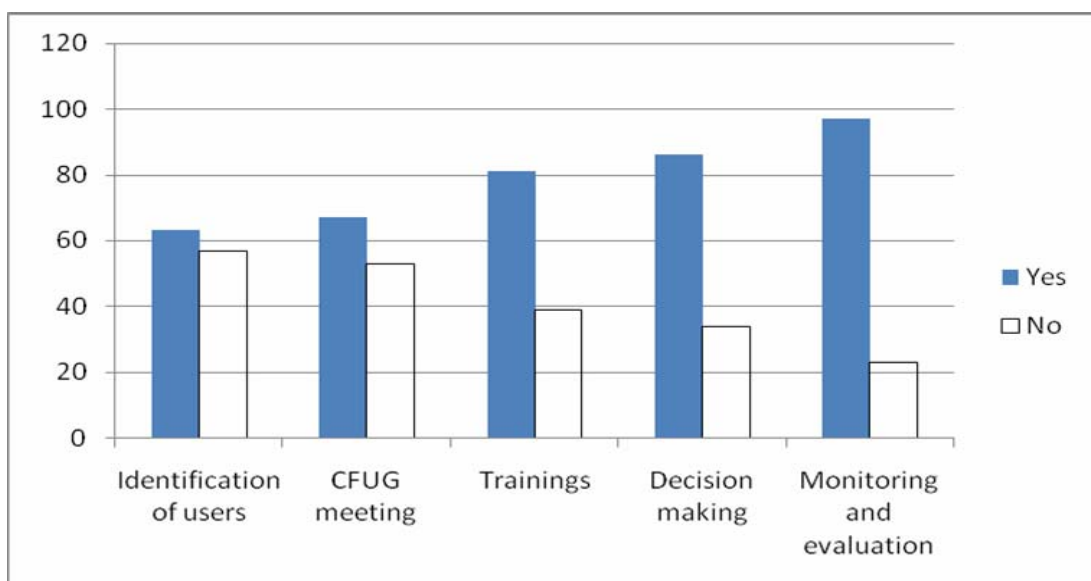


Figure 7: Women's participation in FUG activities, Source: Field Survey, 2009

Majority of the respondents (67.5%) reported that participation of DAGs and Women in the trainings was supported by only 32.5% was not involved .Only 71.67% of the respondents agreed that degree of participation of DAGs and Women in decision making process was followed and (28.33%) was not involved. Participation was observed to be low (88.83%) in monitoring and evaluation procedures and (11.17%) during committee formation process. The extent of DAGs and Women’s participation in overall activities of the forest user groups was found average (66%).

## 5.2 Women’s participation in resource mobilization and development interventions

Women's participation in resource mobilization and other development interventions is presented in Figure 9.

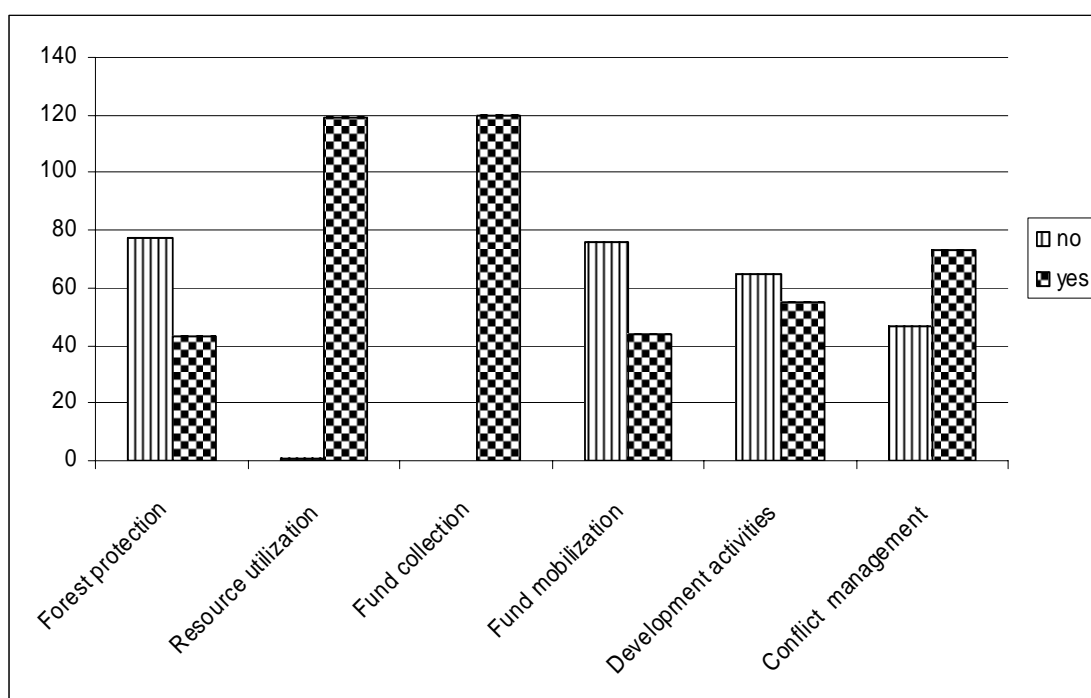


Figure 8: Women’s participation in resource management activities, Source: Field Survey, 2009

Majority of the respondents stated that women’s participation in forest protection activities was average (64.16 %) followed by high and low being (35.86%). Most of the respondents agreed that women’s participated in

resource utilization and fund collecting activities of the users group at average level supported by 83.33% and 100% of the total respondents interviewed respectively. However, participation was observed low in case of fund mobilization and development activities supported by 63.33% and 39.16% of respondents. In development activities of the community, their participation was 54.12%.The participation in conflict resolution is comparatively high.

## Chapter Six

### Perception towards Community Forest management

This chapter deals with the measurement of perception and attitude of the users towards community forest management. The perception of the users was measured in terms of degree of satisfaction in the activities carried out by the group in the community, level of discrimination prevalent in the group among various interest groups and stakeholders including women group, deprived and minor communities and other stakeholders and change in various attributes of the forests in terms of change in greenery etc. in the forest and other visible parameters. Level of response was measured in terms of high, average, low and none.

#### 6.1 Degree of satisfaction of users in various activities of CF

Forest provides various types of goods and services for satisfaction of then users. But in multiethnic group different need based demand are viewed with different perceptions such as training needs, FUC activities and decision making etc.

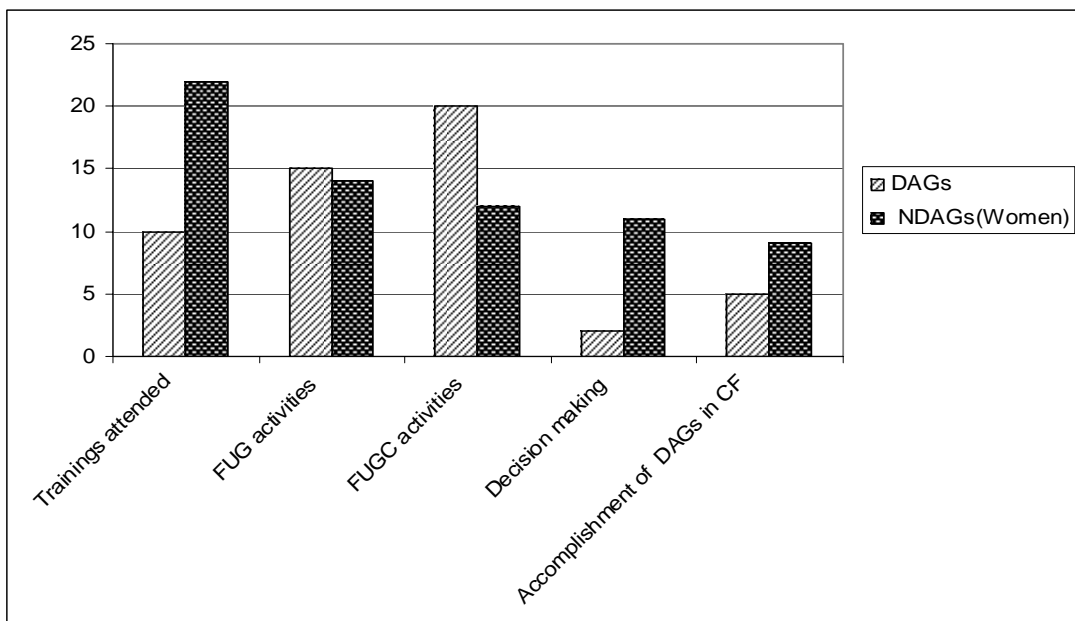


Figure 9: Field Survey, 2009

Figure 9 above depicts that 100% of female respondents showed indifferent views on the statement regarding the satisfaction level on trainings attended. The respondents agreed that satisfaction level in FUG activities was low, supported by 26.67%. Similarly their degree of satisfaction on FUG and FUGC activities was also observed low backed the statement up by 24.17 and 26.67 % respondents respectively. Similar was the case for decision making arrangement/ pattern supported by 10.83 % of respondents. About half of the female respondents agreed that role of DFO was low (51%) whereas other responders stated it was average. Perception of the users in case of accomplishments/ success in addressing goal and objectives of community forest management was found to be high supported by 11.67 % of respondents.

## 6.2 Perception of users regarding discrimination in CFUG

Perception of the respondents about discrimination done to different users in various CFUGs activities is presented in Figure 10.

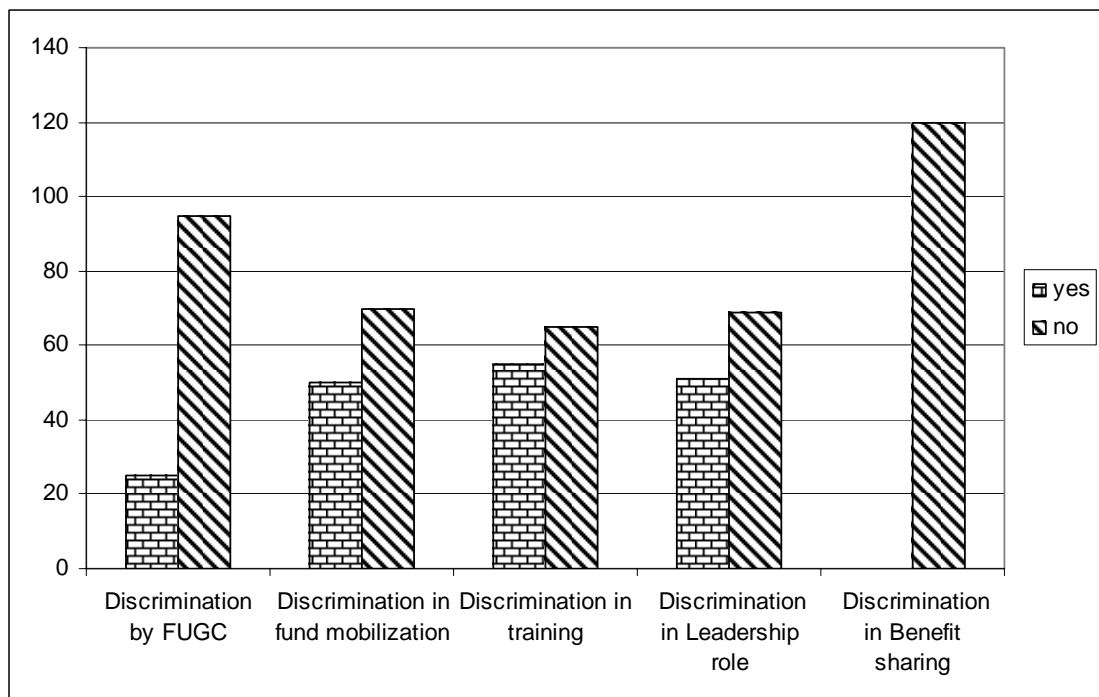


Figure 10: Perception of users regarding discrimination in CFUG, Source: Field Survey, 2009

Figure 10 shows majority of the respondents agreed that there was not any discrimination inside CFUG in various activities such as fund mobilization, trainings, leadership and benefit sharing. More than 70% of the respondents stated that there isn't any discrimination in the name of DAGs and Women and other so-called deprived minorities in the community. The prevalence of any discrimination by CFUG in the users group was ignored by more than two-third of the respondents.

### 6.3 Perception regarding change in various attributes of the forest after CF

Table 4 summarizes the perception of the users regarding changes observed in the attributes after the hand over of the forest.

**Table 4 Perception regarding changes after CF**

Perception regarding Change	No	Percentage	Yes	Percentage
Change in greenery	15	12.5	105	87.5
Change in bird numbers	15	12.5	105	87.5
Change in wildlife numbers	5	4.17	115	95.83
Change in crop density and diversity	5	4.17	115	95.83
Change in tree size	4	3.33	116	96.67
Increase in fodder	4	3.33	116	96.67

Source: Field survey, 2009

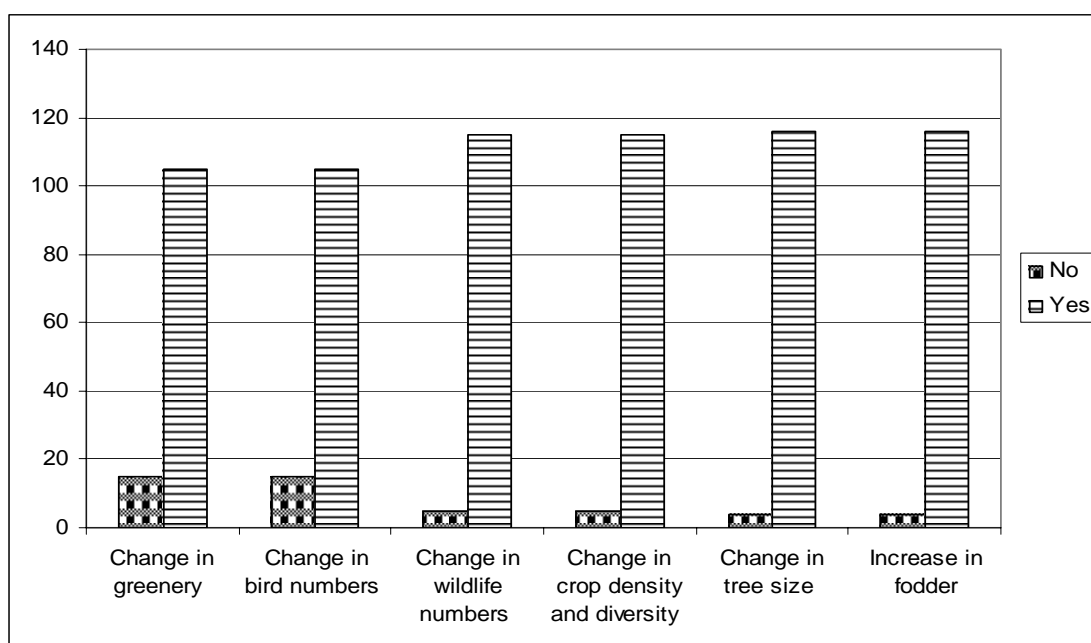


Figure 11 Perception regarding changes after CF,

Both DAGs (87.5%) and Women (96.67%) agreed that has changed in the greenery after the hand over of the forest. However, the change in bird numbers after CF was ignored both DAGs (95.83 %) and Women (95.83 %) respondents. Similar perception was observed in case of change in wildlife numbers stated by both DAGs and Women (95.83%) respondents.

Change in crop density was observed after CF handover by DAGs and Women (96.83 %) respondents. However, change in tree size wasn't observed stated by 96.83 % of all the respondents. All of the respondents of both the categories agreed to continue CF in the future to better address the needs of poor and deprived minorities of the community.

#### 6.4 Perception regarding importance of DAGs and Women participation

Table 5, Perception regarding importance of DAGs and Women participation

Perception	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very important	60	50.00
Important	35	29.17
May be good	25	20.83

Source: Field Survey, 2009

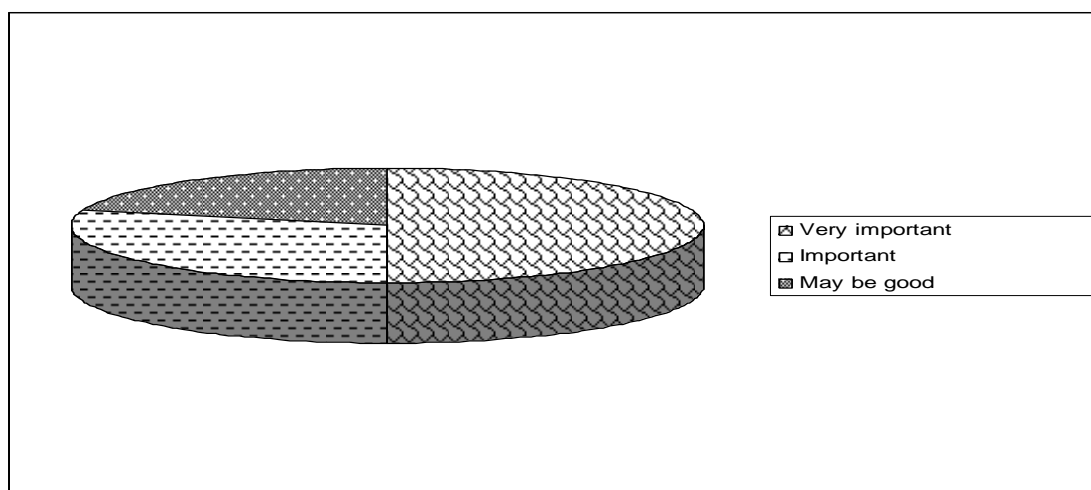


Figure 12: Importance of DAGs and Women participation in CFUC and CFUG activities  
 Figure 12 above reveals that majority of the respondents (54%) perceived that it is very important to secure representation of women and lower caste in Community Forest Users Committee (CFUC) and in various Community Forest Users Group (CFUG) activities and other interventions.

## Chapter Seven

### Improving participation of women and DAGs in Community Forest Management

Participation of DAGs and Women is a serious concern in community forestry in Nepal. Donors and development practitioners have started to recognize the importance of equity and as a result, have sought to foster the participation of DAGs and women and marginalized castes within community forestry. Thus, they have provided the opportunities for the women to participate in the community forest management. Yet, the nature and impact of DAGs and Women on natural resource management and development have been either overlooked or misunderstood by practitioners and policy makers dealing with environmental issues.

Focus on DAGs and Women issues is invisible not only at the policy level but also at the local level. This chapter deals with the suggestions made by the respondents to improve DAGs and women's participation in the group and discusses important aspects to be addressed to ensure higher level of DAGs and women's participation in community forest management in Nepal at present.

#### 7.1 Respondent's view to improve women's and DAGs participation

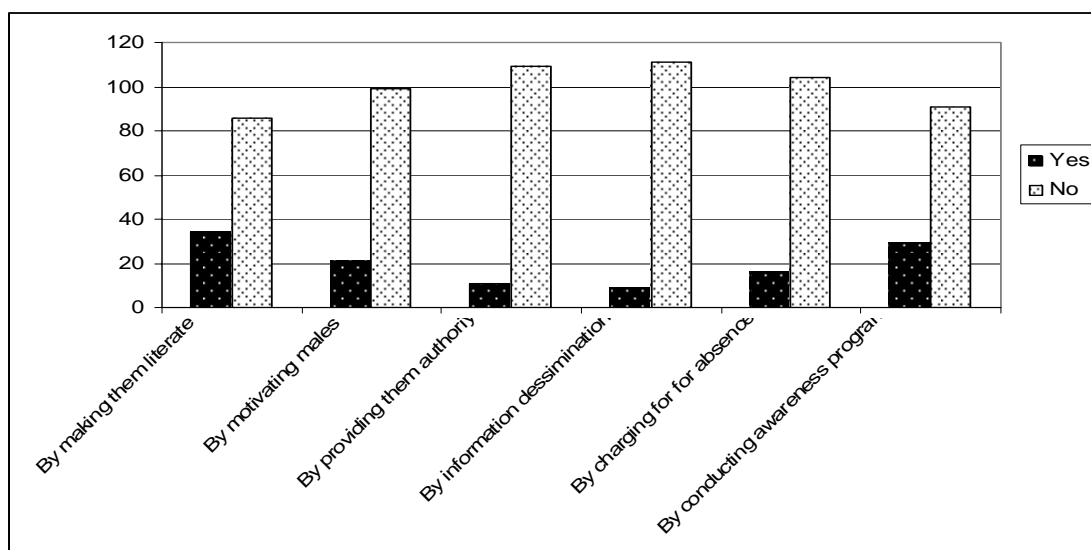


Figure 13 Suggestions to improve women's and DAGs participation,

Source: Field Survey, 2009



In this study, majority of the respondents stated that making them literate, motivating male members of the family, providing them the authority to make them responsible, information dissemination to increase access to information, charging for absence and conducting awareness programs could lead to the increase in the participation of women members of the user groups. These suggestions were stated by more than 80% of the respondents (Figure 13).

## **7.2 Discussion in improving the women's participation in CF management**

National policy on women's participation has been adopted from the sixth plan period to increase women's participation by eliminating the obstacles apparent in the process of all round development of the Nepalese society including the women community. Accordingly National work plan for women's Development was formulated under the governorship of women's services coordination committee by collecting suggestions through various channels about the feasible and practical programs to be implemented through different HMG institutions and non government sectors for the women's development in Nepal. With the aim of increasing women's participation in every field in the socio economic development this National work plan has presented basic objectives, problems, and steps related to administrative and policy matters by allocating different fields such as education, health, employment, agriculture, cooperatives and forest for women's development.

Though the programs presented in the National work Plan have had concurrence in principle by the government and non government institutions for gradual implementation on the basis of practicability no substantial achievement has taken place so far in their implementation aspect. An analysis of determinants (age, gender, ethnicity and land holding were major factors examined) of participation in common property resource management carried out by Maskey et al (2003) showed that participation in common property resource management is based on the socio-economic profile of an individual and the level of participation is determined by the benefits obtained from the

forest. Participation of women in community forest management is enhanced due to the roles of various institutions.

In an article by Pokharel and Paudel (2005), overall achievement from Community Forest Management in Nepal has been secured in case of increased participation and representation of women and socially marginalized groups in leadership positions. However, examining individual cases of various CFUGs has indicated that there is still huge gap to be bridged for active women's participation. Women are largely excluded from the management decision making process in multi-caste user groups. Caste and gender norms require that they sit away from the high-caste men who run the meeting, literally and symbolically dimming their voices at meetings. Even when they do voice their concerns, these concerns are very rarely addressed by the final outcome (Nightingale 2002)

In the study by Pant et al. (2005), participation of women in the CF was found to be low with regard to the national average, which is 21 percent which is similar as in case of the present findings. But outside interventions in the form of training and awareness creation has helped to increase women's involvement in CF (CARE Nepal 2002). Lower women participation in CFUG activities and interventions has been reported by following studies as well. In spite of the existing rules to have one-third of women in the committee, women are underrepresented. Women's participation in meetings, in general, was also reported to be negligible. This trend of only men attending meetings was evident during the group discussion where women's presence was minimal. Women's presence in group and focus group discussions was minimal. Women's participation in terms of raising their voice on pertinent issues or giving opinions at meetings was almost nonexistent. Increasing gender participation usually needs the outside intervention in the form of training (van Koppen et al. 2001), which in most cases is lacking due to primary focus being on the formation of user groups. However, in the study conducted in

Bhodkhore CFUG of Parbat district by Poudel and Vogel (2007), the trend of active participation in CF management activities is increasing except in forest management. Active participation in annual plan formulation and OP and constitution preparation/ amendment is increasing steadily. Some users have participated in trainings/workshops/study tours related to forest management. Active participation of users in forest management activities is in a decreasing trend in the last three years than was in previous years. Representation of women and Dalit in CFUGC helps to increase their active participation in decision-making (Baral 2001), and other users from their groups are encouraged to put their views in discussions and to participate actively in every aspect of CF (Paudel 2003).

The present study found out that women's participation in decision making process in concerned CFUGs was low. Similar finding was reported by Nightingale (2002), who also explained that low participation of women and DAG in decision-making processes did not represent their voices in the decisions. Decision making platform is the most important factor to ensure the meaningful participation of women and disadvantaged group of the society. The result is similar to that of Poudel (2003), who concluded that presence of women and DAGs member in committee is only for attendance not for discussion, suggestion and decision making even if they were called for. Participation of women in the preliminary stages of community forestry process such as users' identification and committee formation was found low in the present study. This implies that the primary users of natural resources have been deprived of rights to raise voices during users' identification and committee formation. A similar finding has been put forth by Parajuli (2005). The causal factors for the indicated problems of inadequate participation of women in different interventions of Community Forest Management are: inadequate information with women, their lack of knowledge about institutional management processes of FUGs, and a lack of focus on power relation between men and women in FUGs. These issues need to be considered

when designing and implementing community forestry policies and strategies. The promotion of women and the poor's access to decision-making processes in forest user groups depends on effective national strategies that consider and incorporate gender issues, and a corresponding commitment at the FUGs level. In the process of economic development women's participation is important. It would not be out of place to accept the socio economic standard of women as an indicator of development of the country because women constitute half of the population of Nepal. Necessary opportunity and appropriate environment must be created to make women participate on the same footing as men do in the process of development of the country. Thus, more attention should be given in gender issues while making policy as well as implementing the policy in field level. Extension workers need to interact with both women and men so that women members also can get equal opportunity to speak in meetings. Furthermore, they should bring together all the interest group people in the meeting in decision-making. There is a need of women extension workers who can motivate women at grass root level to participate in the community forestry.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **8.1 Conclusions**

During the study, participation of DAGs and women in different group activities and perception of the users towards community forest management were analyzed. Based on the findings of the study, following conclusions can be drawn.

The participation of DAGs and women in the group is low during the identification of users and committee formation which shows lack of sufficient involvement of DAGs and women in important preliminary stages of community forestry process. It is also low in case of decision making process and monitoring and evaluation of FUG activities. These processes are recognized as important opportunities for the group to exercise leadership capabilities and the practice of good governance. Women's participation in these for a immense importance in community forestry process suggests that women are still lagging behind in the community based natural resource management. Average level of participation in forest protection activities, resource utilization and fund collection implies that their roles in such activities is somewhat satisfactory compared to others but this still needs to be elevated. However, lower level of women's participation in fund mobilization activities suggests that there isn't sufficient involvement of DAGs and women in mobilizing funds collected for different forest as well community development activities. This implies their limited access to financial transactions information and transparency of such activities. The average level of satisfaction in FUG/FUC activities, decision making arrangement/pattern and accomplishment of CF implies that their average acceptance of current activities and process and arrangements for different activities. However, the role of DFO has been perceived contradictorily by male and female users. Users have perceived that

greenery has been maintained after the handover of CF. The most important perception of the users regarding the discrimination prevalent in the group is of immense importance for creating various ways to the success of the group. Users perceived no prevalence of any form of discrimination in the name of caste, wealth status and other so called *Dalits*. This suggests a new hope for all interest groups/stakeholders in the group to get opportunities for their voices and ideas to flourish in the future and sustain the group in the long run.

Different theories and policy debates have been arising that focus on women involvement in development. It focuses on transforming unequal social/gender relations and empowering women during 1970s as WED movement. WED movement was criticized and GED approach emerged with broader theme. Participation is important for the sharing of the resources and empowerment of people. Equal participation of all types of people in CFUG was advocated since long ago but it was always male biased. DAGs and Women's access to different capitals formed through CFUG s was also limited. Even though women's roles in participation in forest management are recognized and gender issues are incorporated in forest policy and programs everywhere, there are gender issues prevalent especially in the community forestry programs in developing countries like Nepal. Several factors such as social norms, gendered perceptions, household endowments, attributes, illiteracy, and imperfect rules/regulations are affecting the participation of women in community forestry. DAGs are so poor that have no free time to attend assembly and meetings as they have to work on wages to meet the feeding family members. So generally they are not interested where they don't get money and work.

## **8.2 Recommendation**

Taking into account the DAGs and women's lower level of participation in important processes and for the community forestry process, followings suggestions can be made. Illiteracy is one of the major factors hindering participation in case of DAGs and rural women as supported by different

authors. One of the ways to start with can be making them literate to ensure their ability and confidence to participate in the group activities. Nepalese society is male dominated and this domination is one of the influential indirect ways to restrict women from participation in out-door activities in the community. Motivating male members of the family could be effective in ensuring higher level of women's participation in community forest management. Charging for absence in the meetings and other activities could be one of obligatory ways to make them participate but this has not been strongly recommended because mere forceful participation is not as effective as self motivation for participation. Access to the information about different activities in the group should be increased for facilitating DAGs and women's participation through effective information dissemination system within the group. Providing authority/responsibility to them is perhaps the most efficient means of promoting and ensuring DAGs and women's participation in community forest management since this creates feeling of responsibility and ownership that eventually leads to increased DAGs and women's participation in community forest management.

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## **Appendix 1: Household survey questionnaire**

### **Questionnaire for general member of CFUG Kaski District, Western Development Region, Nepal**

#### **A. General information**

1. Household number: Date:  
Respondent's identification  
Name:  
Caste
2. VDC:  
Ward number:  
Village:  
Age:  
Sex :  
Education (number of years of schooling);
3. Family size:
4. Major occupation
  - a. Agriculture
  - b. Business
  - c. Service
  - d. Wage labor
  - e. Others (specify)

#### **B. Knowledge, perception and attitude toward CF program**

5. How do you rate your general knowledge level in the following?
  - a. Definition of CFP H A L N
  - b. Importance CFP H A L N
  - c. Importance of Operational plan H A L N
  - d. Role of DFO and Rangers H A L N
  - e. Role of FUG and FUG/C H A L N
6. How do you rate your attitude level in the following?

- a. Degree of satisfaction with the trainings attended H A L N
  - b. Degree of satisfaction with the activities of FUG H A L N
  - c. Degree of satisfaction with the activities of FUGC H A L N
  - d. Degree of satisfaction with the role of DFO staffs H A L N
  - e. Degree of satisfaction with the accomplishment of CF H A L N
7. How do you rate your perception in the following activity?
- a. Perception of benefits derived from the CFP H A L N
  - b. Perception of individual capability to undertake CFP activity. H A L N
  - c. Perception of FUG's capability to undertake CFP activity H A L N
  - d. Perception of persons/group most benefited  
 community  Individual  None

**C. Participation**

8. Number of CFP activities participated by the respondents/year: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you rate the participation of woman in the following activities?
- a. Identification of users H A L N
  - b. Formulation of operational plan H A L N
  - c. Meetings H A L N
  - d. Trainings H A L N
  - e. FUG activities (godne, etc.) H A L N
  - f. Decision making H A L N
  - g. Monitoring and evaluation H A L N
10. Is there any representation of woman in FUG committee?  
 Yes  No  
 If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What is the level of women participation in CF activities?  
 High  Low  
 If Low, Why \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you think their participation is essential?  
 Yes  No  
 If Yes, What could be done in order to increase the maximum participation of women and lower case group? \_\_\_\_\_

13. How important is to have women and in CFUGC?  
( ) Very important ( ) Important ( ) May be good ( ) Useless ( ) No response
14. Does the FUG make any discrimination to woman members in any matter?  
( ) Yes ( ) No  
If yes, in what aspect? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Please list out the various forest management activities done by women through out the year in your CFUG
16. Are you satisfied with the activities done by woman?  
( ) Yes ( ) No  
If No why? \_\_\_\_\_
17. What is needed to increase people's participation in Community Forestry?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"Thank you for your support"*

## Appendix II: Checklist for key informant (FUG Chairman, Secretary...)

Interview No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of the FUG chairman: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of FUG: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Household: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Type and condition of forest/Area: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Outside support/Linkage: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Fund: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Major Activities done through FUG \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Social information of FUG:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Sex-wise and ethnic wise composition in the committee:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Perception about the advantages of Community forestry?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Major constraints of Community Forestry? (problems faced by FUG in CF)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Are you satisfied with your current role in community forestry?  
( ) Yes ( ) No  
If no why? \_\_\_\_\_
13. What are the aiding factors and hindering factors of community forestry?
  - a. Aiding factors \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Hindering factors \_\_\_\_\_
14. What is your perception about the composition of forest user group? Is it really according to the philosophy of community forestry? If not what could be done?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you think the women and disadvantaged group have really participated in the community forestry activities?

Yes  No

If Not what could be done to improve on the said matter \_\_\_\_\_

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16. Do you believe that real target beneficiaries have benefited from the community? Forestry program?

Yes  No

If Not what could be done to improve on the said matter \_\_\_\_\_

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17. Do you think community forestry will be successful in future?

Yes  No

If no what specific area does you think should be addressed to make CF a grand success?

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*"Thank you for your support"*