

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Forest is a renewable natural resource which plays an important role in the lives of rural Nepali peoples. It is one of the country's most important national resources, which provides a wide range of benefits to rural farmers. Nepali economy, based on agriculture and livestock farming is greatly dependent on forest resources. For example, the forest supplies firewood, fodder, timber, leaf litters and vegetables. Forest provides about 81% of the fuel consumption and more than 50% of the fodder (WECS, 1997). Besides these, forest plays an important role in soil conservation and environmental balance.

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

Before 1957, there was no strict rule and regulation for the protection and use of the forest. By law, the forest resources of Nepal was controlled and managed by local elites such as *Mukhiyas*. The government paid no attention to developing the forest and allowed forest use to continue at higher rate. Forest rehabilitation was similarly ignored. So, deforestation rate was high at that time. To solve the deforestation problem, the government nationalized the forests through Forest Nationalization Act, 1957 (Regmi, 1991).

Community forestry in Nepal has come a long way since it was introduced. It began as a program to regenerate degraded forest. The government policy of CF has empowered local people to make the decision about local forest resources. So that, the community people will be benefited by forest in relation to fulfill their needs based on forest resources. This has made a remarkable progress in the change of Community Forest

management to participatory management, from protection oriented forestry policy (private forest nationalization Act, 1957) to the sustainable utilization oriented forest policy (Gilmour, King and Hobely, 1992). For this reason, Nepal's community forestry has been recognized internationally as one of the most progressive in the world (Barlett, 1992; Bird, 2000).

After the emergence of the community forestry, women's participation was realized as the most essential for sustainable development of forest management. Women's participation was considered necessary by NGOs and INGOs and the government of Nepal also realized this and inspired women for their participation. As a result, various CF were set up by women's committees. According to Department of Forestry, 2003 data, about 33567 (21.5%) women have been involved as executive committee members in different FUGs. Similarly, 4.83 % FUGs are being managed by women groups (DOF/CFD, 2003).

In rural areas, women have much knowledge about forest resources such as fuel, wood, fodder and useful medicinal plants compared to that of men because they are the main collectors of these products. They have good knowledge about forest resources and its efficient use. They have perfect knowledge about species, their uses, geographic location, availability, techniques of conservation of the species and so on (Saul, 1994).

According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (1993), women and girls collect 84% of the fuel wood in Nepal. Daniggelis (1994) writes that women are usually not included in any decision making process of CF. She recommends that due to their enormous role in the collection and utilization of forest products, women should be actively involved in all matters relating to CF. Siddiqui (1989) views that rural women are amongst the most frequent and important forest users in Nepal and paradoxically, they play a marginal role in forestry programs.

However involving women, who are over burdened with farm and household work, in forest management activities is a big challenge, both for the government and the society.

When women participate actively in all the stages, only then can it be said that, women are truly involved in management (Kharel, 1993). The success of every phase of community forestry depends upon the devotion and participation of its women users as they are the most frequent forest users (Dhungana, 1995). Therefore, they can play a strong role in forest development and management activities. However, this is not always easy due to the various existing social barriers in our country.

Although women are involved in most aspects of forest management and do most harvesting of forest products, women's participation in FUC is generally low. On an average, currently only 12% of FUG committee members are women (NUKCFP, 1998). In Nepal, rural women normally play a major role in the collection of various forest products. Supporting their families through the use of such products has become increasingly difficult in the present scenario of rapidly degrading environment. Hence, women who are clearly a major beneficiary of the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, their recent demands of rights to be treated justly in order to maintain the benefits from the adjoining vegetation and to overcome the difficulty they have to face biodiversity degradation, is praiseworthy. In spite of few cases organizing themselves and establishing self-help groups, with involvement in decision making in biodiversity conservation and management programs in different communities, most of the women users are still out in decision making process.

The development practitioners have recognized the importance of women's involvement in forest management. However their heavy involvement on household chores, illiteracy and various socio-economic and cultural factors, restrict their participation in forest management activities. To exacerbate the problem they lack basic information about new and recent activities and management know how any sparse information that they receive is more often than not filtered through their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons (New Era, 1983).

Considering the multilateral significance of community forest (e.g. subsistence ecological balance etc) and vital role of women in CF management, this research has been

conducted to address some common issues in these regards. The research is related to the case study of Kumroj Community Forest User Group, which lays in ward no 3 and 4 of Kumroj VDC in Chitwan district. This study focuses on case studies concerning the women's participation. Such a study is useful for identifying the strength and weakness of women's mobilization and management practices of local societies and for developing plan for future course.

This study aims to assess whether women themselves considered them as co-manager of local community forest management or they are guided to become the manager. Likewise, this research intends to study perception of women regarding the motivating and hindering factors that influence to involve in CF management to women along with the various hidden factors that affect women's participation in community forestry management. Based upon above-mentioned general background, this study has attempted to answer the following questions:

-) What are the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the users of Kumroj Community Forest?
-) How far women users understand the CF management?
-) What is the condition of forest after the involvement of women?
-) Are women involving equally in forest collection activities, CF management, and monitoring and evaluation process of CF?
-) What are the factors that affect the women's role in the community forest development and management?

1.2. Objectives

The general objective of the study is to find out women's participation in community forest management in Kumroj Forest User Group. The specific objectives of the study are:

-) To find out socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the users of Kumroj Community Forestry of Kumroj VDC in Chitwan district.
-) To describe women's participation in different aspects of CF management, and.

-) To identify the motivational and hindering factors of women's participation in Kumroj Community forest management.

1.3. Significance of the Study

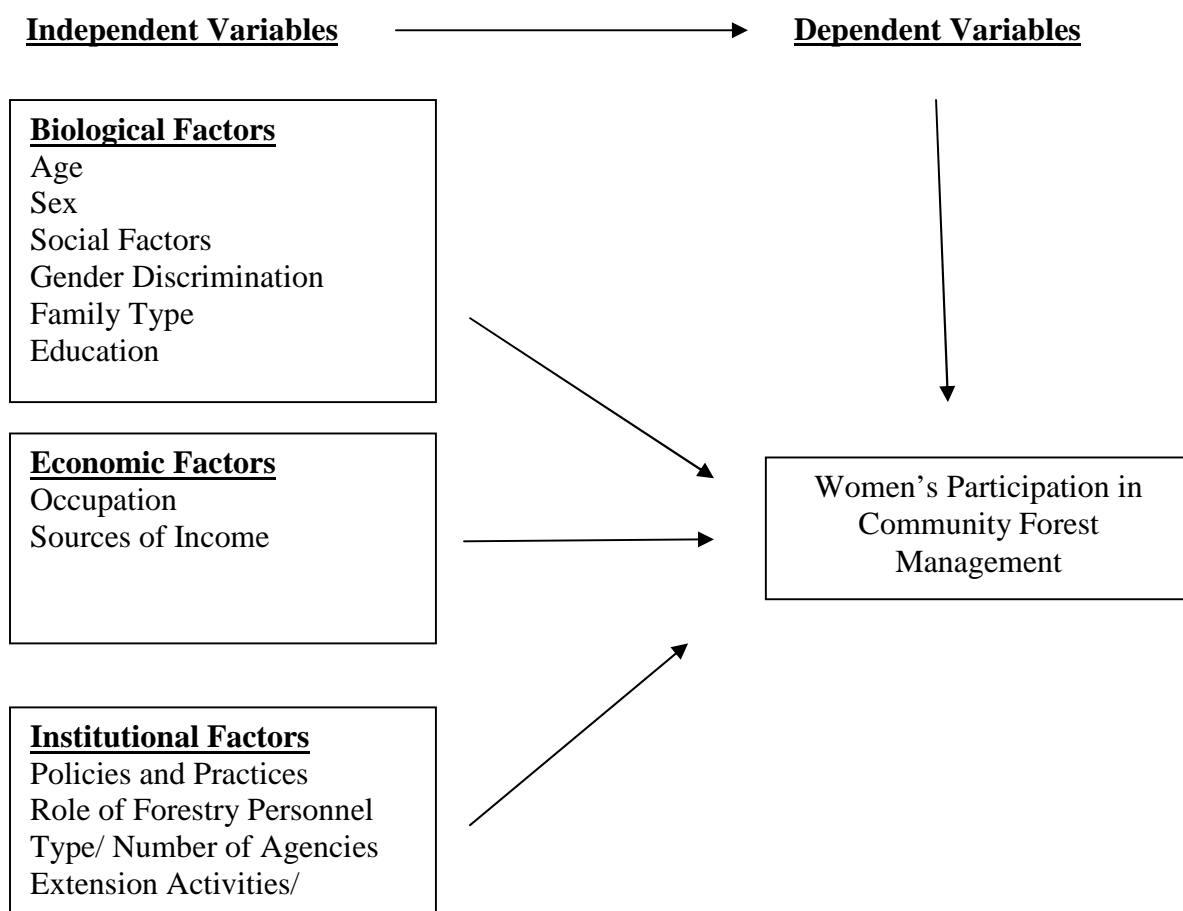
Women can play vital role in the protection and management of forest resources, which ultimately leads to the national development of the country. In the Nepalese context, rural women are the most frequent users of the forest resources. Therefore, their involvement and contribution in the CF management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

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

1.4. Conceptual Framework

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

Fig 1: Variables Affecting Women’s Participation in Community Forest



Two sets of variables, dependent and independent, were used to study the women’s participation in CF management. The first set consisting of biological and social factors like age, sex, gender, family pattern; economic factors like occupation, income sources and institutional sources like policies, roles etc. On the basis of these factors, the effect on dependent variable i.e. women’s participation in CF management was studied.

1.5. Operational Definition of the Variables

Variables are used to identify the socio-economic factors that affect the women’s role in community forestry. Some of the variables that are used are single dimensional and hence

are not necessary to define, where as some variables are multidimensional and are defined as below:

1. Family Type: Composition of the family of the respondent
2. Education: Level of education of the respondent
3. Gender Disparity: Unfair or prejudiced behavior towards women by men
4. Caste/Ethnic composition: The major caste/ethnic groups of the study area
5. Occupation: Major work on which respondent depends on for livelihood
6. Economic Status: Total amount of property of the household
7. Income: Total earning of the household
8. Policy and practices: Policies and practices of the Government, Forest Committee and other agencies involved in the study area
9. Agencies: Agencies working in the study area (GO, NGOs, INGOs, Local agencies)

1.6. Organization of the Study

The first chapter 'Introduction' provides the background, objectives, significance, conceptual framework and operational definition of the variables of the study. The second chapter is 'Literature Review'. The previous studies, done by different persons both individually and institutionally are reviewed with their major findings. Similarly different articles, books, journals and dissertations were also reviewed. The third chapter deals with the 'Research Methodology'. In this chapter study area and rationale for selection, research design, sampling procedure, nature and sources of data, different data collection techniques and tools, limitations of the study are described.

Fourth Chapter deals with socio-economic and cultural background of the study population. It includes demographic characteristics, caste/ethnic composition, age and sex wise distribution of the respondents, their educational, occupational and income status. Fifth chapter provides information on 'Women's Participation in Community Forest Activities'. Women's participation in General Meeting and Executive Meeting of User Group, their involvement in resource collection, monitoring and evaluation, protection

and distribution etc are described to know the status of women's involvement women in CF management.

Finally, the sixth chapter states 'Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation' of the study. The bibliography and annex are also incorporated at the end of the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevant literatures regarding forest resources particularly community forest management, peoples' participation and women's participation in community forest mentioned in the published and unpublished documents is reviewed in this chapter. For this purpose, various books, magazines, reports, plans, working papers, thesis etc were consulted. From these materials, the issues on forest resources as well as peoples' participation were reviewed. The initial part of this chapter is related with the theoretical bases of community forestry in the context of Nepal. The latter part deals with the peoples' participation and especially, women's participation in community forestry in Nepal.

2.1. Social Forestry

Social Forestry is a forestry which aims at ensuring economic, ecological, and social benefits to the people, particularly to the rural masses and those living below poverty line, especially by involving the beneficiaries' right from the planning stage to the harvesting stage. The target of the social forestry is the 'rural poor' and not the 'tree' alone. This support, however, is not just to ensure that the trees get planted and survives but rather to ensure that the people who plant the trees receive adequate sustenance to live with dignity before reaping the harvest from the raised crops. FAO (1989) defined social forestry as 'any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity'. It excludes large scale industrial forestry and other form of forestry which contributes to development solely through employment and wages, but includes activities by forestry industries and public services to encourage and assist forestry activities at a community level.

'Forestry is not about trees, it is about people. And it is about trees only insofar as trees can serve the needs of people' (Westoby, 1967 cited in Leslie, 1987) was first addressed by social forestry. Its appearance on the international stage was as a response to the so-called poor-man's fuel wood energy crisis, the supposed eco-disasters of the 1970s and

most importantly the growing realization that industrial forestry was failing to deliver the claimed socio-economic benefits.

2.3. Community Forestry in Nepal

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

Nepal Government's Forestry Department (DoF) staff gradually recognized shortcomings of the then prevailing exclusionary model of forest management. Bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank, pushed for reform of the forestry sector from the 1970s onwards. In the 1980's community forestry initiatives were promoted by the DoF and bilateral projects. This was initially within the structure of the prevailing *panchayat* system; a fact that has a major negative effect on their development as many sections of the community saw them more as means of entrenching local elites than enabling real participatory management. The situation changed dramatically following the abolition of the *panchayats* after the 1990 revolution, since when a range of new approaches have been adopted (Baginski O. S. et. al. 1999).

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

2.4. Community Forestry as the Common Property Resource

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

According to Arnold (1998), the forest of the many regions of the world have been used and managed as common property. Peoples are depended on the forest's input, which are managed collectively by the user as a group. He has defined the concept of common property system as: "Resource used by the particular group of the user (to the exclusion of the others) an institutional sets rule to govern rules and monitor and enforce the rules. Thus common property system functions only if the group is organized or can organize themselves".

The community forestry program of Nepal is considered as the common property forest management system because its major features are the organizations of the users, definite membership criteria, social unit, collective interest of the peoples etc (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). It has applied the both formal and informal use of the common property forests by villagers in the middle hill of the Nepal. Common property forests in Nepal are forests that are not privately owned and which are locally organized as belonging to the community (Bartlett and Malla, 1992).

The local management mechanism as FUG has evolved in Nepal as a strategy for the conservation as well as sustainable utilization of the forest to prevent the overuse of the forest. It further has enabled the peoples to obtain goods and services that improved their livelihoods without compromising long-term values of the forest.

2.5. Community Forestry as Bottom-Up Development Program

The widely discussed underpinning assumption under which Nepal's community forestry program has been defined is the 'bottom-up' development approach. As Gilmour and Fisher (1991) have defined community forestry program of Nepal is a paradigm shift from top down to bottom up. Nepal's forestry change is a shift from the industrial forestry towards the Panchayat forest and Panchayat protect forest. The phrase was coined 'forest for local community development' to accept the peoples first and the tree second in forest management. This rhetoric was developed with the assumption that traditional professional forestry paradigm (industrial) forestry is the barriers to the establishment of genuine multidisciplinary approach, to develop the authority of the forest management to the community (Gilmour, King and Hopley, 1992). The traditional 'top-down' forestry paradigm was an ideology supporting the 'protection' of the forest where new paradigm supports the effective sustainable management of the common forest resource for the conservation as well as for the use (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). Therefore, the community forestry development program in Nepal has been considered as an 'innovative' bottom-up paradigm, because it puts peoples at the centre of the forestry and makes everything else peripheral (Gilmour, King and Hopley, 1992).

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

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

2.5. Women's Participation in Community Forestry in Nepal

Nepal's population is 50.1% females and 49.9% males. More than 90% of the population lives in rural areas. 90.5% of the women are engaged in agriculture as against 74.9% of men (CBS, 2001). Women have extensive workloads with dual responsibility for farm

and households production. Women play an active role in livestock production and forest resource use and their work is getting harder and more time consuming due to ecological degradation. Several other studies related with community forestry in Nepal have revealed that village women spend a large part of their time in forest related activities such as farming, collecting fuel wood, fodder, leaf-litter, grazing animals, fetching water and cooking food (Peter et al, 1984/85, New Era, 1983 and Landies, 1984).

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

Women of rural Nepal have a very close relationship with forest. Collecting fuel wood meets 85% of the cooking energy consumption (Holm, 1991). Women have traditionally and primarily performed the tedious and tiring job of collecting fodder and other forest products (Ojha, 1989). Women's task of raising cattle requires a great deal of daily care the whole year around. An improved buffalo eats about two head loads of fodder per day, besides prepared feed (Bhatt et al, 1994). The women spend more than three-fourth of household time spent in collecting forest products (Kumar and Hotchkiss, 1989).

Tanaka (1999), states that women are the most needy of forest products and hence the major collectors of forest products in all the localities of the mountain region of Nepal. In spite of this, their saying in CF management and development is restricted. The community forestry operational guidelines issued by the Nepalese government in 1990 was probably the first forestry document, which specifically mentioned the role of women in the decision making process. It stipulated that one-third of the forest users committee members should be women. This is in contrast to Nepal's master plan for the forestry sector 1988-2010, which indicates strong gender biases only emphasizes

women's involvement in family planning programs. However, the guidelines mention little about participation by disadvantaged groups. Other official guidelines on handing-over procedures of community forests have not clearly addressed gender/social equity issues either. Women's concerns are still seen as an 'add-on' issue

A study conducted by Pandey (1997) in the mid-western development region of Nepal shows that the representation of women in the user group committee was Nil in 7 FUGs and only marginal in others except in those committees that were formed exclusively for women.

A similar study conducted by Rasaily (1996) in the eastern Koshi hills of Nepal reported that in all FUGs, women appear to be fully involved in collecting forest products. However, their role in decision-making within the FUGs is very low. Participation of women is found to be significant only in those FUGs, which are exclusively managed by them. In other FUGs, women either did not attend committee meetings and group assemblies or participated passively. When asked about their non-participation, it was established that the women's lack of involvement in overall planning and forest management was because of the domination of men in meetings and the decision making process.

A study conducted in the Tungan sub-watershed of the Lalitpur district shows that out of the 24 CFUGs, women's representation as FUG chairperson is only in one forest user committee (4%) that is exclusively formed by women (Adhikari, 2001).

Rural women confront obstacles that limit their ability to participate in community development programs. They frequently lack the self-confidence or a forum in which to speak up publicly for themselves and for their families. They often lack access to childcare, credits, education and land tenure, which limits them more than it limits the men of their own families. These obstacles prevent them from being heard and from achieving a more powerful role in accessing and making decisions about tree and forest resource management (FAO, 1989).

Recently, gender issues are becoming central to discussion of community forestry programs in Nepal. Although policy has mentioned women's representation in CFUGs, the present legislations have not fixed any quota for the representation of women and poor sections of the community in FUG committee. The federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal (FECOFUN) has made policy of having equal (50/50) female-male membership in the FUGs. However, this has not been translated fully into practice and recent data shows that the participation of women in FUG related activities is low. The representation of women in CFUGs is in an average of 20% (Shrestha, 2000) with some efforts from the forestry department coupled with active demand and desire of the local women, some community forests that are exclusively managed by local women, have been created (Adhikari, 2001).

J. R. Adhikari (2001) mentions that community forestry development projects have the policy of actively involving women in the running of the projects. The foremost reason for this is that women are the main beneficiaries of the forests. They are the main collectors of firewood and fodder, usually responsible for leading livestock to graze in the forests, doing almost all the cooking, which in rural areas is always on wood. Therefore, they are the group, which has most to gain from the success of the projects. Also, they often know more than men about local needs and priorities for forest products, species, preferences etc.

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

Despite the emphasis of policy guidelines, the involvement and participation of women in the community forestry programs, during the planning and decision making process is very low. Although the overall participation of women in the FUG is low and

disproportionate to men, there are many more active and successful females headed or dominated user groups (Ohler, 1999; and Joshi, 1999).

According to Hoskins (1982), the factors that influence women to participate in only development activities are economic factors, socio-cultural factors, historic factors, geographic factors and factors stemming from the political infrastructure.

Similarly, Kharel (1987) has pointed out that various programs and projects have identified numerous problems that have proven to be a hindrance in the involvement of women in forestry management and development activities. The particular nature of Nepalese society, where women have a minimum role in decision making, is the most prominent. Moreover, most rural women of Nepal are illiterate and have a localized view of life, the society is male dominated and they are unwilling to share their power and authority without which approaching rural women is impossible. Due to these constraints it is felt that it will take a long time before one can expect any major involvement of women in forestry.

Molnar (1987), talks about several factors that contribute to the difference in the work load level between males and females. Firstly, in addition to the agricultural and animal husbandry responsibilities, women have primary responsibility for food processing, fuel and fodder collection and domestic chores, including cooking and child care. Secondly, 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 income. In such cases, the women then must assume a greater proportion of the agricultural and forestry tasks as well.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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

3.1. Study Area and Rationale for Selection

The Kumroj Community Forest User Group (KCFUG) is selected for the study. The Kumroj community forest lays in ward no 3 and 4 of Kumroj Village Development Committee of Chitwan district, which was formally handed over to the locals in 1994 by the District Forest Office. This is only the CF of this VDC.

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

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

one of the community forests in Chitwan district where women's participation is noteworthy.

Despite that, seasonal labor migration and international migration also prevail in Kumroj VDC, where considerable numbers of male peoples go to India or Gulf countries for income. In the absence of male member (house head), it comes under women responsibilities to handle the family as well as concern on public activities like attending CF meeting or collecting Forest resources from CF. That is why, women's participation in Kumroj Community is important from this particular area.

Before this attempt, no research has been done at the Kumroj Community Forest. Therefore, a study has been done in this community forest focusing on the women's participation in community forestry and this research will be the first of its kind in this area.

3.2. Research Design

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

3.3. The Universe and Sample

At present, there are 7891 community forests and more than 15,000 Forests User Groups all over Nepal (FECOFUN, 2010). However, the scope of our study is limited to the Kumroj Community Forest situated at ward no 3 and 4 of Kumroj VDC in Chitwan district. There are 1448 households (with 7561 population) in Kumroj VDC that are

members of the Kumroj Community Forest, which is considered as the universe of the study.

Since, all these households are the users of Kumroj Forestry; these households were first divided on the basis of caste, ethnicity and their settlement. For the purpose of the study, a list of the entire households, that are members of the CFUG of the study area, was drawn up. Out of the total households 10 % (145) were selected for the study. For sample selection, Stratified Random Sampling method was applied, where every household had equal chance of selection. First of all, the respondents were stratified on the basis of Caste, Ethnicity, Gender, General Members, Executive Committee Members, users and service holders. Respondents were selected from each stratum by using lottery system to get the sample size. Household heads from each sampled households were interviewed as the respondents. Among the total 145 sampled households, 85 were male and 60 were female.

3.4. Nature and Sources of Data

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, both primary and secondary data were used. The data were both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

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

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

Various methods and techniques of data collection were applied during the research to obtain the required information that is necessary to meet the objectives of the study.

Interview questions and semi-structured questionnaire were used to gather information from the respondents. Similarly, observation, focus group discussion, key informants' interview, FUG households survey were also used during the course of the field study.

3.5.1. Household Survey

In order to collect data regarding to socio-economic and demographic information of user households and general informants, the household survey was conducted. For the study, an interrelated semi-structured survey questionnaire (see annex 1) was developed in the local language (Nepali) and tested for the interview with the respondents.

3.5.2. Observation

In course of fieldwork, simple observation was done. A walk through forest, community visit to know the living standard of the peoples, gender behavior, forest product collection, men and women's working hours, structures of house etc. were simply observed. Information received from the observation was used to analyze with the information received from other resources. That is why, observation was proved more fruitful to find the reality in this study.

3.5.3. Key Informants' Interview

Key informants are the most reliable peoples of the area to provide important information. Eight key informants were interviewed during the study. The key informants of this research were teachers, social-workers, local leaders, FUG members and officials, government officials working in the community forestry sector in the research area. Eight were interviewed as key informants to gather information on the principal issues such as history of CF, socio-economic condition, women's participation in CF management, institutional development of FUG, socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in community forestry. Information received from these interviewees was used to analyze for background information and crosscheck of the information provided by the general informants.

3.5.4. Focus Group Discussion

FGD provides an in-depth discussion by listening of the peoples of different age, ethnic groups on certain topic (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). For women, it provides an opportunity to express them about the topic and for researcher it is very useful to understand the diversity or perception and opinion about definite topic.

Discussion was held between the members of the forest user groups (FUGs) at CFUG Office for the existing condition of the groups, rules and regulation, management and development practices of FUGs and the past and present of community forests. Emphasis was given to the women's role on managing the forests.

3.6. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

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

3.7. Limitation of the Study

The present study has certain limitations upon which the analysis, interpretation and validity of the data is based. They are as follows:

-) The study is based mostly on primary data and this might differ or may not match the data at the national level. Therefore, any inconsistency or discrepancy on the part of the data of the study should not be given much importance.
-) The whole range of the study is concentrated around the 'Kumroj Community Forest User Group' and therefore the statistics and data in this research is strictly limited to this particular community forestry group.
-) Due to time and financial constraints, it was not possible to conduct a survey of all the families involved in Kumroj CFUG and only 10% of the total families

were chosen as based on random sampling. That's why; the whole analysis is based on the data provided by them.

) This research was conducted only for the partial fulfillment of Masters of Arts' Degree in Sociology.

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

CHAPTER IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

This chapter presents the socio-economic and cultural background of the study population. This includes background of the study area, demographic structure of the VDC, caste and ethnic composition of the studied population, age-sex, educational, occupational status and income sources of the respondents.

4.1. The Study Site

The Kumroj Community Forest lies in the Kumroj Village Development Committee located outside the northern boundary of the Chitwan National Park (CNP). This forest is bordered by the Rapti River in the south, Royal Chitwan National Park in the west and settlements in the north and east. Because proximity to the Rapti River puts agricultural lands in this area at risk from floods during the monsoon, the local peoples, with support from the Small Farmers' Development Project and CARE Nepal, initiated a small scale reforestation program at the edge of the agricultural field in the late 1980s. This program was the first step that finally led towards the transformation of the Kumroj village into the Kumroj Community Forest.

Tharus are the indigenous peoples of the area and the hill migrants (mainly Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung, Newar and Tamang) are the local inhabitants. Most of the users of Kumroj forests are subsistence farmers, agriculture and livestock raising being the mainstay of their economy. Major crops include rice, wheat, maize and mustard with newly practiced vegetable farming. The household economy is also based on migrant population, which has moved to India and Gulf countries for labor works.

4.2. Demographic Structure of the Study VDC

The total households of Kumroj VDC is 1,448 and the total population is 7,561 among which 3,644 are male and 3,917 are female (CBS 2001). The following table has

presented the ward wise and sex wise distribution of the total population of Kumroj VDC.

Table- 1: Ward and Sex wise Distribution of the Total Population of Kumroj VDC

Ward No.	Total Households	Population				Total Population	%
		Male	%	Female	%		
1	169	426	49.59	433	50.41	859	100
2	146	365	49.32	375	50.68	740	100
3	229	549	47.74	601	52.26	1150	100
4	197	458	49.51	467	50.49	925	100
5	147	404	48.97	448	51.03	825	100
6	116	287	47.83	313	52.17	600	100
7	183	480	48.14	517	51.86	997	100
8	216	569	47.38	632	52.62	1201	100
9	45	106	44.73	131	55.27	237	100
Total	1448	3644	48.20	3917	51.80	7561	100

Source: CBS, 2001.

From the above table, it is cleared that the average household size is 5.22 for Kumroj VDC, which is approximately equal to national average. It also shows that the population of female is 51.80% in Kumroj VDC. The mentionable thing, here, is that the total population of the VDC is the forest user group of Kumroj Community Forest users of the Kumroj Community Forest.

4.3. Caste and Ethnic Composition of the Users of Study CFUG

The word caste denotes such a group of people who is identified on the basis of common culture, work, and has a sense of collective identity. The caste also denotes hierarchical division of society on the basis of ritual performance and occupation. These groups have common occupation, language, religion and may occupy a given territory. The total population of Kumroj Community FUG is 7561, which is divided in to more than 25 castes/ethnic groups (See Annex 2).

The users of Kumroj CF are diverse in terms of caste and ethnicity. They belong to different castes and ethnic groups. Most of the users belong to the Tharu, Brahmin and Chhetri ethnic and caste groups. Annex- 2 shows that this community has *Tharu* majority followed by *Brahmin* and *Chhetris*. These three castes/ethnic groups constitute 34.95 %, 30.17 % and 15.05 % respectively of the total population of Kumroj VDC. Dusadh/ Paswan, Rai and Kumhar holds the lowest position by population in Kumroj which constitute only 0.09%, 0.08% and 0.06 % respectively of the total population. The community of Kumroj VDC is more heterogeneous in terms of their socio-cultural and economic behaviors.

Being a heterogeneous society, the role of women in society is also heterogeneous in different castes and ethnic groups as set by their cultural norms and values. As commonly observed all over the Nepal, this VDC also observes a higher position of women in terms of household and societal role among indigenous and ethnic groups than in Brahmin and Chhetris.

4.4. Demographic Information of Sampled Households

The sampled household consists of the total population of 695. The population distribution of the sampled households by age and sex is presented below in table.

Table- 2: Age and Sex wise Distribution of Sampled Population

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	%
0-4	15	13	28	4.02
5-9	24	35	59	8.48
10-14	35	32	67	9.64
15-19	33	28	61	8.77
20-24	37	28	65	9.35
25-29	21	27	48	6.90
30-34	30	24	54	7.76
35-39	34	44	78	11.22
40-44	17	24	41	5.89
45-49	24	19	43	6.18
50-54	30	27	57	8.20
55-59	19	24	43	6.18
60 above	23	28	51	7.33
Total	342	353	695	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows that the female population is higher than male population and slightly different from the population distribution of the whole VDC by sex. However, the whole VDC also comprises higher number of female population. The average household size of the sampled household is 4.79. There are total 695 peoples in the sampled households, nearly 30% of which is dependant population because they are economically inactive (below age 14 and above 60 were categorized as economically inactive population). We can conclude that the dependency population and sex ratio of this VDC is higher. Agricultural dependency, socio-cultural norms and value (e.g. giving high emphasis to the son) poverty, are the main cause of the growth of the dependency population and sex ratio. High dependency ratio is economically and socially not favorable to the community as far as to the country.

4.5. Castes/ Ethnic and Sex wise Distribution of the Respondents

The following table shows the Caste/ Ethnic and sex wise distribution of the respondents. Household heads were taken as the main respondents in this research. That is why; the following table also shows the household heads pattern of the sampled household.

Table- 3: Caste/ Ethnic and Sex wise Distribution of the Respondents

Caste/ Ethnicity	Respondents		Total	
	Male	Female	No.	%
Tharu	23	22	55	37.93
Brahmin- Hill	33	9	42	28.96
Chhetri	12	9	21	14.48
Tamang	2	4	6	4.13
Darai	3	2	5	3.44
Gurung	2	2	4	2.75
Kami	1	2	3	2.06
Newar	1	2	3	2.06
Others	8	8	16	11.03
Total	85	60	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Above table shows that number of males is higher as household head. In Brahmin family, 83.33% household heads are male, which is comparatively higher than other castes family. In Gurung family, one is male and one is female household head. So on in Newar family, one household head is male and two household heads are females. Generally, females become household heads due to job migration of male in family. The frequency of female household head is comparatively more in ethnic groups than in caste groups. There is the trend in this area that mostly male members from ethnic groups are out from

the village for different purposes such as international labor migration. That is why, female members obviously had to handle the role of household head.

4.6. Age wise Distribution of the Respondents

The respondents were divided into four age groups. The following table shows the age wise distribution of the respondents.

Table- 4: Age wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age Group	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
15-24	10	11.76	5	8.33	15	10.34
25-34	17	20	14	23.33	31	21.37
35-44	25	29.41	19	31.66	44	30.34
Above 45	33	38.82	22	36.66	55	37.93
Total	85	58.62	60	41.37	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

As shown in the Table, the highest number of the respondents falls under the age group of above 45 years followed by the age group 35-44. The age factor is also a determinant of participation of the household heads in CF activities in Kumroj FUG. The representative age range of functional members in the CFUGs is 25 to 45 in case of females and 30 to 80 in case of males. The most common age group of women is around 40 years and that of males is around 45. This is because their male heads in that age are either outside the area or have no time due to busy to earn more or less for subsistence of the family and because the children, particularly son, wouldn't so adult to interfere his female parent. Again, before this age they are generally represented by their father in law and after either by husband or by son.

4.7. Educational Status of the Respondents

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

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

Table- 5: Educational Status of Respondents

Educational Status	No of Respondents		Total	
	Male	Female	No.	%
Illiterate	31	24	55	37.93
Literate	18	10	28	19.31
Primary	9	10	18	12.41
Lower Secondary	11	6	17	11.72
Secondary	6	6	12	8.27
SLC and Above	10	4	14	9.65
Total	85	60	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows that, total literacy rate of the respondents is 61.36 percent which is higher than the national record as 53.74 percent. Female literacy is 60 percent and male literacy is 63.52 percent. Though female educational rate is lower than male, it is satisfactory compared to other districts of Nepal. Informal literacy programs have helped to make some women literate.

According to Headmaster of secondary school of Kumroj, the concept about female education is changing among the local peoples. They are quite aware of sending daughters to school.

A remarkable literacy rate of the women in the village has played an important role for the active participation of the women in community forest.

4.8. Occupational Structure of the Respondents

Agriculture is the main economic base of the peoples in the study area. However agricultural activities are still primitive and crude. Most of the ethnic communities mainly depend on agriculture and as a waged labor too. As the country's deteriorating condition could not easily promote their source of income, so now days some young members of the study area have also been attracted towards Gulf countries for getting occupations as the waged labors. They comparatively make more amount of money than in Nepal. The following table gives about the occupation of the sampled households.

Table- 6: Occupational Structure of the Respondents

Main Occupation	No. of Respondents		Total	
	Male	Female	No.	%
Agriculture	62	51	119	82.07
Non-Agriculture	23	9	26	17.93
Total	85	60	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows that 82.07% of the sampled households are engaged in agriculture while only 17.93% are engaged in non-agricultural activities. Non-agricultural activities are as; business, service, non-agricultural labor etc. The female population is comparatively much higher in agricultural activities.

Due to facility of irrigation, the paddy is produced twice a year, early paddy is planted in Chaitra-Baishakh and harvested in Jestha-Ashad, while the late paddy is planted in Ashad-Shrawan and harvested in Kartik-Mangshir. Apart from paddy, peoples also cultivate pulses like Mash, Mushuro in small area of land; vegetables are grown near the homesteads mainly for home consumption. Main vegetables grown are potatoes, radish, cauliflower, cabbage, Brinjal and leafy vegetables (Rayo, Palungo, Chamsur). The production of fruits is very low in the study area.

4.9. Sources of Income of the Respondents

The main sources of income are agriculture in rural areas. Agricultural income mainly consists from agricultural products and livestock. In rural areas, non-agricultural sectors such as remittance, labor, service, business and cottage industries are also contributing in total income. The following table gives about the source of income of the study area.

Table- 7: Sources of Income of Respondents

Sources	No. of Respondents		Total	
	Male	Female	No	%
Agriculture	53	36	89	61.37
Livestock	14	9	23	15.86
Remittance	3	9	12	8.27
Labour (Wage)	6	3	9	6.20
Service	4	1	5	3.44
Borrowing	5	2	7	4.82
Total	85	60	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows that most of the peoples' or almost 78 % households' main source of income is agriculture; while rest 22 % of the sampled households generate their income from non-agricultural activities like remittance, labor, service and borrowing etc. So it can be said that most of the people are dependent more or less in agriculture.

According to respondents, most of the people are involved in agriculture but their production is insufficient for feeding their own family because they are unable to apply new technology in their farming. There is negligence about seed and fertilizer. As a result they get less production from their land. Almost all the respondents said that they cannot save any amount from their earnings.

Since most of the sampled households are depended on farming activities, they have to rely on forest and forest activities too. Agriculture and livestock, both are directly or indirectly linked up with forest. Women pay most of their time on agriculture and livestock activities. The village women's works are related with farm, forest, family and others. The farming consists of different works like digging of field, pitting, weeding, planting or seeding, excavating of manure from the pit, putting manure in the fields, harvesting etc. The forestry related works consists of collecting of fuel wood, fodder and leaf litter, grazing animals, fetching water and cooking foods.

CHAPTER V
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FOREST ACTIVITIES

This is the section that deals with the women and community forest and their corresponding results that include women’s participation in CFUG General and EC meeting,, their involvement in CF management, forest resource collection, monitoring and evaluation and fund collection and mobilization etc. The results are totally based on the data collected from primary and secondary sources.

5.1. Women’s Participation in General Meeting

General meeting of user group held once per month. There is compulsory provision to attend the general meeting of KCFUG. During the survey, most of the household said that they used to attend the meeting. However, some used to send other members of the house to participate the meeting. The information condition of meeting attends by age and gender was collected by household survey. The following table presents the sex and age composition of KCFUG meeting attends by the respondents.

Table- 8: Distribution of the Respondents Participated in General Meeting by Age and Sex.

Meeting Attend by Age	Male (Out of 85)	%	Female (Out of 60)	%	Total (Out of 145)	%
15-24	7	8.23	4	6.66	11	7.58
25-34	11	12.94	11	18.33	22	15.17
35-44	16	18.82	15	25	31	21.37
Above 45	27	31.76	18	30	45	31.03
Total	61	71.76	48	80	109	75.17

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

When asked about the attendance at the general meeting of KCFUG during the field survey, only 71.76 % of the total male respondents replied that they, themselves, used to attend the general meeting of the KCFUG, when 80 % of the total female respondents replied in view of that. Hence, only 75.17 % of the total sampled households' heads used to attend the general meeting of KCFUG and comparatively, women's participation was higher. Rest of the household heads said that they used to send other members for the participation in general meeting. Among them, female respondents mostly used to give emphasis on female members of the family to attend the meeting.

5.2. Women's Participation in Executive Committee

The Kumroj Community Forest User Group's statutory mandate is that at least 33% of the Executive Committee (EC) Members should be females. However, the participation of females in KFUG EC is 40 %. The following table shows the participation of women in EC.

Table- 9: Women's Participation in Executive Committee of FUG

Frequency at EC Meeting	No. of Respondents		Total	
	Male	Female	No.	%
Regularly	7	6	13	86.66
Frequently	2	-	2	13.33
Occasionally	-	-		
Once a Year	-	-		
Never	-	-		
Total	9	6	15	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The data, shown above tells that women's participation in KFUG EC is higher than statutory mandate. It proves the active participation of women in this particular community forestry. The women EC members' participation compared to that of men is better if we analyze the above table.

5.3. Role of Women in Decision Making

The researcher had asked the female respondents about their ‘manner of participation’ in KCFUG general meeting. Following table shows the statistics of the performance of women in general meeting.

Table- 10: Role of Women in Decision Making

Role of Women in General Assembly	No. of Respondents by Meeting Attend	%
Like Audience	11	22.91
Giving Suggestion	13	27.08
Discussion	17	35.41
Decision Making	7	14.58
Total Respondents	48	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

As already mentioned in Table 9, only 48 among 60 female respondents (household heads) used to be involved in general meeting. The overall performance of women in KCFUG general meeting was satisfactory. They used to participate actively while giving suggestions, discussing or making decisions. However, still a large number of women used to participate as mere audiences. These women, due to the lack of self confidence, could not express their views in the forum of meeting. The active women said that they were playing their roles actively as far as they could.

5.4. Role of Women in Implementing Community Forestry Activities

Women users have main role in implementing CF activities. The participation of women for the use of forest and platform created by CF activities are remarkable. The statue of Kumroj CF has mentioned that at least one-third women members in the CFUG must mandatorily be included while doing forestry related activities.

That is why; women actively participated in different CF activities like afforestation, reforestation, seedlings distribution, fencing, training of forest efficient management and others.

5.5. Women’s Involvement in Forest Resources Collection

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

Table-11: Involvement of Household Members in Forest Resources Collection

Forest Resources	Households Involved in Forest Resources Collection				Total No. of Respondents	
	Male	%	Female	%	No.	%
Firewood	38	26.20	107	73.79	145	100
Grass Cutting	34	23.44	111	76.55	145	100
Timber	105	72.41	40	27.58	145	100
Herbs	64	44.13	81	55.86	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2007.

To know about women’s participation in forest resources collection, the researcher had asked all the informants who used to participate in different activities in terms of forest resources collection. According to the informants, mostly, women used to represent the houses for collecting different forest resources such as collecting firewood, cutting grass or collecting herbs.

After the establishment of community forest, women of the study area have been benefitting from the forest products. As the women are intimately related to their forests, they generally have a better knowledge about the forest than their males living in the same area. As it is the women, who feel the need for forest products the most, they are the active participants in resources collection activities.

5.6. Women's Involvement in Protection and Management of CF Area

Women members participated themselves in the management process of the community forestry. They started encouraging other women to do co. They followed the scheduled forest activities particularly involvement in pruning and thinning.

Table- 12: Women's Involvement in Protection and Management of CF Area

Activities	No. of Households		Total	
	Male	Female	No	%
Thinning	40	105	145	100
Pruning	44	101	145	100
Grazing Safely	22	123	145	100
Illicit felling trees collection	118	27	145	100
Patrolling	91	54	145	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The forest is protected from cattle grazing, illicit felling of trees and collection of forest products through a strict system of forest watching overseen by the forest user's group. Users are required to patrol the forest on a rotation basis. Failure to take one's turn at patrolling leads to fine equals to Rs. 200.

5.7. Women's Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation

Involvement of both sexes in various issues of monitoring and evaluation process was assessed during the survey. Although, comparatively women's participation in monitoring and evaluation process was less in quantity, they had an effective role while accomplishing their respective responsibilities. While doing activities like forest watching (*Ban Herne Kaam*), male members used to go separately and gather at a place. They used to sign in attendants' register book and talk for the whole day. Forest watching

used to be just formality for them. But, in the case of women, they used to go in pairs. By trimming and thinning the unnecessary plants, they used to make way and guard the forest for the whole day during their turns. Their method of *Ban Herne Kaam* was more effective compared to that of males. Forest watching was not just a task of forest activities but a gathering of social interaction for the women. They used to share their problems, exchange experiences and gain knowledge on different aspects from their fellows. Women's involvement in silvicultural activities was also noteworthy. Low number of males used to participate in silvicultural activities compared to women.

During the study, it was found that the CF management Executive Committee was selected through voting and the decision of the users. Of all total fifteen executive members, it was compulsion that 33 % should be women. But there were six female executive members in KCFUG's EC. Majority of the women EC members were between the ages 25-45 years. According to female respondents, women from below 25 were not easily accepted as EC members due to their instability and immaturity. Hence middle aged women were forced to act as EC members. Regarding educational status, women EC members were found both illiterate and literate.

5.8. Fund Collection and Mobilization

Generally the amounts of FUGs' funds have been found deposited on bank account and within members. Large part of such funds has been going to the members in the form of debt at economic or zero interest rate for certain periods. The investment of Fund in forest development and women awareness fields is very low as compared to community development sectors. The most common area of amount incurred by the FUGs was found to be FECOFUN membership fee. The FECOFUN, being a professional umbrella organization of the FUGs, special attention has been paid to it. The fund is provided as low interest paid debt for different income generation activities primarily agriculture based like goat farming, pig farming and gardening. Women have been especially given emphasis for these kinds of support.

CHAPTER VI
INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CF
ACTIVITIES

Influencing factors for women especially for study area is divided in two categories: motivational factors and obstacles for women's participation. Factors sustaining to increase the women's participation are included in motivational factors and other factors, which are the barriers for women's participation, are mentioned in obstacles.

6.1. Motivational Factors for Women's Participation

In this study, following 5 alternative factors were identified as the motivational factors, which motivated women to involve in community forest activities. Following table shows the view of respondents about the motivational factors.

Table- 13: Distribution of Respondents by Motivational Factors for Women in Community Forest Activities

S. No.	Motivational Factors	No. of Respondents	%
1	Local Political Leaders	10	16.66
2	Self Motivated/ Education	16	26.66
3	Awareness Programs Launched by NGOs/ INGOs	13	21.66
4	Government Policies	6	10.00
5	Husband (Family Members)	15	25.00
Total		60	100

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

The above table shows, self motivation (26.66%) and husbands' motivation (Family members) (25.00%) are more effective motivational factors to motivate women for community forest activities.

Responsibility of running the household lies primarily with the women. It is also their responsibility to care for and look after the animals in the house. For these purpose, it becomes necessary for the women to collect and fulfill the requirements of grass and grass litter for the animals and firewood for fuel. Therefore, these women, who have a direct relationship with the forest, have a better knowledge than men about the type of plants that provide grass, firewood, and leaf-litter. They are self motivated in terms of community forest related activities.

Often they are motivated to be participated in forest management activities and other forest related activities by their husbands and other family members. Since considerable number of village males are out of the place and have understood the importance of women's presence at household activities, they encourage them to participate in the activities of the outer spheres through mails and telephones. Elderly members of the family also suggest their daughters-in-law or daughters to participate in the forest management activities since they, themselves, hardly participate in forest related activities like cutting grass, woods or other activities related to forest management.

Similarly, as women, these days, are taking part in adult literacy classes conducted by different NGOs and organizations, they are becoming more active and curious about their rights and responsibilities. They have, now, understood that involvement of women in community forestry activities will make them directly aware of the various activities that are going on in their community forest and this will provide them with the opportunity of learning something new. It has also provided these rural women an opportunity to learn something in an equal way as the males. After the involvement in such activities, the women have also felt encouraged and be motivated to participate in forestry related and other development activities.

6.2. Hindering Factors of Women's Participation in Community Forest Management

The women identified some constraints that have been a hindrance in their participation of community forestry activities. Although many of these are location and individual specific, some common constraints of this FUG are time, economy, education mobility, social customs etc.

6.2.1. Time Allocation

Most of the CF activities are time demanding. Meeting and assemblies are usually held during the day or in the morning. These are the times when rural women are the busiest with their household responsibilities. As a result, mostly male members go to meetings and in assemblies. Therefore, women generally lack the information that was discussed in the meeting and assemblies. Timing is the most important reason for the inability of the women to participate to the maximum in the assemblies.

6.2.2. Financial Constraints

The members of the CF have not been able to participate fully in the works of the CF as they have to be involved in other supplementary income generating activities, to improve their economic condition.

Some of these peoples even have to leave their houses and go to other places within and outside of the country in pursuant of their jobs and other businesses. As the economic condition of these peoples is poor, in addition to agriculture, they have to undertake other tasks like conducting various small businesses, rising and selling domestic animals like goat, cows and buffaloes and even restoring to manual labour, to supplement their economy.

These days, the women of the community have started involving themselves in various jobs so that they can add on to the family income. This contribution of women in the family income is substantial. As it is not possible to live off the production of one's owned land, the members of every household work in the field of other peoples, during

their free time, to generate maximum output from the land as well as to make an extra earning.

Therefore, economic factor also restricts the women to participate in the CF activities. Some women sayings was that they are compelled to start small business and do labor work in the factory to solve their existing hand to mouth problem. They say if they have to be involved in CF activities, they will have to stop their work. This affects the household economy negatively. However, some courageous and aware women say that they have postponed or even stopped their work to participating in the CF activities.

6.2.3. Customs and Tradition

Customs and traditions are the greatest factors that restrict the women's mobility. Like in almost all developing countries, in most parts of the Nepali society too, the women's mobility has been fettered by customs and traditions, which defines the women's domain to be within the confines of the house. In a society where it is still considered a taboo for women to talk to men outside of the household, it is no surprise that women need the permission of the household head to go out of their house for non household related activities. Therefore, many families disapprove of their women going away from home to participate in CF activities, training and work. However, those women who have their families' approval still need to travel in pairs or in group in order to gain family and community approval.

6.2.4. Secondary Status in the Society

Like in all societies the women of Nepal have always been relegated to secondary a status. They have to look up to their men folk for approval in every activity that they want to undertake. This secondary status is due to centuries of male domination in society. Although now a days, many families are allowing their females to take up roles outside of the house, many families are still not very approachable to this idea and hence this has also become a hindrance to women's participation in CF activities. This has led to women being less informed about the activities that take place in the meetings and assemblies.

6.2.5. Insufficient Extension by the Government and Development Agencies

The lack of sufficient donor agencies has resulted in the extension awareness programs not having reached sufficiently in the study area. The government and other development agencies have not made any obligatory rules to get women involved in the CFUG committee except for implementing the mandatory quota requirement for women. However, in reality, women's participation is not effective enough because there is no institutional mechanism to involve women and lack of women's organization. Also as there is a lack of gender knowledge among the professional and forestry technicians, they have not been able to address the gender issues properly during the planning and decision making phase in the CF activities.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.1. Summary

The study “Women’s participation in Community Forest Management” was conducted in Kumroj Community Forest situated at Kumroj VDC ward no 3 and 4 of Chitwan district aiming to assess the level of women’s participation in community forest management at the study area. The study was carried out in the sequential steps of research methodology such as defining research problem, reviewing literature, designing research, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and reporting. For the study, various research problems were identified to reach the goal of the research. The research aimed to find out socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the users of Kumroj Community Forestry. Similarly, it tried to describe women's participation in community forest. Participation of women in CFUG General and Executive meeting, forest resource collection, protection and mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, fund collection and mobilization etc were studied. The research also revealed the hindering and motivational factors for women's participation in the management of KCFUG.

The study is mainly based on primary data; however secondary data were also used. Among the total households, only 145 households were chosen as sampled households for the study. Household heads were the main respondents of the study. The main data collection tools were Household survey, Observation, Key Informants’ Interview and Focus Group Discussion.

Kumroj VDC of Chitwan district was the study VDC of this research. Kumroj Community Forest User Group is the only CFUG in this VDC. The study site comprised of diverse Caste/ Ethnic composition, where Tharus, an indigenous group, are in majority with 34.95 % of the total population followed by Brahmin-Hill and Chhetris with 30.17 % and 15.05 % respectively.

The whole VDC comprises higher number of female population. The average household size of the sampled household is 4.79. There are total 695 peoples in the sampled households, nearly 30% of which is dependant population.

The number of male is higher as household head. In Brahmin family, 83.33% household heads are male, which is comparatively higher than other castes/ethnic family. Generally, females become household heads due to job migration of male in family in the study VDC.

The highest number of the respondents falls under the age group of above 45 years followed by the age group 35-44. The age factor is also a determinant of participation of the household heads in CF activities in Kumroj FUG. The representative age range of functional members in the CFUGs is 25 to 45 in case of females and 30 to 80 in case of males. The most common age group of women is around 40 years and that of males is around 45.

Total literacy rate of the respondents is 61.36 percent which is higher than the national record as 53.74 percent. Female literacy is 60 percent and male literacy is 63.52 percent. The study also revealed that 82.07% of the sampled households are engaged in agriculture while only 17.93% are engaged in non-agricultural activities. Agriculture and Livestock are the main sources of income in the study area, which are directly or indirectly linked up with forest.

Only 71.76 % of the total male respondents, themselves, used to attend the general meeting of the KCFUG, when 80 % of the total female respondents replied in view of that. Hence, comparatively, women's participation was higher. The attendance of Female EC members was also better compared to that of male.

The overall performance of women in KCFUG general meeting was satisfactory. They used to participate actively while giving suggestions, discussing or making decisions. However, still a large number of women used to participate as mere audiences.

Gender has different interest in different products of forest. Women, whether they are schoolgirl or college girls have extremely important contribution in forest resources collection and herding goats. Women's participation as executive committee members and their presence in regular meeting were found satisfactory.

In Kumroj CFUG, awareness programs are not launched to make women's active involvement in forest management activities and there is male dominated cultural system existing. However, there is active women's involvement in KCFUG. Women are active in monitoring and evaluation process. Similarly, they play vital role in protection of the CF area, mobilization of funds.

Self motivation (26.66%) and husbands' motivation (Family members) (25.00%) are more effective motivational factors to motivate women for community forest activities. Similarly, problem in time allocation, customs and traditions, secondary status in society, economic problems etc were the hindrances for the women in study area to be actively involved in CF activities.

7.2. Conclusion

Women, in Nepal, have suppressive role in general. The patriarchal pattern of Nepalese society has led women to be involved in the inner spheres of the households most of the time. But during the course of time, women's range of presence is widening. They are gradually coming to the limelight of the public spheres from private spheres. The present system of Community Forest Management has given women important chance to be involved in outer spheres.

The concept of CF is a vital one for preserving and devolving natural resources in general and forest resources in particular. Forest is one of the major resources of rural livelihood. It is the source of food, firewood, timber, fodder, leafs and litters etc. For the better management and enhancement of the forest resources, the concept of CF was emerged during 1970s in Nepal. As the women are the ultimate managers and users of the forest

resources, they can play a significant role in CF development, protection and management. Hence, success of the CF largely depends upon degree of women's participation in its management.

On the basis of this study, it can be said that women have very important role to play for the protection and better management of CF. Although, there are several potentialities for women's participation in CF, women participation is determined by various factors like socio-economic, practices, institutional structures, perception and attitudes.

In all, the participation of women in CF helps to enhance the living standards as well as socio-economic status of women. It can be regarded as one of the major agents for developing the female participation and the inclusive involvement of females in public spheres.

In sum, the participation of women in Kumroj Community Forest Management is good. However, this is not adequate. Much has to be done to include women with ethnic diversities, religious diversities and different economic background. There are still so many hindering factors that have to be eliminated for the proper participation of women in KCF management.

7.3. Recommendation

The study identified the scope for further study on different aspects of KCFUG. Upcoming researchers can focus their study on other aspects like achievements and challenges of women after their involvement in community forest management and participation in community forest activities.

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Annex 1

Household Census Form

Date:

HHs No:

General Information

1. Name of the Household Head (Respondent):

2. Type of Family:

a) Nuclear b) Joint c) Extended

3. Caste/ Ethnicity:

4. Age:

5. Sex:

6. Education: a) Literate b) Illiterate

If "literate, which grade?.....

7. Occupation:

Detailed Description of the Family Members of the Respondent

S. N.	Name	Relationship with HH	Age	Sex	Education	Occupation	Marital Status	Remarks

8. Livestock

Cattle..... Buffalo.....Goat.....Pig.....

Others.....

9. Farm Size (in Kattha)

Khet.....Bari.....Forest.....Landless

10. Crop Production

Rice.....Maize.....Wheat.....Potato.....Others.....

Annex 2

Interview Schedule for the Respondents

- 1) For what purpose you joined CFUG?
 - A) Religious purpose
 - B) Social Benefits
 - C) Others (Specify).....
- 2) How often do you attend general meeting?
 - a) Regularly b)Frequently c) Occasionally d)Once a year
 - e) Never
- 3) What is your role in General Meeting?
- 4) What do you collect from the forest?
 - a) Wood b) Leafs c) Litters d) Fodders e) Others.....
- 5) Who collects these things from your family?
.....
- 6) What is your role in decision making process in CFUG?
- 7) What is your role in protection of the forest?
- 8) How is the fund of Community forest mobilized?
- 9) Who encouraged you to involve in CFUG? (For women)
- 10) What are the constraints in active participation in CFUG? (Women)

Annex 3

Guideline for FGD

- 1) What are the major benefits that you are receiving from this CF?
- 2) Does the Operational Plan address the women's participation properly?
- 3) How has been women's participation influencing the decision making process of the CF?
- 4) What are the major programs sanctioned especially for women in this CF?
- 5) What types of problems are faced by you being a member of this CF?
- 6) Do you know the community development social activities conducted by this CF?
- 7) What measures should be adopted to make effective participation of women in this CF?

Annex 4

Caste and Ethnic Composition of the Users of Study CFUG

Caste/ Ethnic Group	Population	%
Tharu	2642	34.95
Brahmin-Hill	2281	30.17
Chhetri	1138	15.05
Tamang	254	3.36
Darai	235	3.11
Gurung	217	2.88
Kami	206	2.72
Newar	171	2.26
Bote	93	1.23
Damai/ Dholi	75	0.99
Sarki	60	0.80
Magar	43	0.57
Kayastha	26	0.34
Majhi	22	0.30
Unidentified Caste	15	0.20
Sherpa	14	0.18
Yadav	13	0.17
Sanyasi	9	0.12
Thakuri	8	0.10
Teli	8	0.10
Dusadh/ Paswan	7	0.09
Rai	6	0.08
Kumhar	5	0.06
Others	13	0.17
Total	7561	100

Source: CBS, 2001

Annex 5
Photos



Researcher Conducting Focus Group Discussion with Women



Grain Management in the Study Area