CHAPTER I
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Forest is one of the important components of ecosystems, which is self-perpetuating and protective of the environment. It is an integral part of farming system of mountainous country like Nepal. It provides feeding material for livestock, which in turn provides farmyard-manure to maintain productivity of farmland of the 90% people living in rural area (CBS 2001) whose economy is based on subsistence agriculture. Forest is not only fostering to the Agriculture System but also one of the sources of basic need of the rural people. Out of 14.7 million hectare land, 5.4 million hectare is covered by forest. The valuable species of forest product like timber wood of Sal and Sissoo, fuel wood and poles for agriculture implements, grass for thatched roofing, non timber forest product and herbal plants like Chiraito, Jatamasi, Panchaulle etc are viable source of economy, which can be extracted from forest directly and indirectly, it contributes to maintain land productivity. It balances ecological system by controlling soil erosion and landslide and improving hydrological regime of fragile Young Mountains of Nepal (Bajracharya, 1987).

Since long time forest of Nepal were managed and utilized in traditional way in the form of Kipat (communal Land Ownership), Raikar (State land lordship), Guthi (lands used for temples and charity) and Birta (state land grants to the priests, military personnel and nobility). This system relied on locally accepted rules through which a clearly fixed group of beneficiaries regularized forest use and excluded outsiders. These local systems were recognized by the Rana period under the feudal system. Whether it was the Kipat system or the Raikar or Birta, forest resources were held under the control of Subba, Jimmawal, Talukdar who were not only the land revenue collector of the Government but also used to maintain law and order at the local level. They were responsible for the use of local resources (Dahal, 1994).

The Panchayat and Panchayat Protected Forest (Community Forest) was handed over to the locally elected political body of the same Village Panchayat. This approach of management highly benefited the elite classes of the village then general people. This practice was also impractical because the regulations were not clear and only isolated small patches of forest could be handed over. The local leaders took this program as a government program and they used the program simply to employ their people as forest watcher. The government field staffs concentrated on the reforestation of degraded lands because railing seedling and planting were easier than to work with

user groups. Assessment of performance was also based on planting targets rather than on user group formation. As a result, even though the Community Forestry program was started in Nepal since 1978, there was a declination of total forestland by 3.4 percent from 1978 to 1988 (Chhetri, et al; 1992).

To address these issues and find a good solution in protecting and increasing forestland, The Master plan for Forestry Sector (MPFS) was published in 1989 as a concrete forest policy supporting the people's participation concept. This MPFS adopted the concept of Forest User Group for the management of forest in local level irrespective of political boundary. The regulations were subsequently revised after the change of the political system in 1990 and then the Forest Act- 1993 and forest policy-1995 was approved following the norms of MPFS. Thus, the name of Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest was changed to Community Forest. The Community Forestry is a participatory approach. It necessarily recognize the involvement of local user from the beginning (from identification of users until the implementation in which Forest User Group is responsible to manage, utilize and protect the forest while Government officials involve as a catalyst or facilitator to provide technical knowledge and other relevant support. The government supports to prepare constitution of the user group and management plan of community forest. During the formation of Community Forest process, there is provision for recognition of social arrangement and their need (Forest act, 1993).

The emphasis given in Community Forestry was a radical change in protecting forest in Nepal. This change was also based on the national and international factors like, international perceptions of ecological crisis, shift in the development philosophy from "trickle down" approach to "bottom up" approach, world trend on the common property resource management system, realization of capabilities of local communities and decentralization policy-1982 of Nepal (Karki et al; 1994).

The Community Forestry program is a largest program among six major programs of forest protection implemented in Nepal. Different International Non-government Organization (INGO) and Non-governmental Organization (NGO) have great interest in such conservation program. They directly take part and are also involve in funding the Community Forestry program. They see this program as a tool in the improvement of environment as well as well as upgrade of existing lively hood of local people. In this respect, they use Community Forestry as a tool for community development. During last 24 years, the experience has shown positive indication in the improvement of environment and community development (Shrestha , 1999).

Since, Community Forestry program is people oriented program and its success depends on the active people's participation, there is a need for more research both on technical and social aspects. The technical aspects include management operation, protection rules, conservation strategies whereas social aspects include forest user group and their culture, social norms, interest, religion, need etc. Both aspects should be considered equally because they impact each other and consequently reflect the success of community forestry. In this regard, study of people participation in community forestry is very important, which allows to evaluate the success rate of the program. In this respect, people participation in community forestry, which considers the institutional and decision making processes, affecting factors of participation and changed knowledge of people (users) will be studied in Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur District.

1.2 Problem Identification and Research Question

Scholars (Baral 1993) have mentioned and discussed many practical problems in the implementation of Community Forestry program in their research paper. Most of them pointed out the multi ethnic group, language, religion practice and different ideology in politics, which are making problem in people's participation in Community Forestry Program.

Problems arise when the composition of the ethnic group, political ideology and culture of one group of community differ from another as a result, they do not want to work together. Similarly people living near to the forest are not ready to involve outsiders in forest management activities. If the forest is in different VDCs, or on the border of two VDCs the problem is more severe (Baral, 1993)

There are some reasons in less participation. One of the problematic issues emerges mostly in the presence of political backing in community. Where forest user committee member may not be accepted by small portion of users being not from political party they support. Thus, they may want to prove the failure of the forest user committee. Behaviors of such group make destruction of forest due to reject of rule of operational plan, avoidance of active participation. To come to the solution from these problems, a new committee can be made incorporating leader of those groups (Who are opposition to committee member) after then forest user group can function well (Shrestha, 1994).

Chhetry (1992) argues that in practice, People's participation has been given a variety of meanings and perceptions. The problems prevail because of inadequate understanding on how the idea of people's participation and empowering the people

could be effectively put into practice. This could be because of the lack of knowledge about the social, cultural and economic context of the communities or localities when the ideas have to be transferred into practice. He also argued that there is gap between realities and rhetoric in people's participation in community forestry. Forest user group with the help of District Forest Office or other line agency may carry out participation of people in plantation work. Most of the user may involve in plantation in return for wages. This type of involvement is named with as full participation. On such participation, elite people are involved in decision making while others are not fully informed about actual objective of the program. General people involve only in the implementations and they may misrepresent the program thus, may not give expected result (Chhetry, 1992).

There are many potential benefits from community forest for rural development. Still, there are some problems that some Community Forest might be over utilized and the local elite people may try to capture the benefits. Rural elite of Nepal generally owns more land, big houses and has larger family and keeps larger herds of animals. Eventually the rural rich use forest products in larger quantities and consequently benefit from the Community Forest may go in their favor. Till now, the issue of equity in community forestry has received little attention (Malla, et al; 1998).

Some time low caste people do not speak out in a community dominated by high caste people. As a result when user group is formed such disadvantaged persons are left out. Later, the conflict will surface on the time of benefit sharing, (Shrestha, 1994).

Forest rule and regulation of Nepal has made provision that there should be representation of all interest group in the Forest user committee. In Community Forest user committee rather than forest user group makes most of the decision. If all interest groups are not included in forest user committee, how the voices of the all interest group will can be heard (Karki et al; 1994).

Not only participation of ethnic group but also the participation of women users may help in the success of Community Forestry as they are the major collectors of forest. However, most of the women are not directly involved in decision-making and their involvement is found not satisfactory. In this respect, women in executive committee are kept just to fulfill the Government norms. Thus, they are not actively involved in major decision- making meetings. This demonstrates that the present male biased model of development has basically neglected women's work, knowledge and potential capacities in sustaining resource (Kayastha, 1991).

Many sleeping users (both male and female) may represent in Forest User Group who do not even visit the forest, never attended any Forest User Group meetings and even do not utilize any forest products. But at the same time, they pay money to forest watcher thus claiming the legal right to be user of the forest. Although such users are saving forest products for the time being, they are not sharing their ideas in the management, use and distribution of forest products. This practice is not good enough for young Forest User Group to become sustainable as collective efforts are essential (Dahal, 1994).

The Community Forest program consists both social and technical factors. The knowledge on both factors is equally important for the effectiveness of Forest User Group. The silviculture prescriptions, which are the technical factors, included in the operational plans are often incompatible with the understanding of the users. Therefore, the user cannot implement operation plans successfully. Thus, the user group should be trained at least with minimum required skills. The training on increasing awareness, knowledge and skills equally benefits for sustainability of participation. Training on awareness and other managerial skill add extra input in people interest to participate actively in Community Forestry. However, the existing training programs are disorganized and are poorly programmed (Karki et.al. 1994). Many Forest User Groups are still unclear about their rights and responsibilities in Community Forest management. They lack knowledge of people's participation. Through awareness training to local users, users can adopt democratic decision-making process. The involvement of lower caste in Forest User Committee will also increase (Jackson, 1994).

Villagers are simply not aware of management responsibilities and use rights due to in sufficient extension work. The long time gap between investment and return in forestry enterprises and identification of real users has been inappropriately accomplished is also reasons for the less participation of people in Community Forestry Program (Shrestha, 1999).

Based on the above discussion it can be seen that there are still many problems, which exist in Community Forestry Program. Most of the researcher pointed out that the ignorance of local factor the presence of different ethnic composition with different interest, lack of their role in decision-making and less or lack of awareness of the interest groups on Community Forestry development are main reasons for the less participation of users in Community Forestry.

Though, Community Forestry Program of Nepal has passed about 24 years, the scholars have not sufficiently focused yet their study on the changes in attitude, knowledge and skill of the forest users in Community Forestry Program. These social aspects of community forestry play one of the very important roles in the development of society as a whole. Therefore, the researcher has put one of the objectives to study on these factors of Community Forestry Program.

Research Questions

Based on the above-identified problems, the researcher has set following research questions.

    i.   How the diversity of cultural group and interest group obstructs on the Institutional process?

    ii.   How people are participating in implementation process of Community Forestry?

    iii.   How all interest groups are taking part in the process of decision-making and benefit sharing?

    iv.   Are there any changes in attitude, knowledge and skill of users after Community Forestry Program?

    v.   Which factors are controlling people from active participation?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

To study people's participation in Community Forestry Program is the general objective of this research. Apart from this objective, the following specific objectives, which highlight different community forestry activities, have been considered in this research.

    i.   To access the institutional process of Community Forestry.
    ii.   To judge the peoples' participation in Community Forestry activities.
    iii.   To find out the factors effecting in participation.
    iv.   To examine the changes of peoples' skill and knowledge.

1.4 Rational of the Study

The CF program has received the highest priority in the forestry of Nepal (HMGN 1988). Community Forestry policy in Nepal combines an environmental objective to

protect against land degradation and deforestation with economic and social objectives to meet the people's basic need for fuel wood, timber, fodder and other forest products on a sustainable basis and to contribute to food production through an effective interaction between forestry and farming practice (MPFS 1988).

The ninth and tenth development plan for forestry sector (1997-2002, 2002-2007) have included poverty alleviation as a primary objective in forestry development. Employment opportunities, income generation activities and sustainable forest management for fulfilling the timber, firewood and fodder requirement of local people are included in sectoral program.

Community Forestry Program is launched in all 75 district of Nepal by the guidance of the policies to fulfill the above objectives of the Community Forestry program. The community forestry program was introduced in Lalitpur District in late 1980's. Lalitpur District Forest Office has already handed over 196 number of Community Forest. In this respect, researcher has examined Kumari Community Forest User Group of Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur District. During the study, the concentration has been given on institutional processes of forest user group, their participation in CF activities and effecting factors for their participation.

Community Forestry program is one of the successful programs of Nepal in the context of people's participation. On the basis of master plan, operational guidelines issued by the department of forest, New forest act 1993 prepared. The policy specifies the formation of user group committee whose representatives and functions should be agreed by group member. If possible one third of the representative should be women and the views of all members of the group should be considered. It also advised that the operational plan should include how to improve the productivity of the resource and to satisfy the needs of user on a sustainable basis. MPFS give emphasis on "basic need" that the satisfaction of rural people. It also requires the user to prepare the constitution of group operation. For the preparation of these constitution and management plan, the government may provides it's technical support to these user committee and require active people's participation on both process.

These existing Community Forestry Policies are appreciable and the CF program is advancing quite well. Still, there is a need to study whether implementation process is following the norms of rules or not. In the researcher's opinion, this study will provide information in this regard. The researcher is hopeful that this research will be useful document for the researchers in future who are interested in further research in this

field. Equally, the Kumari Community Forestry will be benefited from this research as it will evaluate them to some extend. This research will also be useful to District Forest Office of Lalitpur.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study is carried out for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Art in Rural Development. Among 6 Forest User Group of Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur District, the researcher has only confined to the one forest uses group "Kumari Community Forest" among the 129 households for the collection of socio-economic information of the user groups. Due to limited resources like time, money and manpower, the detail study of Forest User Group could not be made, as the researcher is student. Except sampled households, some key informants were considered to gather necessary data and information. Therefore, the response of partial users may not be adequate to explain the exact situation and the findings of the study may not be conclusive. The generalization made in the study may not represent in other Forest User Group unless same socio-economic and socio-biological contexts are existing.

1.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Community forestry program is "bottom to up" participatory program. Participation in decision making, implementation and benefit sharing are main components of participation. Socio-cultural components like caste/ethnicity, tradition / culture, norms / values, education, economic conditions may influence in active people's participation.

Belief on caste /ethnicity is found in every society of Nepal. Higher caste feel superiority in society and this superiority and inferiority feeling may influence from decision making process to benefit sharing.

Every ethnic group has peculiar tradition and cultural practice. Some practice may have relation to natural resources management like forest. This factor either encourages or discourages to participate in forest activities. For example, our Hindu culture does not allow cutting tree of Pipal (*Ficus* *nemoralis*). Similarly, Buddhists have also religious belief on Pipal tree because lord Buddha became enlightens under the tree of Pipal. Thus, the Pipal tree is considered a holly tree and is being religiously protected in Nepal.

Social norms and values may play important role in people's participation. In some society in Nepal, women are not allowed to talk with unknown male from outside, to involve in outside activities then the household. This values effect on approaching to

women by field level staff. Our male dominated society is not willing to share their authority and power to women. Where should women go what should do are determined by male in male dominated society (Joshi, 1997).

Education is the next viable factor, which effect on participation of people. Education creates confidence in administrative function, decision making. Illiterate users who what to stay in committee require help from literate people to perform written activities

(Baskota'1997). Economy is another important contributing factor in the participation of any development activities. Poor and landless people can not give full participation because they have to involve in daily wages labor for fulfillment of their need. Nature of occupation also affect in participation. Farmer can not participate in Community Forestry activities during the period of farming.

Skill and knowledge encourage people to participate in community forestry. The aware user manages his time in the best suitable way to contribute in community forestry activities than lack in knowledge users as the aware users know the importance of forest resource.

Social/cultural components have relation to participation components. Social cultural factors differ in structure of Forest User Group and Forest User Committees, during the process of decision-making and benefit sharing, which ultimately effect on sustainability of Community Forestry. In what extent these two components (social/cultural and participatory) are playing their role in Kumari Community Forest is the conceptual framework of the research. In this conceptual component of Community Forestry is dependent variable.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized in Seven main chapters. The introductory chapter contains the background of the study, which mainly discusses importance of forest and development of Community Forestry in Nepal. This chapter also includes limitation of the study. Likewise, the chapter also highlights research problems, research questions, objectives of the study and rational of the study. The chapter two includes the review of the literature, which discusses the concept of Community Forestry, Forest User Group, participation and equity in benefit sharing. Various books reports articles and selected thesis are reviewed in this chapter. Chapter three highlights research methodology adopted during the field work to collect information and data analysis., experience and problems encounter during data collection. Chapter Four is about

setting of the study area that includes geographic and ethnographic profile in brief. Chapter Five describes the Kumari Community Forestry, which is the study unit of this research. This chapter also discusses location history and socio-economic feature of user group. discussion and interpretation of findings which discusses institutional process, people's participation, affecting factors in participation, changed knowledge and skill of Kumari Forest User Group. Finally, in Chapter seven, summary, conclusion and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER II
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Relevant Literature

2.1.1 Evolution of Community Forestry Concept

It is widely recognized that local communities have historically played an instrumental role in forest management as an indispensable common property (Uprety 2000). Management of common forest resources was well developed in England by the middle Ages with clearly defined use and ownership right and such rights already dated from time immemorial (Rackham 1986 cited in Baniya, 2000). Thus, far from "Community Forestry" being a modern concept, it is in fact a very old one; another case of "old wine in a new bottle" (Gilmour et al; 1991).

The prevailing development paradigm was a pro-industrialization, top down, which has been characterize as the "development from above" approach (Stohr and Fraertylor 1981 cited in Gilmour et al; 1991). By the late 1960s, the development paradigm changed to the "development from below" (Stohr and Frasertylor 1989 and Chamber 1983 cited in Gilmour et al; 1991) because of the criticized of the "development from above". The emergence of new approach did not replace the old one. Both approaches continue to exist side by side in general development and in forestry development. In 1985 to 1970 forest was used as a source of industrialization and economic growth. This led to the poverty in the third world countries increased; the rural people were getting poorer. In the late 1970s two major role of forest is recognized are 1) provide forest products and trees for rural people who no longer had access to them and 2) find ways of increasing the benefits of the forest resource to the rural people who lived in or near forests. As a result, the concept of community or social forestry came after the release of the landmark FAO publication "Forestry for local community development" (FAO 1978). FAO defined CF as "any situation which intimately involves local people in forestry activities". The legitimating of the concept was also boosted by the adaptation of "Forestry for people" as the theme for the eight-world forestry congress in Jakarta in 1978. By the 1980s, the concept of Community Forestry had become major program within the forestry policy of many developing countries.

Evolution of development paradigm influenced on the forest policy of Nepal. In 1957, under the forest nationalization act of 2013 B.S., government of Nepal nationalized all the private forest. From 1957 to 1977, subsequent amendment was made in rules and Act (Joshi 1991). The legislation proved to be completely ineffective because the act controlled the utilization of forest products and only gave importance on controlling

the users to enter the forest. The department of forest was incapable of maintaining effective control over thousands of small patches of forest throughout the hills (Fisher 1990 cited in Uprety, 2000). In 1978, the Nepalese Government introduced Panchayat Forest (PF) and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) rules in a response to the failure of the protection of the forest. Panchayat (now replaced by Village Development committee) was responsible to manage forest within their boundary. Initially, Department of Forest and other line agencies were willing to hand over only barren and degraded forest land to the local people in the form of Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest because reforestation was the main program of Community Forestry and District Forest Officers did not want to hand over natural forest underestimating the practices and knowledge of local people. Due to pressure of local user, natural forest was also handed over n selected district by Department of Forest did not get anticipated result. The major problem was the ambiguities in program regarding the security of traditional use right, lack of freedom in decision making and user had to function under the structure of Panchayat. Forest could be handed over only to the Panchayat official within a politically defined area e.g.; a ward, VDC and District However political boundary for forest did not usually coincide because some forests were common to more than one ward or more than one Panchayat (now Village Development Committee). General local people did not appreciate such practice. Issue related to forest ownership and recognition of actual use right is solved by the introduction of the concept of user group in the centralization act 1982. In 1988 Master Plan for Forestry Sector prepared which also emphasized on Community Forestry and user level management disregarding of Panchayat. Now Forest Act 1993, Forest Regulation 1995, Operational guideline 1995 are the effort of Government for the sustainability of Community Forest which clearly recognized the involvement of user group (Karki, et. Al;1994).

In Nepal, the Community Forest policy combines wit environmental objectives of preventing land degradation and deforestation with socials and economic objectives The latter objectives are to meet the peoples basic needs for fire wood, fodder, timber and other forest products on a sustainable basis and also to contribute to food production through effective interaction between forestry and farming practices (HMGN, 1988). Therefore all the accessible forest area in the middle hills of Nepal has been over by District Forest Office to the local communities themselves (Aryal, 2000).

Department of forest identified 60% of the national forest (3.9 million hectares) is designated to be handed as the Community Forest (Anonymous, 1991). Many

development projects are working in the field of CF program in Nepal and getting good progress in the hills. According to A.R. Sharma "up to 2000, 662 thousand hectare of national forest is already handed over to Forest User Groups, encompassing some one million thousand users".

Community Forest is a partnership program between government and community organization in which Government staff play a role as facilitator and catalyst to identify real user groups, to prepare operational plan of forest and constitution of group and in implementation of CF activities where as community (user group) is responsible to manage, protect and utilize the forest on the sustainable basis (MPFS, 1988). Community Forest is a part of national forest that has given to the users only use right but not land tenure ship and there is provision of the back from users if users do not follow the rules of operational plan of the forest. This provision has made some doubt towards the Government from local people (Gilmour, et al, 1991).

2.1.2 Forest User Group

The Forest User Group (FUG) is focus subject of Community Forest, which recognizes local user right and practices to considerable extend (Fisher and Gilmour, 1991). The concept of Forest User Group is derived from the concept of use right. The Forest User Group is an institution based on the concept of "common property". The Forest User Group is known common property resource institution that is group of people share specified use right (Gilmour and Fisher and Karki 1994). The evolutionary background of user group is closely linked to the existence of indigenous forest management system of Nepal, thus the forestry profession may not doing no more than rediscovering and redefining the system (Chhetri, et al; 1992).

Community Forestry planning process prescribed four separated phase to form Community Forest or Forest user group. Identification of Forest User Group is the first phase of Community Forest handover process. In this process, the field staffs within the village determined the real users of a particular forest by discussion and checking. Community Forest Extension worker need to debate more time with the forest users in this phase. The process also identifies Socio technical information about the use of forest and Community Forestry area (Joshi, 1991). "When a person is of low cast of disadvantaged, he or she does not easily mingle with the rest of the community and will have a low profile and therefore may not know what is happening around the village and so miss the chance to be included in the user group. Sometimes low cast people don not speak out in community dominated by high cast people. As a result,

when a user group is formed such disadvantaged persons are left out. Later on at the time of benefit sharing, the conflicts will surface" (Shrestha, 1994).

The second phase of Community Forest process is negotiation phase in which user group is formed, their need and problems are identified and discussed on the problem and issue and find the solution themselves with the assistance of DFO staff. In this phase they prepared constitution of group and operational plan of forest. During the preparation of constitution they formed one executive committee is called Forest User Committee (FUC) on the basis of consensus or voting mechanism of forest protection, management and utilization are mentioned in the operational plan and Forest User Group is responsible to implement these. They have total right to fix price of their forest products, they can use forest products for their collective benefits and use surplus income in forestry development as well as community development work. These authorities can be practiced in a way that should not be affected on sustainability of forest. Third phase is implementation phase that includes carrying out approved forest management activities by the Forest User Group. Last phase is the review of operational plan at the request of Forest User Group of expiry of the operational plan after five years. It is continuous process. The first two phases are concerned with the formation of Forest User Group and the rest two are concerned with the strengthening of the Forest User Group (Karki et. al; 1994).

Through the Community Forestry Program following rights re given to the Forest User Group:

) Any part of the forest can be handed over to Forest User Group who is traditional users of the forest irrespective of the political boundary.
) There is no limit of forest to be handed over as Community Forest to Forest User Group that depends upon their willing and capability.
) Forest User Group must be registered at District Forest Office with their constitution and manage the Community Forest according to their operational plan approved by District Forest Office.
) Forest User Group can freely fix price, transport and market ad forest products from Community Forest.
) Forest User Group can grow long term cash crop applying inter cropping system inside the Community Forest.
) Forest User Groups allowed establish forest based industry that cam be run with the raw material yielded by Community Forest.

) Forest User Group utilize the fund generated through the sale of forest produce n ay development work but amendment of Forest Act 1993 make compulsion t utilize 25% fund in forest management work.

) Forest User Group can take action to the members of Forest User Group who break the rule of the constitution or operational plan. (Joshi 1993, Lamichhane 2000).

In terms of function there are two basic types of groups: expressive and instrumental.

Expressive groups are formed primarily for the purpose of the individual relating to each other. Instrumental groups are formed to reach a specific goal. Forest User Groups are combination of both of these types. It is primarily a task oriented (instrumental) group. It is designated to manage forest. To reach their goals, forest users become close well knit members of community (Lamichhane, 2000).

2.1.3 People's participation

The concept, People's participation has been used since ancient time of Plato and Greek philosopher in public affairs especially in political science. Participation on those days was merely a matter of voting, holding office, attending public meeting, paying taxes and defending the state (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980 in Joshi, 1995). The meaning of participation however has changed with the passage of time. Participation of people in the affairs of the state is necessary for modern welfare state. The participation ideology "bottom-up" approach is originated in reaction to colonial Bureaucratic failure in 1950s (Moris 1981 cited in Rahnema, 2000). Social activist and field worker advocated on the side of participatory development against the "top down" approach (Rahnema , 2000). During the later half of the 1970, the concept of people's participation in development become more popular and fashionable as oppose to the "top-down" approach (Lisk 1981, cited in Joshi 1995). World Bank also realized the participatory development approach due to far less achievement on expected out put from billions spent on development project through "top to bottom" approach of development. The concept, people's participation has become a politically attractive slogan; it is perceived as instrument for greater effectiveness as well as new source of investment. Participation is becoming good fund raising device and it could help the private sectors to be directly involved in the development business (Rahnema, 2000). Community participation is now generally taken as a necessary precondition to the successful implementation of any renewable or rehabilitation project. Community participation is generally agreed to be important for the long term success of local resource management system (Joshi, 1995).

People's participation has been used in a variety of context such as community development, social mobilization, community participation, public participation etc. Various authors define people's participation in divergent way. Soen (1981) regards community participation as the means of involving people out side of the government in the planning process. While Fagence (1977) sees it is a means of reducing power differences and is therefore, contributory to equalization and social justice. White (1981) calls it an involvement of the people actively in the decision making concerning development project or in the implementation (Quoted in Joshi, 1995). World Bank defines "participation means their active not passive involvement and it should be transformative" (1995; 6). According to Cohen and Norman people's participation is often narrowly defined as the voluntary contribution of labor and / or cash by the local people. However, conceptually people's participation includes their participation in identifying needs, decision making, implied benefit sharing and evaluation (Cited in Bhandari, 1997). People's participation has been taken as means by the Government agencies and the projects for achieving their goals. "A problem free situation of people's participation is not easy". There is no common understanding regarding what people's participation. Different level of people has different conception about it. Participation in the sense of only physically involvement is passive participation. Such participation does not seem to last long (Baral, 1999).

Community Forestry of Nepal is one of the popular programs in the context of people's participation. Many scholars and professionals have defined Community Forestry focusing people's participation. Food and Agricultural Organization (1978) defines "Community Forestry as many situation, which intimately involves local people in forestry activities. Like wise, Pardo(1985) describes "Social forestry as referring to any situation which closely involves local people in forestry or tree growing activities for which people assume responsibilities and from which they derive direct benefit through their own efforts". In the context of Nepal Gilmour and Fisher (1991) define "Community Forestry is the control and management of forest resources by the people who use them for their domestic purposes and as an integral part of subsistence and peasant farming system". Similarly, Inserra (1988) defines "Community Forestry as management of forest by the local people who depend upon them for fuel wood, fodder, timber, food and raw materials" Cited in Joshi, 1995).

People's participation is the most essential feature of Community Forest. In field practice, idea of people's participation in Community Forest has gained high level of popularity in Nepal. The institutional arrangement and policy behind this program is

quite good in the sense of people's participation and empowering the people could be effectively put into practice. His research on Hagam Village Development Committee of Sindhupalchok district gave feed back to know that there is no real participation of people in plantation work carried out by Forest User Group with the help of District Forest Office. Most of the users involved in plantation in return for wages. This involvement is given name of full participation. All researchers asked to users during his field visit about such behavior; it is known that they were thinking that plantation of government seedlings means loosing their convenient grazing land. From this research it is concluded that the type of people involved in decision making were elite while some other people were not fully informed and the need of general people was not recognized (Chhetri, 1992).

It is realized that people's participation is the best way to achieve the objective on effective protection and management of forest research. It is suggested for popular participation that exiting local particles, institution, organization structure and local use group should be recognized. People should be convinced that they are not only the protector but immediate beneficiaries as well. Effective participation can be further increase if people are well informed about the program and sense of belonging is created through motivation and awareness (Chherti et.al; 1992)

Lamichane (2000) carried out his research in Ramechhap district and he found that before the involvement of District forest Office and other line agencies in providing training to users, need of interest group was not addressed in most of the community. The local elite controlled most of the forest resources. The group was not mobilized effectively. But after awareness training to local users, users started to adopt democratic decision-making process. Involvement of lower caste in Forest User Committee also increased from 2% in 1997 to 7% in 1999.

Particiption of women is crucial for the success of Community Forestry. Women are the major collectors of the forest products such as fuel wood, fodder and dry leaf. So, consequences of deforestation directly impact on women. District Forest Office and other line agencies must motivate women to participate in Community Forestry Program through extension and awareness classes (Kasthaya, 1991).

2.1.4 Equity in benefit sharing

MPFS specifies the objectives of Community Forestry are "to meet the people" need for fuel wood, timber, fodder and other forest products on a sustainable basis. The Community Forestry policy has provided use right to the user independently.

Community Forestry is primarily for the benefit of the villagers. Equity in the benefit sharing encourages the individuals to work effectively in sustainability of the forest management. Equity in benefit sharing is big issue in Community Forestry. Conflict may arise as to how the forest product should be shared. Some people may argue benefit be shared on the basis of household and other may argue be shared on the4 basis of the number of family members. Similarly, equity is problematic between primary user who is regular user and secondary user who is seasonal user (Shrestha, 1994).

Community forestry aims to ensure that all villagers have equitable access to forest resources. To be fair and equitable, full involvement of farmers, women, occupational casters and poor in decision making during in preparation of operational plan is required. Their input will be effective for forest management if not fails to address the need of the poor. It is essential to obtain the views of the all level of people in benefit sharing. Different interest group may have different points of view about it. They have different need from forest product. If the views of all people is not care in decision making of benefit more than other general communities (Chhetri, et al; 1992).

Equity is a measure of how evenly the benefit and burdens from the Community Forestry are distributed among its beneficiaries. Equity is associated whether accepted systems of the provision of inputs in production and protection activities are made or not, high level of participation in decision-making and access of all use members to Community Forest. No standard criteria for benefit sharing have been set by government rules and regulations. It is found variation in benefit-sharing mechanism form one Forest User Group to another Forest User Group. Generally, the benefits in Community Forests are shared based on the contribution of users (Pokhrel, 2000).

R. Pokhrel (2000) studied three user groups, each user group from Kaski, Palpa and Surkhet district. He found that Phedipatan user group of Kaski District had distributed fire wood on the basis of group contribution where as he found group contribution with lottery system in Bharkesh user group of Palpa District and individual contribution in Surkhet District.

Dahal (1994) found his research in eastern part of Nepal that many seeping users ho have not even visited the forest for the last two or three years, never attended any Forest User Group meeting and so far not utilized any forest product. But at the shame time, they pay money to forest watcher thus claiming the legal right to be user of the forest. He viewed on the "Although such users are saving forest products for the time

being, they are not sharing their ideas, regarding the management, use and distribution of forest products for young Forest User Group to become sustainable, collective efforts are essential".

From the views of various scholars it was revealed that the Community Forestry is the involvement of people in forest management for their own welfare. Therefore, it is known as Community Forestry that includes not only technical aspect but also social aspects of the communities. Nepal is ethnically and culturally heterogeneous country. So, consideration of these factors is essential for the sustainability of Community forestry through people's participation.

The involvement of all kind of people in Forest User Group is precondition for effectiveness of Community Forestry. Because of different cultural, religious and political ideology, the problems may arise in identifying user group, in decision-making and benefit sharing. Even though, they have different perception in forest resource, a good mechanism should be established so that ether is an equal share in benefit, active participation in all type of decision-making. It is not an easy task to satisfy all kind of people, it requires social mobilization through awareness. Sociologist and Anthropologist can devote their efforts by studying ethnic composition of user group that helps to handle Community Forestry more successfully.

2.2 Community Forestry Program in Nepal

Community Forestry is the major strategy Nepal's forest policy. The community forestry program resulted due to the failure of forest nationalization act 1957. This nationalization act ignored traditionally managed communal forest, which c\act came into conflict with the traditional type of community management of forest resources (Dahal, 1994). The lack and difficulties of supervision from the center, bureaucratic practice, the lack of ownership feeling among the people, who were the direct beneficiaries of the forest, led to the failure of the nationalization policy.

In 1975, a conference was held in Kathmandu to consider issues relating to management of Forest in Nepal. The participants of the conference were Divisional Forest Official from throughout the country and senior members of Department of Forest and Ministry of Forest. The planned three days meeting was extended to 23 days because of the great interest that was generated and desire to make a strong statement on the need to address the deteriorating condition of the country's forest. This conference formulated the National Forestry Plan (NAFP) 1976.NAFP recognized that the Department of Forest had ignored forest of hills which led to the

deterioration of watershed. To overcome this problem, the concept of "Panchayat Forest" which aims on the plantation of bared land was proposed. NAFP provided base for the formulation of "Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest Act, 1978". Thus, it can be said that the Community Forestry Program in Nepal formally commenced in 1978 (Gilmour et. al 1991).

Community Forest Program was launched in 29 districts up to mid 1980s. Initially, Panchayat Forest and Panchayat Protected Forest were handed over to the local political body "The village Pachayat" that was responsible to take care of the forest. In 1980s the concept of User Group was introduced. After that Community Forestry has been handed over to local user irrespective of political boundary and political body.

Now, Community Forestry Program covers almost all hilly districts of Nepal. The most of the forest areas were handed over to communities and its considerable success in the hills earned a lot of recognition internationally (Joshi 1997, cited in Pokhrel 1999) whereas, the picture of the Terai in this field is different. The reason for not gaining momentum of Community Forestry in the Terai could be due to different socio-economic and resources use tradition. Most of the settlements around the Terai forest are of new origin with heterogeneous society which may cause difficulties to bring them under one umbrella. This may be the reason why user group forestry having hard time to get full momentum in the Terai (Upadhyaya et. al, 1997).

Although, Community Forestry Program is effective participatory of Nepal, It is not out of debate. One of the major issues of debate is revenue from forest especially in Terai. Baral Subedi and Pokhrel had discussed the issue of revenue from Terai Forest in the process of Community Forestry Program. They argued that there is a need of a new model of forest management in Terai then in the hill forest. They suggested a new model should ensure Community Forestry's contribution to the national treasury without effecting local enthusiasms for participation. "Success can be achieved through the joint efforts with community and Department of Forest. This could be done by sharing the revenue between two parties" (Pokhrel, 1999). But Federation of Community Forestry User Group (FECOFUN) is in against of sharing of revenue through any model of participatory forest management. They argue "Terai people want an area that would be enough to match their needs and be granted the right according to the provision of forest act 1993" (EFCOFUN, 1999).

Next debate is about land tenuership. Government has given full use right of forest products to users but not land teneurship. This provision may develop low confidence

towards Community Forestry Program. Users may feel whether government take the Community Forestry back from the users group and revert to national forest (Shrestha, 1994).

Next major debate is about nuclear guideline where the objectives of Community Forestry is only to fulfill subsistence need of forest produce or whether it may commercialize the Community Forestry by permitting installation of wood based industries in sustainable way (Shrestha, 1996). The sustainability of Community Forest Management in Nepal depends upon economical, social and cultural diversities of Nepal. Diversities of social cultural setting make diverse natural resource management practice and allied resource use conflict. Conflict in Community Forestry in Nepal is one of them which are rooted in the communities themselves (Kharel, 1994). In Community Forestry, conflicts are seen within a Forest User Group, between two and more Forest User Groups or between Forest User Groups and District Forest Office (Shrestha, 1994).

Although, there are some debate and conflicts during the process of Community Forestry in Nepal, the Community Forestry Program in general is one of the successful forestry programs of Nepal (Joshi, 1995). The improvement of the forest of the nation and meeting the basic forest products to the need of local forest users are the two major objectives in Community Forestry Program in Nepal.

Community Forestry program is a partnership program between local communities and the staff of Department of Forest (DOF) for the management of locally accessible forest. Community Forestry involves the control and management of forest either natural or planted by specified user group. Several amendments in Community Forest policies were made supporting for better people participation. The term Forest management encompasses both technical and social arrangements. Forest management includes the planting, protection, harvesting and distribution of forest products.

The process of Community Forestry can be divided into four major phases according to Community Forestry Guideline 1995. These are:

2.2.1 Investigation phase

This is the first phase of Community Forestry process. This phase includes gathering of socio-technical information about the use of the forest and the identification of the real forest users and forest areas. Careful attention should be given in identifying the users to ensure no one is let out.

2.2.2 Negotiation Phase

This phase includes formation of Forest of Forest User Group, discussion on forest management issues within the Forest User Group and preparation of Operational Plan of forest and constitution of user group. Existing management knowledge is acknowledged. The needs, problems, concerns and issues of different interest group as well as the solution of the needs and problems are identified during the preparation of Operational Plan. Finally, Operational Plan is prepared with the help of forest technician; District office approves this Operational Plan and constitution.

The Forest User Group could be either existing group or newly organized specially to manage Community Forest. After approval of constitution, Forest User Group is formalized operational plan of forest is prepared with the objectives of developing and conserving the forests. The use and distribution of forest products is made by maintaining the environmental balance.

2.2.3 Implementation Phase

After the approval of constitution and operational plan, the right and responsibilities of management and utilization of forest as mentioned in the Operational Plan are legally transferred to the Forest User Group. The implementation phase includes fulfilling approved forest management plan with the help of District forest official. Any mistakes made during investigation of forest and its real users and during negotiation among the users may create problems during the implementation of Operational Plan.

2.2.4 Review Phase

This phase includes appraisal, revision and re-negotiation of the Operational Plan either at the request of Forest User Group or upon the expiry of operational plan, which is prepared generally in every five years. Whether, Forest User Group is working properly or not is evaluated and a new Operational plan is approved after the expiry of the old one.

Box 1: Some information about Community Forestry in Nepal
  ꓭ *No. of districts involved in CF Program: 75*
      ꓭ *Total Forest User Group formed: 13,718*
  ꓭ *Benefited Household by Community Forest: 1,564799 (40.70% of the total population)*
  ꓭ *Total Forest Area: 5,938,933 ha*
  ꓭ *Potential Community Forest area: 3,420,412 ha*
  ꓭ *Potential CF area handed over: 31.81%*
  ꓭ *Community Forest handed over: 1,129,957.77 ha*
  ꓭ *Average number of committee members: 11.76 per committee*
  ꓭ *Average women committee member: 2.79 per committee*

This chapter has discussed general overview of Community Forestry of Nepal. Next chapter will discuss the people participation in Kumari Community Forestry of Lalitpur District. This community Forestry is handed over in 2051. Findings will be discussed on the basis of primary and secondary data.

CHAPTER III
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Area

The selected research site for this thesis is Badikhel VDC of lalitpur district. The VDC is easily accessible with a motor road. Kumari Community Forest User Group is selected purposively among 6-Community Forests of the VDC. There are six different castes groups who are the users of the community forest. This community forest was also selected as there is a mixed caste composition within the user group. During last fifteen years of its operation, this Community Forest user has gained significant knowledge and skill, which can be examined. In the past, this forest user group was not studied by anybody else focusing on people's participation.

3.2 Research Design

The study has adopted both the descriptive and exploratory research designs. Descriptive researcher design is concerned with the describing characteristics of a particular individual or of a group. Community Forest User Group's character and their rules and process in Community Forestry activities are descriptively discussed. Exploratory research design finds out some problems and then analyses these problems applying different research method. Participation of different level of people in Community Forest activities, factors affecting in participation and changed skill and knowledge are discussed on the basic of exploratory design.

3.3 The Universe and Sample

Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur district was selected as study area among 41 VDCs of lalitpur District. In Badikhel VDC, there are six Community forest User Groups. Among six community Forest User Groups, Kumari Community Forest User Group was selected as study unit purposively. This Community Forest consists of 129 households and it benefits about 645 users. Among 129 households, there are 52 household of Brahaman caste, 68 households of Pahari, 3 households of Chhetri, 2 households of Damai, 2 households of Magar and 2 households of Newar. Of the total 129 user households, 40 households were selected as the sample unit by the list of user group. Caste, ethnicity, educational, economic and gender backgrounds of the users were considered while selecting the samples. Sample units covered 20 households of Pahari, 16 households of Brahmin, 1 household of Damai and 1 household of Chhtri, 1 household of Magar and 1 from Newar Household. In addition to sampled household survey, key informants interview was conducted. Some people of adequate and in-depth-knowledge on the research issues were selected purposively. They included School teaches, forest officials, old aged people and local politicians. Besides, that,

women users, educated and uneducated users were also interviewed through structured questionnaire to collect information about participation.

3.4 Nature and Source of Data

This research is field-based study. The primary data like socio-economic information, people's participation, factors affecting in participation and changed knowledge and skill of people were collected through fieldwork. The available relevant written documents e.g. village profile, user group constitution and operational plan of forest, Forest User Group and Forest Committee meeting minutes and documents, publication and reports of District Office and Forest User Group were the sources of secondary data.

3.5 Data Collection Technique and Tools

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

3.5.1 Household survey

Socio-economic data like total users, caste and ethnic composition, land holding and food production, educational status and occupational status were collected through household survey. Close-ended structured questionnaires were used for the socio-economic information. 40 households were considered for the household survey. Questionnaires were filled by the facilitation of the researcher. The head of the household, who is well educated, was given questionnaire to fill themselves. Researcher had visited users on their own house and in the field for the household survey. Quantitative data were collected through household survey.

3.5.2 Formal and informal Group Discussions

During field stay, the researcher met local users, women users and lower caster users. Formal and informal discussions were done with them. Discussion with women users and lower caste users were taken separately. Quantitative data were collected through discussions. The discussion focused on the matter of the user's participation in different Community Forest activities. Their view about Community Forestry was also discussed. Checklists were prepared for gathering data and on other basis of checklists, researcher discussed to them carefully. Information was noted down in plain sheet later after discussion was held. Information was also collected from the discussions in meeting places of user e.g. in the field, tea shops and other places.

3.5.3 Interview

Some questions regarding people's participation in decision-making, implementation and benefit sharing, factors affecting in participation and changed knowledge were

asked to sample respondents. Semi-structured questionnaire were asked to respondents. For interview, 24 male respondents and 16 women respondents were considered among 40 sampled households. On the basis of household survey, economically rich and poor, illiterate and literate were sorted out and interview was made. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through interview.

3.5.4 Key Informants Interview

Staffs of District Forest Office, Forest User Group Committee members, Village Development Committee members and other educated users were the key informants for the study. Formal and informal discussions were performed with them. The discussion was held on their contribution, history of Community Forestry and status of participation of women, lower caste and other general users. Checklists was prepared to discuss with the. Based on the discussion, the relevant information was recorded in plain sheet. Besides that, two users, one male and one female were also taken as key informants. They are the devoted users in protecting the forest since Community Forestry was launched. In depth informal discussion was carried out with their experiences, feelings and contribution. Maximum focus was given to collect qualitative rather than quantitative data from the key informants.

3.5.5 Observation

Direct observation was applied to get relevant information for the study. In the course of fieldwork, present condition of forest, applied forest management operation (thinning and pruning, fire line construction) was observed. The researcher attended one of the user committee meetings as an observer. Participation of women and their activeness in the meeting was also observed. Fire storage, fire wood consumption, feeding materials of domestic animals, agricultural practices were also observed. Observation was made during rapport building and informal discussion with users. The observation helped very much in understanding the field reality, which was fruitful for the study that could not be captured through verbal discussions.

3.6 Data Analysis

As discussed above, the data were collected through various sources using various data collection techniques and tools. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from field visit. Since the nature of field study was more qualitative, information related to population structure, ethnic distribution, education, economic and participation status were quantified. Qualitative data were discussed analytically on the basis of findings. Quantitative data were tabulated and analyzed descriptively. Simple statistical tools like frequency and percentage were used to present quantitative data. The details of other data analysis are discussed in the following chapters.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

In this study, some ethical norms and values were used, which guided for less biasness during study period. Such as:

- Respondent's personal/private relation and confidential matters which affects in his/her life were not mentioned in this study.
- Respondents or key informants were explained the purpose and objectives of the study clearly and in understandable way. This study did not consider adding any of researcher's own expectations and false information.
- No unnecessary pressure was made to the user refusing to involve in the discussion but more efforts were made to motivate such user to involve in the discussion.
- Data/information were not exploited or manipulated during study period. Data and information were interpreted on the basis of gathered information and findings.
- The due respect was given to the respondent's culture, social values and their ideology.

3.8 Encounters and Experiences

People's participation in Community Forestry was the research topic of the study. Community Forestry includes major two aspects, which are forest and people. Researcher has concentrated his inertest on the aspects of people and their participation in forest management. People are very sensitive subject for study. "They are self aware, having individual personality, emotion and motives. They are capable of choosing their own course of action for both rational and irrational reasons" (Rao, 2000). Therefore reliability of research depend on the how researcher has encounter with them.

Researcher has applied observation, discussion and interview tools for the information gathering. Before going to collection of information, researcher became familiar with the study area. Among 6 Forest User Group of Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur District, researcher has selected Kumari Community Forestry for the study with the suggestion of District Forest Office staff as this Community Forest consists of the mixed caste composition within the user group. During last fifteen years of its operation, this Community Forest User has gained significant knowledge and skill which can be examined.

During the course of this study, the researcher has visited study area four times. General information about location of the area and name of committee members were

obtained from District Forest Office. During first visit, researcher has met forest user committee members. The researcher introduced with them and highlighted her objectives to visit their place.

During the last and fourth visit, researcher went to study area for detail data collection. During his stay, researcher has tried to establish good relationship with the villagers. The researcher has put simple dress as villagers were to fell comfortable. First researcher has visited the selected Community Forest with the users and observed the applied scientific operation e.g. thinning, pruning, and cleaning and making fire line. During this period informal discussion was began from their daily life and gradually moved to the history of Community Forest and other Community Forestry related activities. User's settlement of the study area was surveyed, which made him familiar with the area. Researcher has politely introduced who ever he met to avoid any suspicion. He introduced them as a student of Rural Development of Tribhuvan University Central Campus Kirtipur.

Field visit was made during the month of March, 2008. During this period, the users were busy in land preparation for farming. Therefore, household survey was not easily approachable during the daytime where women were considered as householder. Most of the males were job holder and could not be met in the day time. To avoid this difficulty, the household survey was conducted during morning and evening period. Whereas, in daytime informal discussions were carried out visiting respondents in the field or other meeting places. Kitchen was considered main basis of Household. Eldest male and female was taken as householder. The researcher considered both males and female respondents to identify gender role in Community Forestry.

Focus group discussion of women users was held on a house where women were meeting for the preparation of marriage ceremony. They were making Tapari (leaf made plates). The issues for discussion were mainly on the history of forest, their role to protect forest, their participation in Community Forestry activities and changed knowledge. Having a discussion with several women at a time gave advantage that women corrected one other when they did not agree with what was being said.

Pahari users were busy in different labor works. Researcher met them where they were working. Similarly, researcher met other respondents and one informal discussion was made. Researcher especially focused Damai users and asked some questions informally. They expressed positively towards Community Forest, its members and committee members and their activities. Researcher felt that Damai users were in fear

to express real answer against other ethnic groups. So, next day, he again met them in their own household. At this time they kept their voices against other ethnic group and they express some dissatisfaction towards Community Forestry activities.

Respondents were also met in field for the informal discussion. During this discussion researcher did not record anything in front of them. Discussion was begun with the observing situation. For example, when a respondent was found working in field, then discussion was started about agriculture production, food sufficiency. Slowly when they became used to and feel comfortable with researcher than subject matter of research was discussed. This kind of discussion with the users had advantage to researcher as both parties felt comfortable to talk freely even about sensitive issues. During the discussion, user talked out of subject matter like their experience of life. The researcher respected the respondent matter of interest and listen patiently.

Name list of the users and respondents were obtained mainly from the membership list of Forest User Group. Users were categorized on the basis of ethnic group, economy, gender and education with the help of the users and self-judgment.

It was experienced that, respondents were unwilling to give the income source clearly, and researcher also felt uneasy to ask such question to respondents. Respondents gave sufficient time while interviewing them. They were found reluctant to say about negative aspect of Forest User Group like stealing of forest products, domination of decision making etc. Researcher has also found male domination. When researcher has taken female as householder to fill the questionnaire, slowly male stated to dominate and answered before female. Although, Badikhel VDC is near by Kathmandu valley, researcher felt completely village environment. The users were friendly gave good hospitality. More than 75% people in their community are educated but they highly believe on cast discrimination. Brahman even does not enter to the compound of Damai house.

Researcher had tried to be more informal and friendly to the users. Researcher was invited in marriage ceremony and he heartily accepted the invitation and attended the ceremony.

Researcher has analyzed his information believing that respondents had given their opinion with honest.

3.9 Definition of Key terms

Community Forest (CF): A Community Forest is a part of national forest handed over to Forest User Group for its development, protection and utilization for collective benefit.

Forest User Group (FUG): Forest User Group refers to the functional group of users of CF which are registered with their constitution in District Forest Office, is allowed to manage the forest and to use and distribute the forest products independently according to the approved Operational Plan.

Forest User Committee (FUC): FUC is an executive committee, whose members are selected by FUG on the basis of consensus or voting that are listed in the constitution of Forest User Group.

Operational Plan: Operational Plan is a written document related to the protection, management and utilization of forest on a sustainable basis prepared by FUG with the assistance of District Forest Office (DFO) staff, which must be approved by District Forest Office under the Act 1993.

Constitution: Constitution refers in this study is constitution of FUG which is prepared with the help of DFO staff.

Interest Group: Interest Group is group of people with similar sets of interest or common problems. These include different in sex, caste, wealth and religious belief.

People's Participation: People's participation refers to the active participation of all forest users in all phases of Community Forestry planning that means from user identification to the benefit sharing as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Secondary Users: Secondary Users refers to the users who are only seasonal users. They do not take part in protection physically by economically they contribute.

Untouchable Caste: Untouchable castes are those castes, which are not allowed to touch other cast upper than them in caste hierarchy according to Hindu Ideology.

Forest Management: Forest management means take care of forests applying different scientific operation like thinning, pruning, weeding and clearing.

Benefit Sharing: Benefit sharing means sharing of forest products to all users as equal to for the satisfaction of users considering forest stock.

CHAPTER IV
4. GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY AREA
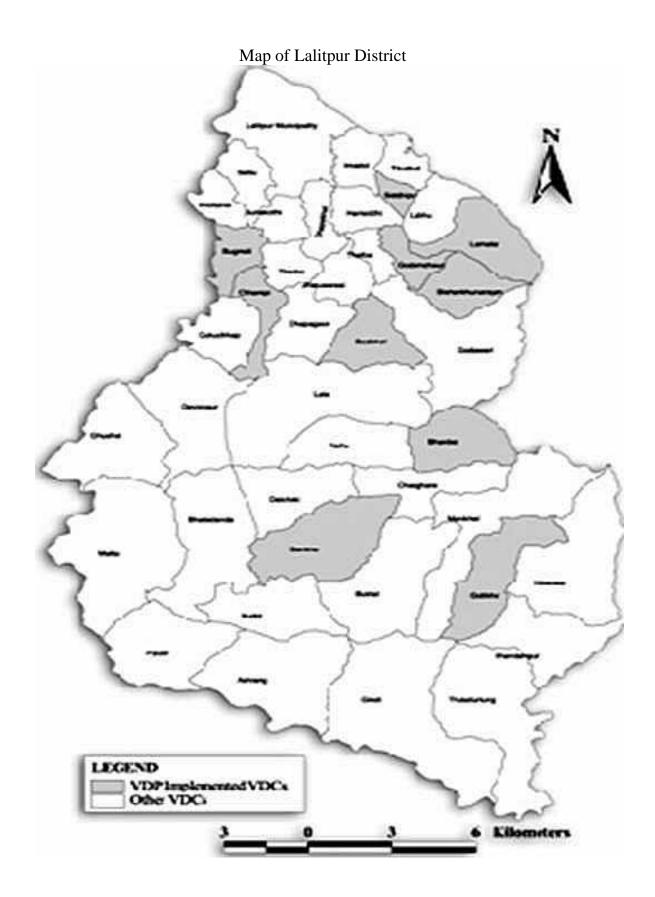
4.1 Lalitpur District

Lalitpur district is situated in the central development region of Nepal. The district is in hilly belt of the kingdom and surrounded by Kathmandu and Bhaktpur in the north, Kavre in the east, Kathmandu and Makwanpur in the west and Makwanpur in the south. The district is divided politically and administratively into 1 sub-metropolitan and 41 VDCs. It extends between $27^022'$ and $28^050'$ North latitude and 85^014 and $85^026'$ east longitude.

The total area of this district is 385 square kilometer; of the total area, 15296 hectares is cultivated, 15253 hectares is covered by forest and remaining area is covered by pastures land and other river or rivulets.

According to the census of 2001, the total population of this district is 3, 37,785 out of which 1, 72,455 are males and 1, 65,330 are females and total household no. is 68,922. The main inhabitants of this district are Brahmin, Chhettri, Newar, Tamang, Gurung, Damai, Kami etc. The average rainfall of this district is 78.32 mm. Its temperature ranges from minimum 11.62^0C to maximum 24.16^0C. The weather condition of this district is very fine. It is neither too hot nor too cold.

The main occupation of the people of this district is agriculture, animal husbandry and poultry. People are also engaged in service trades. The main agro-products are paddy, maize, wheat, barley, potato, soybean, etc. The main tourist spot of this district are Bungmati, Godawari, Mangalbazar, Khokana, Chapagun, Lele, Godamchaur, Bisankhu Narayan etc.

According to the 'Nepal Human Development Report, Lalitpur is placed in second position compared with other districts of Nepal. The HDI value of the district is 0.523 while the average of Nepal is 0.325. On the basis of Gender-sensitive development index, it is in third position. The life expectancy of the people in this district is 63 years and literacy rate is 60.37 percent.

Map of Lalitpur District

4.2 Badikhel VDC:

Badikhel VDC is the study area selected for this research. Among the 3913 VDCs of the Kingdom of Nepal, Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur district lies in the Bagmati Zone of central development region. It is about 11 Km. far from its district headquarter Patan. Its altitude ranges from 4220 ft to 5670 ft from the sea level. The total area of this VDC is 12576.2 Ropani and surrounded by the VDCs, Godawari in east and north, Jhuruwarisi and Chapagoun in west and Lele and Chapagoun in south. The major streams of this VDC are Kutku and Karmanasa. The village consists of 35% fertile land, 44% jungle, o.75% non-productive and 0.8% is grazing land.

There are three types of jungle in this VDC. These are Government, Private and community. There is not any big river and lake. Kodku, Karmanasa and Thulokhala are the three main rivers and Gwalindaha, Sirupadhayamul and Haramul are three main lake situated in this VDC.

According to the Census of 2001, the total population of this VDC is 4312 of which 2162 are male and 2150 are female. It is somehow triangular in its shape. There is diversity in its land structure. Only about 50 percent of its total land can be used for cultivation.

The weather condition of this VDC is very fine. It is neither too hot nor too cold. The average temperature is about 18^0C to 27^0C. The rainy season starts from Jestha and continue till Ashwin causing 500-700 mm. rainfall in average. In the jungle, lots of medicinal plants like, Nundhiki, Bakaino, Timmur, Katus, Chilaune, Sungava etc are found. To some extent, the Pahari community of this VDC gets some income by selling the flowers esp. Sungava (orchid) and the like. This VDC is also potential for tourism activities like picnic spot, resort, mount view etc. There are some community forests where different kinds of wild animals are found.

The population consists of different ethnic groups such as Brahmins, Chettri, Magar, Damai, Kami, Gurung, Newar etc. Among these, Pahari is the largest ethnic group which occupies more than 55 percent of total population of the VDC. 'Pahari' people especially live in ward no 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Most of the people follow the Hindusm and speak Nepali language within this VDC. Transportation, communication, electrification and other infrastructural development are available in almost all over the VDC. Agriculture is the main occupation of the

people of this VDC and some are engaged in trade, business, government service and foreign employment.

People, who live in this VDC, have general living standard as other Nepalese. The living style of this VDC is directly influenced by urban system due to proximity to Patan and Kathmandu. Majority of the people are poor. Among them, some are in such a miserable condition that they have insufficient food to feed their children throughout the year. Women in this area are still influenced by traditional customs. They are still engaging in unproductive activities. Although they contribute hard labour, they don't possess any economic power.

Map of Badikhel VDC

This chapter has discussed setting of the study area. The physical setting has given idea of location, climate and resources of the area. The social setting has described population, ethnic and caste composition, culture religion, education and occupation of the area. The next chapter will discuss the general overview of Community Forestry of Nepal.

CHAPTER V
5. 1 DESCRIPTION OF KUMARI FOREST USER GROUP

5.1.1 Location

Kumari community Forest User Group is one of the six Forest User Groups of Badikhel VDC. A portion of people of ward no.3 and 4 is the user of the Kumari Community Forest. The Community Forest is located in the eastern part of the VDC, which has the total area of 48 hectare. Slope of the forest is about 25^0 to 60^0 facing toward northwest. Forest is dominated by almost natural regeneration. Major tree species of the forest are Salla (*Pinus roxburghii*), Chilaune (*Schima wallichii*), Paiu, Katus (*Castonopsis indica*), Kharsu *(quercus spp.)*, Gurans (*Rhododendrom spp.*). Leopard, deer, jackal and Rabbits are the major wild animals. The different species of the birds including Kalij are found in the forest.

5.1.2 History

Before 2051, it was a government forest and the condition of the forest was degrading day by day. Realizing the fact, the people around the forest show their interest to save the forest and demanded the district forest office to hand over the forest to them. Then, the Kumari Community Forest was handed over to the Forest User Group in 2051. After then, the user group had completely prohibited forest from grazing and green woodcutting. Now, forest is growing towards well stocked where the trees girth reached to 40" and 25 in height.

5.1.3 Social Characteristics of Forest User Group

Social and cultural features and economic activities of forest users were examined to discuss the social characteristics of Forest User Group using forty sampled households. Among forty households, twenty were taken from Pahari caste, sixteen households from Brahmins, and remaining four households from Chhetri, Damai, Magar and Newar each.

5.1.3.1 Ethnic composition of Forest User Group

Kumari Community forest has covered 129 households. There are 645 users among these households. And they are the primary users of the forest. The Table no.1 below shows detail information of Caste/ethnic composition of Kumari Forest User Group.

Table no. 1 Caste/Ethnic composition of Kumari Community Forest User Group

Sno	Ethnic composition	No of households	Users	Percentage
1	Pahari	68	341	52.86
2	Brahmins	52	254	39.37
3	Chhetri	3	13	2.01
4	Damai	2	15	2.32
5	Magar	2	12	1.86
6	Newar	2	10	1.55
Total		129	645	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Above table describes that there are 68 households of Pahari, 52 households of Brahaman, 3 households of Chhetri, and Damai, Magar and Newar comprises 2 households each. There are 341 Pahari users, 254 Bhahaman users, 13 Chhetri users, 15 Damai users, 12 Magar users and 10 Newar users. By caste hierarchy, Brahaman are the higher caste and then followed by Chhetri, Newar, Pahari, Magar and the lower caste Damai (also called untouchable) in Kumari Forest User Group.

5.1.3.2 Age and sex composition

There are altogether fifty-eight households in the Kumari Community Forest User Group. Out of these, twenty-nine households were selected as sample for the study. Twenty-nine sample households covered one hundred and sixty-seven benefit users. These sampled users are categorized in five age groups in the following table.

Table No. 2: Age and Sex Composition of Sampled Households.

Sn	Age Group	Male		Female		Grand total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	0-14	21	9.59	23	10.50	44	20.09
2	15-39	42	19.18	45	20.55	87	39.73
3	40-59	28	12.79	31	14.15	59	26.94
4	Above 59	14	6.39	15	6.85	29	13.24
Total		105	47.95	114	52.05	219	100

Source: Field survey 2008

From the table 2, it can be seen that the population of female is higher than male. The age group15-39 has domination in the user group, which has covered 39.73% of the total users.

5.1.3.3 Households size and structure

Household size of the Kumari Community Forest User Group found from one to fifteen members with the average members of 5.00 persons. Most of the families were found nuclear family. Distribution of families of respondent household is presented in the table no. 3 below

Table no. 3: Number and Percentage Distribution of Family Size of the Sample Households

Sn.	No. of family members	No. of households	Percentage
1	1-3	5	12.50
2	4-6	23	57.50
3	7-10	11	27.50
4	Above 10	1	2.50
Total		40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Above table indicates that most of the households were found having 4 to 6 members' family size which is 57.50 percentages in coverage of the user group. Five households were found having 1 to 3 members' with 12.50 percentage of coverage of total households. Only 11 households were found with 7 to 10 members in family. During the household survey, only one Damai family household was found with more than 10 members, which has family size of 11 members. Ethnically, it was found that Brahaman has average of 5.5 persons per household whereas Chhetri, Pahari, Magar, Newar and Damai were found 4.33, 5.01, 6.00, 5.00 and 7.50 persons per household respectively.

5.1.3.4 Educational Status of Respondents

The data revels that Brahaman and Chhetri are highly educated than other. Educational level of male is higher than female. Both young and old generations of males are educated. Most of the females are uneducated over the ages of 45 years however; the young generations of females are educated. About 25% women with the ages between 15 and 45 years are literate. Similarly, young generation of Pahari, Newar, Magar and Damai are also educated. Old generation of women of both of these groups is illiterate. Educational status of the sampled users is categorized in six levels, which is given in the Table no. 4 below.

Table no. 4: Distribution of Population by Educational Status.

Sn.	Educational Status	Male		Female		Grand Total	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	Illiterate	15	14.29	40	35.09	55	25.11
2	Primary (1-5) class	18	17.14	11	9.65	29	13.24
3	Secondary (6-10) class	18	17.14	21	18.42	39	17.81
4	SLC	15	14.29	17	14.91	32	14.61
5	Intermediate above	33	31.43	18	15.79	51	23.29
6	Literate but not attended school	6	5.71	7	6.14	13	5.94
	Total	105	100	114	100	219	100

Source: Field survey, 2008

The above table reviles that in total 25.11 percentages of users are illiterate and 74.89 percentages of users are literate. Illiterate percentage of female is in higher in comparison to male users. The 35.09 percentage of females are illiterate while 14.29 percentages male are illiterate. The 31.43 percentage of male are having intermediate and above intermediate levels of education whereas total 15.79 percentage of females are having intermediate level of education. During household survey, in the Damai users no single user was observed with the education above than SLC.

5.1.4 Economic Activities

Land tenure, livestock holding capacity, agriculture production, food sufficiency and occupation of the Forest User Group were surveyed and examined. The details of these activities are briefly discussed in the following section.

5.1.4.1 Land Tenureship

Among three ethnic groups, Brahaman hold more land than other two ethnic groups. No Brahaman family was found having less than three Ropanies of land. The data reviled that the average land holding capacity of Brahaman community is about 3.15 Ropanies irrigated land and 2.5 Ropanies non irrigated land. Damai have no land for agricultural production excluding kitchen gardening.

Brahaman cultivate their land themselves. They hire daily wage labor during preparation of agricultural land and harvesting agricultural products. During the survey it was found that most of the Pahari community performs bamboo works for income generation. Except this occupation Pahari also works as agricultural wage labours. No single household has ranted out their land to others for the cultivation. Distribution of samples household by the size of land holding is given in the Table no. 5

Table No. 5: Distribution of Sampled Household by the Size of Land Holding

S. No.	Land holding (Ropani)	No. of households	Percentage
1	Landless	0	0
2	0-1	4	10
3	2-5	19	47.50
4	6-10	17	42.50
	Total	40	100

Source: Field survey 2008

Above table indicates that there are four households with 0-1 ropani land holding. They are from Damai, Pahari and Newar community. Brahaman, Chhetri and Magar are holding more than 2 ropanies of agricultural land. Eight households of Brahaman won 2 to 5 ropanies of agricultural land. Similarly out of seventeen households of land, eight households of Brahmins, 7 households of Pahari, 1 household of Magar and 1 household of Chhetri own more than 5 ropanies of land.

5.1.4.2 Livestock Holding

Cow is common domestic animal of Forest User Group. All Brahaman, Chhetri and Magar respondents are keeping one to two cows for their own use. Likewise, Newar and Pahari respondents are involved in hen keeping in the range of two to five hens for their own use. Damai did not have any domestic animals during field survey.

5.1.4.3 Agricultural Production and Food Sufficiency

Main agriculture productions are rice, pea, potato and some green vegetable in the settlement area of Kumari Forest User Group. Pea and Green vegetables are produced as cash crop. However, no household was found dependent on agricultural production only. Brahaman has extended their service in different Governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Generally, females of household occupied with the agricultural work and male were occupied with government and non-government sector service. Only 3% households of Brahaman are completely dependent in agriculture that has sufficient production for their livelihood. They have small family size and sufficient land for them self. The Table no. 6 below shows the production pattern of agriculture in Kumari Forest User Group.

Table No. 6: Distribution of Sampled Households Based on their Agricultural Production

Crops	Unit	Agricultural production						
		Zero production	1-3 Muri	4-6 Muri	7-9 Muri	10-12 Muri	13-15 Muri	Above 15 Muri

Rice	Households	3	1	4	6	12	4	10
Wheat	Households	3	1	5	5	11	6	9
Maize	Households	4	12	4	8	5	0	7

Source: field Survey, 2008

Above table shows that seven households produces rice and wheat. Similarly, 36 households produce maize while 4 households do not produce wheat. Only 10 households produce rice more than 15 muri. Only 6 households sell their agricultural production as a surplus production. The 12 households produce green vegetables as cash crop. In average they generate Rs. 5000 income by selling green vegetables as a cash crop.

5.1.4.4 Occupation

Livelihood of the users is mainly based on subsistence of the agricultural economy. The only agricultural production is not sufficient for their livelihood. Brahaman, Chhetri and Magar community extended their occupation in service of government and non-governmental organization. Some females of Brahaman, Chhetri and Magar community are also engaged in government school and private school as a teacher and one female respondent was found having government service. Males and females of Pahari community generally involve in bamboo work. Newar community is involved in agriculture. Except students, males and females of Damai are doing their occupational job that is tailoring. Occupational distribution of respondents is given in the table no. 7 below.

Table No. 7: Occupational Distribution Of Sampled Households.

S. no.	Occupation	Households	Percentage
1	Only agriculture	3	7.5
2	Agriculture and service	14	35
3	Agriculture and cottage industry	12	30
4	Wage labor	3	7.5
5	Occupational job	8	20
	Total	40	100

Source: field survey, 2008

The table above shows that most of the household (35%) are involved in governmental and non-governmental service besides agriculture. Income from extra activities than agriculture is used in the expenditure of education, health, festivals, cloth and food. Household of Damai and some of Pahari community are found solely dependent on daily wage labor and occupational jobs.

5.1.5 Cultures and Religion

In Kumari Community Forest User Group, ethnically the users are heterogeneous but culturally and religiously, they are homogenous. They belong to Hindu religion. All ethnic groups celebrate Dashain and Tihar and other Hindu festivals. Damai in the community belongs to untouchable caste. Even though constitutionally prohibited, they are not allowed to touch Brahaman and other so called higher caste people. Brahmins community celebrates Kul Puja (Worship of dynasty god) once in a year. Pahari and Newar celebrate various local festivals. Other community has no extra special religious practice and celebration.

5.1.6 Use of forest Products

The Main Forest Products used by the local people on regular basis are leaf litter, fire wood and fodder, Timber for construction is in less demand. The Forest User fulfills their most of the demand of forest products from Community Forest and to some extent from their own farmland (farm tree, agricultural residue and weeds of agricultural land). So far, the Forest Users are not using forest products for the purpose of income generation. As the trees of the Community Forest are in young age, not viable to produce timber as demand of the users. If users need large amount of timber they buy from near by market. Users use medicinal plants extracting from their community Forest if they need for their own use.

5.2. Institutional Process of Kumari Community Forest

There are different institutional processes in the practice of Community forestry, forest User Group, District forest Office and other line agencies must perform different institutional process to gain objectives of Community Forestry program. Forest User Group is al local level organization established for the purpose of management, protection and proper utilization of forest which has been using by them since past. Formation of Forest User Group and forest User Committee, preparation of operational plan of forest and constitution of user group and implementation are major institutional process of Community forestry. How these institutional processes are being adopted by Kumari Forest User Group is described.

5.2.1 Realization of the Problems

After the enacted of Forest Nationalization Act in 1957, all traditionally managed communal forest nationalized as a national forest and then, started to control use of forest directly from government. This step of government could not be able to achieve expected success. The Forest Nationalization Act affected Kumari Community Forest as well. Users of the forest over used forest products supposing forest are of government under nationalization act villagers were not aware about the consequences

of forest degradation. Thus they used forest in a way that the forest almost changed to bare land. Because of rapid destruction of forest, firewood and other forest products became scarce. Villagers had to go far to bring firewood and fodder. Especially this adverse situation impacted on women who are real collector of forest products had to spend more time to collect forest products.

Because of heavy degradation of forest in the study area, also led to the destruction of medicinal plants, herbs and the habitat of birds and other wild animals. To come out from these problems, Government had planted salla (*Pinus* *species*). Plantation did not success because of insufficient proper protection from government. Adverse Environmental problems affected on life of people of the Badikhel VDC. Effort of Government only could not success to protect forest to solve the adverse effect of forest destruction. Therefore, District Forest Office and staff motivated some educated and leading people of the village to form Forest User Group to manage village forest as Community forest. Leading people also agreed with the view of District Forest Office of Lalitpur to form Forest User Group.

5.2.2 Formation of Forest User Group and Forest User Committee

Formation of forest user group and forest user committee is the first step of community forestry program. All users of the forest must be identified to form a forest user group. DFO (District Forest Office) suggested some leading people of ward no. 3 and 4 of Badikhel VDC to form user group for the management of their forest as community forest. With the initiation of some leading person, users were mobilized themselves and they organized first informal group discussion where teachers, villagers and district forest officials were presented. From informal group discussion, they decided to make community forest to protect and strength the forest according to forest act, 1993. In 1995, all people of ward no. 3 and 4 had made one community forest.

Kumari Community Forest has 129 primary users and 15 secondary users managing 48 hectares forest area. Primary users and secondary users are classified on the basis of right of access and usage. Primary users are real users of the forest. Secondary users of Kumari Community forest are not the villagers of same VDC. They used forest only for the recreational purpose without affecting forest condition. So, they are given membership of secondary users.

Forest User Group included six ethnic groups are Brahaman, Pahari Chhetri, Magar, Newar and Damai (Pariyar). Ethnic composition of Forest User Group is already

mentioned in Table 1. The table shows that there are 129 household with 645 users in Kumari community forest user group. Caste of Pahari is the largest group among three ethnic groups having 341 users. Other community Brahman, Chhetri, Magar, Newar and Damai has 254, 13, 12, 10 and 15 respectively.

The findings make known that there was not equally distributed position of User Committee to all six ethnic groups. Brahaman and Chhetri have occupied vital posts of User Committee.

In latest User Committee there is representation of Damai with only 6.66% of coverage. Following table shows the ethnic composition of all forest User Committee of Kumari Community Forest.

Table no.8: Ethnic Composition of Forest User Committee

S. No.	Ethnic group		Committee
1	Pahari	Male	6
		Female	2
2	Brahaman	Male	3
		Female	2
3	Chhetri	Male	1
		Female	-
4.	Magar	Male	-
		Female	-
5.	Newar	Male	-
		Female	-
6.	Damai	Male	1
		Female	-
Total			15

Source: Field Survey 2008

Above table describes that there is the higher representation of Pahari community in the user group. Their number is 8 in total. Similarly, Brahmins representation is 5 and remaining two seats are occupied by Chhetri and Newar. Out of 15 members women's representation is only four. This shows that more than 70% seats are covered by male users. But while talking about the use of forest products, females are the direct users. The interesting finding was that there is no representation of Magar and Newar community in the user committee. This shows that the committee is unable to cover all the ethnic groups.

District Forest Office was found less active during the identification of users. Users of the forest have no clear knowledge about concept of Forest User Group and they are also unknown about consequences of improper identification of users. According to users they only know that Forest User Group should be from users of ward no. 3 and 4. So, they did not inform to these two communities.

5.2.3 Preparation of Constitution and Operational Plan

Every Community Forestry needs to make one written constitution of user group and one Operational Plan for Community forest. This provision is included in forest regulation 1995 and Community Forest guideline 1995.

Constitution of users is the guideline to go on specific direction and to participate systematically. It is the document of policies, rules and regulation. It is necessary to include the name, address, objectives and stamp of the user's group in Constitution. Total household, estimated population of user's group, formation procedure of user's committee and the name list of the user's committee members is also needed to include in constitution. Working procedure of the user's committee, the ways to control forest offences, penalties for the user members who don not obey the constitution, a system of collection of funds and auditing are also must.

Preparation of constitution was a difficult task for user members. First, they organized the user's assembly to discuss regarding the preparation of the constitution. Users had no knowledge about it. Therefore, they requested the Ranger to help them. The user assembly gave authority to the users' committee to prepare the constitution. The users' committee members discussed and prepared the draft of the constitution with the help of the Ranger. Thereafter, they called users' group assembly to discuss on the draft constitution. After the ratification of the constitution, they registered in District Forest Office and issued a certificate of registration in the prescribed form on 1995.

Operational Plan is the written document with the description of forest (i.e.; name, boundary, area, condition, forest types), the map of the forest, objectives of the forest management, forest, protection system, scientific management operation (i.e.; cleaning, singling pruning, thinning), income generation program and benefit sharing for those who don not obey the Operational Plan.

The users alone can not prepare the Operational Plan without help of the forest technicians because it is technical task (i.e.; survey of the forest, preparation of map of

the forest, designation of the Operational Plan). Users had no proper knowledge regarding how to draw an Operational Plan. The group meeting decided to prepare the Operational Plan and gave full authority to the user's committee to prepare the draft of the Operational Plan.

After the completion of the survey of the forest by the forest technicians, users prepared the draft of the Operational Plan with the help of Ranger. A general assembly of all the users was called and discussions were held on major provisions. Then, Operational Plan was finalized and submitted to District Forest Office for the approval. District Forest Officer provided the registration certificate on 1995. This Operational Plan was approved for 5 years. After 5 years, District Forest Office evaluated and monitored the situation of forest and working style of Forest user Group. Then from 2000, Forest User Group was extended the authority to manage the forest for next five years. However, there is provision of making five years operational plan. Kumari Community Forest User Group has been making one-year Operational Plan through group assembly since 2000. One year Operational Plan was made similarly like first operational plan was made and was approved by District Forest Office.

5.2.4 Implementation Process

For the implementation of Community Forestry activities, they have formed user Committee and made constitution of user group and Operational Plan of forest. During implementation, user group must follow the rules and regulation of constitution and Operational Plan. Forest user Group had developed protection and management rules to implement Community Forestry activities properly which are discussed below.

5.2.4.1 Duties and Responsibilities of Forest User Committee

Forest user group Committee plays a vital role in protecting and managing the forest with the help of people. They have to follow constitution of user group and operational plan of forest. If User Committee needs to change and to add new rules, they have to call general assembly to formulate and approve the rules. They can formulate new rules with the agreement of the general users but it is necessary to take approval from District Forest Office.

Forest User Committee has set some duties and responsibilities for the effective implementation of Community Forestry activities with full participation as much as. The duties and responsibilities of the forest User Committee are as follows:
- To call the committee meeting in every month for the discussion on forest management and other casual problems.

- To take the necessary step to implement the operational plan.
- To punish and fine the individual who is against the rules and regulation of operational plan and constitution. As per need, they get help form District Forest Office for further punishment.
- To consult with District Forest Office to take necessary technical advice and other helps if needed.
- To keep the records of income and the expenditure of the committees and to present in general assembly in every year for the approval from group.
- To dismiss the position holder User Committee members if they don wrong with forest and forest user group.
- To use and distribute the forest products equally as mentioned in operational plan for the satisfaction of users.
- To check whether user are performing their duty of forest protection.
- To notify the users about the works and decisions of forest User Committee.
- To perform other concerned works of Community Forest with the help of general users.

5.2.4.2 Objectives of the Kumari Community Forest User Group

Forest User Group has set following objectives for the betterment of the forest.
- To supply timber, fuel wood, fodder, leaf litter, grass easily and continuously on sustainable way
- To improve forest conditions and forest productivity
- To conserve medicinal plants and used them properly
- To protect wild lives
- To control soil erosion
- To increase income generation activities using forest product without effecting sustainability of forest
- To develop tourist activities

5.2.4.3 Protection Rules

Protection of forest is major task of Community Forestry program. Different rules are made in different Community Forest for the protection of Community Forest. Forest User Group of Kumari Community Forest has decided to protect forest on a rotational basis by users themselves. Every user has been assigned to protection duty as volunteer on a rotational basis. They also supervised each other and if any one were found with stolen forest products are informed to user Committee for punishment. Grazing is completely prohibited to protect small seedling and samplings of tree species and medicinal plants.

5.2.4.4 Offences and Penalties Rules

Forest User Group made some penalties rules for those users (either belonging to user group or not) who break the norms and rules of constitution and Operational Plan. Constitution has not given permission to enter the forest without notice. Users who involve in the destruction of forest ate supposed to get penalties. S/he will get penalties in accordance with his and her nature of crème. Kumari Forest User Group has made two types of penalties; penalties for minor offence and penalties for major offence. Detail of offence item and penalties are mentioned in two tables below.

Table No. 9: Penalties for Minor Offences

Sn	Offence items	Penalties
1	Fire wood collection	Rs. 15 to 100
2	Timber cutting and coal making	Depending upon quantity
3	Damaging for seedling	Rs. 100 to 500 per seedling

Source: field survey, 2008.

Above table describes that there are penalties in monetary term. There is different rate of fines for separate penalties. Fines rate for destruction of seedlings and saplings is high than other penalties. Above mentioned penalties are minor offences. Next table has described major offences and penalties for those who found in the forest having intention of forest destruction or already destructed of forest are supposed to get separate penalties on the basis of destruction. The Table 10 below shows the major offence items and penalties for them.

Table no. 10: Penalties for Major Offences

S. no.	Item	Intention of destruction	Dead of destruction
1	Hunting	Rs. 10 to 100	File the case to district forest office
2	Fire hazards	Rs. 500 to 1000	File the case to district forest office
3	Land encroachment	-	File the case to district forest Office
4	Grazing	Rs. 10 to 100	Rs. 10 to 30
5	Digging soil and stone	-	To inform DFO for punishment

Source: field survey, 2008

Above table reveals that there is role of District Forest Office to give penalties if case is forwarded to District Forest Office by Forest User Group. District Forest Office punish under the forest act 1993. Offender who is getting punishment by Forest User Committee should pay fines within seven days. Who don not pay doing mistake are again punished by the decision of user group.

All forest users are responsible to control fire hazards if happen. Absence users in the exhaustion of fire are suspended for on year from general membership of users. Big wild animals and even any type of small birds of the forest are not allowed for hunting for the protection of wild life.

5.2.4.5 Rules of Distributing of Forest Products

Forest is well protected by Kumari Community Forest User Group. It is a natural regenerated forest excluding some planted pine trees. Users are allowed to extract firewood, fodder, grass and leaf litter in prescribed time but forest trees are too young to provide timber. Every year, in the month of January and February, user group performs management operations which include clearing, thinning and pruning. Products came out by the operation are equally distributed among users. Nominal price, as given below has been fixed for each product to raise forest user Group fund,

- Green firewood per Kg Rs. 0.20
- Dry firewood per Bhari Rs. 5 (One Bhari is equal to about 30 K.G.)
- Fodder and leaf litter on free of cost
- Timber Rs. 40/C.Ft. upto 35-45 C.Ft

Extraction of coal and timber has not been allowed and there is prohibition for grazing on foreland. Permission is not given to anybody to take out medical plant for the purpose of sale but they can extract for their own use. Fire wood up to 1000 kg, 20 Bhari dry fire wood, 20 Bhari grass and 40 Bhari leaf litter per household is distributed from Community forest. Grass and leaf litter can be brought any time not exceeding prescribed amount. More products than the need of users of Kumari Community Forest are sold to outsider in same price as the users pay. In case of timber the non useful extracts are sold to the local users.

Forest user Group has made such rules that for the distribution of forest products in the case of special ceremony or cultural events like marriage, "PUJA" and emergency events such as death of a family member, natural calamities and firing of house. In such cases essential fire wood and needed timber is provided free of cost. Written application should be submitted to Forest User Committee to get such benefit.

5.2.4.6 Transparency and Communication

User group/committee has adopted good system for the transparency and communication. Committee has recorded every meeting minute and financial activity. Any users can check and look it if he/she has any suspect to User Committee. Every user can keep any question to the Committee to come out from his and her confusion.

Every year one auditor audits account of user group. Detail of account has been presented in the group assembly every year.

User Committee and users are informed through letter by committee chairperson or secretary for the participation in meeting and assembly. Any absentee user can see meeting minute afterwards without restriction to know what decisions were made in meeting. Similarly, for the implementation of every activity, all households are informed to participate through letter.

5.2.5 Meeting the Objectives of the Community Forestry

Kumari Community Forestry User Group has set seven major objectives, which are written in forest operational plan. Forest User Group is trying to fulfill these objectives.

- The User Group is protecting forest in a way that they fulfill their most of the demand of the forest products from Community Forest excluding timber use as the trees are still young. If the Community Forest is protected in the same manner as present, the User Group will be able to fulfill the timber demand as well. Since the forest growth is satisfactory, there is a significant reduction in soil erosion and landslide.

- To conserve the medicinal plant, the User Group has prohibited the use of medicine plan for the purpose of sale. However, they are free to use these medicinal plants for their own use. Some users have been trained on the propagation of medicinal plat targeting future income source form medicinal plants. They have planted already some medicinal plats as a trial in their community forest.

- The users as well as outsiders are not allowed to hunt animals, birds and reptiles of the forest. According to the user groups, there is a good growth of wildlife.

- The VDC is now building a tower in the top of the hill within the Kumari Community Forest using VDC's resource. Some private stakeholders, who are the secondary users of the community forestry, have opened Hotel and Resort near by this community forest. The user group is hoping to benefit from these activities in the future.

ꞵ) To work for local development activities- the Kumari community user group allocates 75% of its income for local development and 25% for forest protection.

The chapter has discussed about different rules of Kumari Community Forestry. How far rules of Community Forestry are applied determines affective participation of people. Above mentioned rules guide the users of Kumari Community Forest to implement every activities of Community Forest. Next chapter will discuss how people are participating in different activities of Community Forest and how far above mentioned provision are fulfilled.

5.3 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY

5.3.1 Participation in Decision Making

In Kumari community forestry, forest user group makes decision through group assembly or committee meeting. Meeting of group or committee relied on the issue to be decided. Committee members decide minor issue whereas group decides major issues.

The chairperson and secretary call every group meeting and committee meeting. It is mandatory that, all members of the committee should be present in the committee meeting while one member from one household should represent in the group meeting. The member of the forest user group is a household but not an individual. So, the household decides which of its member should represent the household at the group meeting. Both meetings need more than half representative to decide any decisions.

Every decision is carried out by consensus. Every member has aright to keep his/her opinion regarding each case. Peoples' participation in decision-making is known by asking their representation in meeting and asking some questions to access their active participations. For institutional development, the process of decision-making makes great difference whether this institution really could run or not. Group meeting and committee meetings are means of decision making, which are discussed below:

Committee Meeting:

Generally committee meeting is held regularly once in a month. If members feel necessary, a meeting is held more than regular meeting. When a meting is called, it is usually the secretary or the chairperson who informs other members. Usually meeting is called on Saturday or evening time of any day, which time is free time of committee members. After gathering, members recommend agendas for discussion. Participation rate of the committee member is found nine to eleven members per meeting. Generally

decision to implement forest operational plan is being made by the forest user committee.

It is necessary to analyze the representation of women user and lower cast user of community in forest user committee. If the people of the lower cast and women are not the members of the forest user committee, it may be assumed that there is less participation of people in decision-making. Forest user committee has enough authority to make decisions with regard to community forest user group processes such as what sort of seedlings to be planted, which members would participate in different trainings, tours and workshops. Therefore there should be representation from all interest group.

Kumari forest user committee is highly dominated by Brahaman and Pahari community as they are the largest community of the area. There is one representation of Chhetri, and Damai community each whereas Magar and Newar community have no representation. The Chairman of the committee is from Chhetri community. Hence, while making decision the Brahmin, Pahari and Chhetri play the dominant role.

In the committee, there is the representation from Brahmin and Pahari community. Though Brahmin women speak little bit, the Pahari Women don't speak any thing in the community meeting. Although they regularly attend the committee meeting, they told that they have never spoken any word in committee meeting about community forestry activities. They said that they only know that they have to go in meeting otherwise they will be punished. They again said that they do not need to speak because other educated members make decisions. On such context there was less approach of women in decision-making. These women know their all committee members and have knowledge of decision what they made in meeting. It was found that there was no representation from Newar and Magar group user committee. So, it can be said that the participation of Newar and Magar group in decision-making through forest user committee zero.

Group meeting / Group assembly:

Group meeting and group assembly is called when the user committee feels its necessity. Generally assembly of group is held at least once in a year. At least majority assemblies (more than 50%) must be present tom pass a decision. In-group meeting, the users express the view and decisions are carried out by a majority vote of user group. Every member has the right to keep his/her opinion in each agenda during group meeting.

Kumari user group organized group assembly during the preparation of constitution of groups and operational plan of forest. Every year users evaluate their progress through group assembly. User committee presents a progress report on group assembly. User group can raise questions n different issues of report if they like. Due date of operational plan is generally about five years. After five years every forest user group should prepare next operational plan or revise. First five year operational plan of Kumari community forest was finished in 2000AD.After then, they prepare one-year operational plan through assembly for every year. It is already mentioned that user group has given authority to user committee to prepare operational plans and constitutions through group meetings. The user group members actively participated and gave suggestions, added some points and changed a little also during the discussion period. The decision was taken by the consensus of the user members.

Kumari forest user group changed forest user committee through group meeting in three times. All user committee was made by consensus of the user members. Second user committee formulated democratic policies for the selection of the third user committee and asked the user to file their nominations. However, nobody filed their nominations and at the end, user group formed committee members based on education, leadership and attitude of membership and also considered gender participation but ignored caste representation.

The status of the participation was measured asking respondent to express the frequency of their participation in meeting. Frequencies of participations are divided into three levels. They are always participations for those who participate regularly, sometimes participations for those who are not participating regularly but participate when they have time and never participation for those who are not participating till now. The following table 11 shows status of participation of different ethnic group in group assembly or group meeting.

Table no.11: Participation of Respondent in Group Meeting/Assembly

Sn	Participation Level	Pahari		Brahmins		Chhetri		Magar		Newar		Damai		Total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Always	10	2	9	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26
2	Sometimes	3	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	9
3	Never	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Total		15	5	10	6	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	40

Source: Field survey, 2008

Above table indicates that there are only 26 respondents among 40 respondents who were found regular participants of group meetings. Among eleven there are 20 male and 6 female. These all are from Brahman, Pahari and Chhetri. Other community people were not found regular participants in-group meeting. Participation of Brahmin and Pahari was found satisfactory as compared to participation of other ethnic groups. Except interviewing to users about their participations, meeting minute of group meeting also revealed that there is poor participation of Magar, Newar and Damai group. From this minute it was also found that participation of women is less in comparison to male participation. So, it can be said there is less participation of women in decision-making. Within women users; there is good participation of Brahman women comparing to that of Pahari Women, whereas the participation of Chhetri, Magar, Newar and Damai women is nil.

According to male respondent of Damai group, they were not involved in-group meeting during constitution preparation. Constitution is document of rules and regulation. So, if possible, every benefited user most actively represent for effectiveness of Community Forest. If all user didn't participate, decisions mayn't be favored the left group. Such happened in Kumari Community Forest. During field stay it was revealed that Damai group didn't participate in decision-making meeting while preparing rules and norms of their Community Forestry. Group decided to pay Rs. 10 to be a user member in every year through group meeting during preparation of constitution but afterwards absentee users (they are Damai group) didn't accepted the rules for paying Rs. 10. According to Damai users they are unable to pay Rs. 10 every year as a member of Community Forest. In such context they should take part in-group meetings and should keep their opinion on this issue. During decision-making, every responsible body should insure that there is participation of all interest groups otherwise it effects on implementation.

Although there was no participation of Damai group, Constitution and Operational Plan was developed with an active involvement of other users, leaders of that VDC and Ranger from District Forest Office.

Whenever there is a need to deal with the cases of theft of forest products (tree-fodder, green wood, dry wood and thatch) and to determine the amount of fine or to make or change new rules and regulations regarding the protection and management of the forest. These issues are considered generally through group meeting and decisions are taken based on consensus. Generally in-group meeting, agendas are made by

committee for the discussion in-group meeting. If any general users want to add extra agenda is also accepted from Forest User Committee and afterwards agendas are discussed. Finally, group accepts the decisions for the implementation.

5.3.2 *Participation in Implementation*

Implementation is the real practice of Operational Plan, constitution, and other decisions made by user group. It is the main responsibility of User Committee to implement all decisions and Operational Plan with the full participation of users. It is the responsibility of Forest User to be involved in implementation of rules and plan for effective implementation Committee Forest program. Protection, management and benefits sharing are major implementation activities of Community Forest. Implementation of these activities cannot be successful in the absence of people participation.

There are great influences of decision making in implementation of Community Forest activities Implementation decision includes which area of the forest is considered for the application of management operation, what period of the year is allocated for the harvesting of forest products, planting and distribution of forest products, how and what practices are to be applied in the planting, harvesting and protection. There is no meaning of decision-making unless it has not to be reflected in positive and supportive action by all users.

Respondents of Kumari Forest User Group were asked their participation in three major activities of Community Forest implementation activities are protection of forest, implementation of management operation and benefit sharing. Participation in implementation is categorized in three levels. Respondents who are participating in more than two third activities are categorized in High participation, who are participating more than half activities to two third activities are categorized in moderate participation and at last who participating less than half are categorized in less participation.

5.3..2.1 Participation in Protection of Forest

Kumari Community forest User Group has not appointed paid watcher for the protection of forest but they protect forest by volunteer guarding on the regular rotational basis. Evaluation of last year by the user they revealed that there were only 110 household participated in guarding.

To implement protection rules effectively, Forest User Group has made some incentive for those who involve more in protection work. These incentives are:

i. User who involve in guarding of forest more than 80%, will be given forest products with 50% discount.
ii. User who involve in guarding of forest more than 60% will be benefited with 25% discount during benefit sharing.
iii. Similarly, who involve less than 40% and never must pay 25% and 50% extra respectively to take benefit from forest.

Above mentioned rules were applied least year and two households benefited to use forest products with 50% discounts. Table 12 below shows the detail of participation of respondents in protection of forest.

Table no. 12: Participation Level of Respondents in Protection of Forest

Sn	Caste Ethnic Group		Participation level in protection				Total
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	
1	Pahari	M	5	5	2		12
		F	1	2	2	3	8
2	Brahmins	M	4	2	3	1	10
		F	1	2	1	2	6
3	Chhetri	M	1	-	-	-	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
4	Magar	M	-	-	1	-	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
5	Newar	M	-	-	-	1	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
6	Damai	M	-	1	-	-	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
Total			12	12	9	7	40

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Above table describes that there is less participation of female than male in protection of forest. According to women respondents, they have to engage in household work and can not make time for guarding them. On their own words they are protecting forest not to going inside the forest for stealing of firewood and fodder. There are two women with high participation who are from Brahaman, and Pahari Caste. There is one male respondent with never participation who is from Newar Caste. Altogether there are five women who did not participate in protection till now. Participation of both gender of Newar group is completely zero in protection of forest.

5.3.2.2 Participation in Forest Management

Forest management is the scientific operation that is applied in forest. Forest management operation includes plantations, weeding, thinning and pruning, clearing of bushes and fire line construction inside the forest area. It needs technical knowledge for the forest management. Therefore, management operation needs technical

assistance from District Forest Office. So, users as well as District Forest Officials often ply several roles simultaneously in forest management. But there is always need to take initiation from /forest User Group. Ranger of Range Post of the area has been providing such assistance for the Kumari Community Forest.

Plantation of seedlings in an open are of the forest is one of the main works of forest management. Kumari Community forest planted more than 25,000 tree seedlings inside the forest area. For the production of seedlings one user established one temporary nursery in his field. It helped him for income generation to some extend. Forest User Group bought seedlings from him. Every year they carry out thinning, pruning and clearing operation in the forest. For the forest management they have divided forest area into five blocks and given name A, B, C, D and E. Every year one block is considered for the application of management operation on the rotational basis.

Forest management needs physical exercise, so there is high participation of male compared to women. Women are participating in cleaning and thinning where as male is participating in pruning and transportation of extracted material from forest to own land during forest management. According to respondent, lack of sufficient knowledge of forest management, they are not getting expected out put in forest management. However, most of the users have participated in carrying out management activities to some extend. Thus, it can be said there is good participation of Brahaman Chhetri and Pahari in management of forest while participation of Newar group in forest management was found nil. Below table 13 presents participation level of respondents during application of management operation.

Table no. 13: Participation Level of Respondents during Management Operation

Sn	Caste /Ethnic Group		Participation level in Management operation				Total
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	
1	Pahari	M	4	6	2		12
		F	2	3	1	2	8
2	Brahmins	M	3	2	3	1	10
		F	2	2	1	2	6
3	Chhetri	M	1	-	-	-	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
4	Magar	M	-	-	1	-	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
5	Newar	M	-	-	-	1	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
6	Damai	M	-		-	1	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-

Total	12	13	8	7	40

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Above table shows high participation of male than female in forest management activities. Participation of Brahaman and Pahari women was found satisfactorily whereas that of other four ethnic group's women was found nil. Only Brahaman and Pahari respondents were found with high participation.

5.3.2.3 Participation in Benefit Sharing

Benefit sharing is an important element of people's participation of there is no equal sharing of forest products; people may be frustrated with the Community Forestry program. At the same time disparity may increase between advantageous and disadvantageous users. Equal sharing of forest products may make users to realize the Community Forest as their own.

Benefit sharing includes distribution of forest products like firewood, fodder, timber, grass and leaf litter. Firewood and fodder are important forest products needed for users. The members of the Kumari Community forest user Group were asked whether they share the benefits from the community forestry equally or not and whether they are satisfied about the present conditions of distribution system or not. It was found that Benefit is shared equally based on households. Firewood and fodder is distributed during the forest management operation as green firewood dry, dry firewood, fodder and timber are extracted during this period. The forest user group fixed nominal price for the extraction of green firewood and dry firewood. All users have accepted this rule. Generally, one household can use up to 1000 kg, green firewood, 20 Bhari dry firewood, 20 Bhari grass and 40 Bhari leaf litter as mentioned in forest product distribution rules. While forest could not supply such amount of forest products then they distributed Green firewood and extracted fodder in equal amount for all households. Grazing is completely prohibited, ground grass and dry leaf litter can be collect anytime throughout the year without hampering tree seedlings. Users need more forest product in especial religious and cultural event that is already mentioned in chapter 6 "Distribution Rules of Forest products".

Table no. 14: Participation Level of Respondents in Benefit Sharing

Sn	Caste /Ethnic Group		Participation level in Benefit Sharing				Total
			High	Moderate	Less	Never	
1	Pahari	M	3	4	2	1	10
		F	3	4	1	2	10
2	Brahmins	M	3	2	1	1	7
		F	4	2	2	1	9
3	Chhetri	M		-	-	-	-
		F	1	-	-	-	1
4	Magar	M	-	-		-	-
		F	-	-	1	-	1
5	Newar	M	-	-	-	1	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
6	Damai	M	-		-	1	1
		F	-	-	-	-	-
Total			14	12	7	7	40

Source: Field Survey, 2008

Above table indicates that the participation of women in benefit sharing is high. There are five households who do not use forest products for firewood because they have their own source. The table shows that out of total 40 respondents 14 are getting high participation in benefit sharing. This shows that the percentage of people being highly participated in benefit sharing is higher than other categories. Similarly only seven respondents argued that they have never been participated in this activity.

5.3.3 Participation in other Activities

Participation in training information dissemination, financial auditing and relation to District Forest Office activities are also Community Forestry activities. These activities are briefly describes here.

5.3.3.1Training

Forest User Committee is authorized body in selection of trainee participants. 21 user members have already benefited by different training. But the trainings provided so far are not enough to solve various problems related to forest management and to get maximum benefit from forest products. Likewise, the training was received by most Brahmins and Pahari. Hence here too other communities' representation was found unsatisfactory.

5.3.3.2 Relation to District Forest Officials

User Committee member has good relationship with District Forest officials. They regularly visit to ranger of range post and other forest officials. If needed, they visit District Forest Office for technical help. Forest officials are helping them time to time. There are no disputes between them.

5.3.3.3 Information Sharing

Members are informed through letter for group meeting and committee meeting. Any member who is unable to participate can see meeting minutes easily without any restriction. Clustered Settlement is also helping user to meet day to day to each other and share their information to each other about Community Forestry.

5.3.3.4 Raising and Mobilizing Fund

Forest User Group has opened a bank account. All the earning of the user group is deposited in bank account. Two persons from the User Committee are authorized to withdraw deposited monkey from the bank as per the guidelines set by the general assembly. They can raise question if they have any doubt in the money expenditure. It is the responsibility of Forest User Committee to explain and clarify on the raised doubt. Annual auditing is carried out on the expenditure and income.

The Forest User Group comprises the following revenue.

-) Grants received from His majesty's Government.
-) Grants donation or assistance received from any individual or institution.
-) Amount received from the sales or distribution of forest products.
-) Amount collected through fines.
-) Amount received from user's household per year as a membership renewable fee.
-) Amount received from any other sources.

5.3.3.5 Village Development Work

Village development has got high priority from the forest user group. It was already mentioned that the group allocates 75% of its income in local development. From this, they have performed following development activities:
-) Construction of road spending Rs. 18,000.
-) Constructed Buddha temple spending Rs. 10,000.
-) Culvert construction spending Rs. 10,000.
-) Constructed wooden bridge spending Rs. 3,200.

These are the direct interventions made by Kumari forest user group. Besides this they have supported Health Post to build its compound by providing wooden poles. Similarly the group has donated timber to the local School for its construction.

5.4 FACTORS AFFECTING PEOPLES PARTICIPATION

There are some factors which are responsible for the active participation of people in Community Forestry Program. These factors are classified as:

1) Social cultural factor,

2) Economic factor and

3) Other related factors.

5.4.1 Social Cultural Factor

Social factors include age group, family size and structure, cultural practices, gender and social value and norms. How these social factors effecting in people participation of Kumari Community Forest is briefly described in the following section.

5.4.1.1 Age

From field study, it is revealed that the respondents below the age of 25 years are young generation users who are mostly busy in their study. They have limited time to contribute in Community Forestry activities. They contribute their free time for Community Forestry activities. Treasure position is occupied by student of age 18 in present User Committee. Most of the respondents with the age between 25 to 40 years are busy in their professional job and also contribute their free time in Community forest activities. The respondents between ages 40 to 60 years are the one whose participation and contribution in community forestry is found higher then other age group users. Users above 60 years age are unable to contribute due to their physical weakness. Due to age factor, many old users left User Committee. However, Forest user Committee has tried to integrate all age group people above 16 years. The elderly users are placed in the position of advisor.

5.4.1.2 Family Size

Family size is another responsible factor in participation. It was revealed from field study that respondents with larger family size are participation in most of the activities. Such households have managed to send one representative from their house. Sometime small family sizes have faced problem in sending their representative from their household during Community Forestry activities as they are occupied in their won jobs.

Especially, there is high influence of family size in women's participation. Women of large family size household have to devote her time in preparing food and other inside housework. However, in the large family size where number of women is higher, well participation of women was found.

5.4.1.3 Gender

In Kumari Community Forest, no gender discrimination was found in Community Forestry activities. Women are equally participating as they get free time from their housework. Although there is no restriction for women to participate actively in decision-making process, their participation was found not equal to male users in decision making but participation in implementation is good. Women users of Kumari Community Forestry participated in training as well as study tour to other districts even tough, as per Nepali culture there is hesitation to allow women to travel without their family member far from their house.

5.4.1.4 Caste and Ethnic group

Culturally and religiously, user group of Kumari Community forest is a homogeneous group. All users are Hindu but ethnically users are heterogeneous. Social values and religious belief on caste system are affecting in participation of users. Damai are called untouchable caste. Brahaman do not touch as well as eat food made by Damai in Badikhel VDC. Other casts also do not eat food provided by Damai users. Even though, it is illegal in practicing caste discrimination based on the constitution of Nepal, still there is social/cultural practice of caste discrimination in Badikhel VDC. Such social norms are inhibiting Damai users to participate equally without any discrimination. According to the respondents, they set the criteria like education, free time, leading capacity and gender of the users during the selection of members of user committee. But they did not consider criteria for caste, ethnic group and disadvantaged group. Damai users expressed feeling of caste inferiority to the researcher during her field visit.

5.4.2 Economic Factor

Economic factor includes size of agriculture land, livestock and nature of occupation. Economic level within Brahaman community is more or less similar in Kumari Community forest. They have no great difference in farm size and livestock number whereas; Newar and Damai community have less farmland and livestock. This factor is especially affecting on participation of Newar and Damai in community forestry.

Nature of occupation is also affecting on participation of users. Service holder respondent said that they have no time to involve in guarding of forest. However, they

are participating on group meetings and assemblies, if activities are organized during leave days or holidays. They again argued that they are unable in participation as free respondents because of their job in government and non-government organizations.

Newar and some Pahari group work as a wage labor in Badikhel VDC. They have no holiday and leave like others who work in government and non-government organizations. Therefore, they can not contribute their time even like service holder man; they have not managed to attend meeting and other activities of same day avoiding their work.

To avoid such difficulties, the Forest User Group Committee is making maximum effort for the high participation of user group in the meeting by calling it either in evening period or during holidays.

5.4.3 Other Related Factors

In researcher view, the other related factors consist of self-consciousness, government support proximity and participation in decision-making.

5.4.3.1 Self-consciousness

Attitude, education, awareness and interest play important role in developing self-consciousness in a person. Most of the respondents are very much aware and have interest and positive attitude in community forestry work. Education factor is highly affecting in active participation in decision-making. Illiterate users who are participation in meeting do not raise their voice. Researcher asked them why they don't speak in the meeting and their response was that they are uneducated and don't know as educated. They think that decisions made by educated users are always good and thus support their decisions. Thus, in committee member selection the priority is given in selecting educated persons. All committee members are literate except two women in existing committee. Illiterate users participate during implementation as equally as literate users and is not affecting in implementation of any decision made.

In general, wealthy users are literate but poor and landless users (Pahari and Damai) are illiterate. For the illiterate users, it is difficult to hold the leadership position in Forest user Committee as the leaders should perform daily administrative activities of the committee (letter writing, minute keeping and reporting to higher officials). Literacy plays a vital role as source of powers and privilege in rural context. The researcher asked questions to the illiterate, poor and users with less land on "why don't they hold the position of the leader of User Committee?" Their reply was "We are poor, and illiterate, we have no knowledge and thus how to perform leader's responsibility. Due to this reason we select literate person in the position of the

leader". Two illiterate women are committee members but do not hold leadership position.

User who is self-conscious understands the importance of forest. Such user devotes his or her time in protection and management of forest although they do not need forest products from the forest. Lack of self-consciousness was found in the five households because they have large farm size and are fulfilling their need of forest products from their won land. So, they are not participating actively in Community Forestry activities.

They should understand that they are getting indirect benefit from the community forest and it is not wise for them not to participate actively in the user group.

5.4.3.2 Government Support

Another important factor that affects people's participation is Government support. Government official are supporting Kumari Forest User Group that has enhanced their participation. Forest user Group organized one Community Forest Management training themselves and requested technical support (trainer) to District Forest Office. District Forest office provided such support.

According to the provision of forest Act 1993, there should be representation of women in one third seat of committee member and should encompasses all interest group from users. The Government officials have failed to convince all ethnic groups to be in User Committee.

5.4.3.3 Participation in Decision Making

Participation in decision making is directly connected with the participation in benefit sharing and implementation of the decision made. The users, who are participating in decision making, their participation in implementation and benefit sharing seems good whereas, those whose participation is less during decision making lack in information.

For an example, a woman respondent reported to the researcher that she was interested to participate in one of the Community Forestry training program but she could not participate in the training as she was unable not involved in decision making. She was unhappy on the decision made by the user committee favoring their relatives. Thus, such practice makes her unhappy and even sometime she is unwilling to support committee activities but she has not made such decision yet.

5.4.3.4 Rule of Forest User Group

Forest User Group formulated the rules to smoothly operate community forest. The rule states that in every community forestry activities one representation from one

household is compulsory. There is no compulsion for every user. This rule is inhibiting in the participation of all users especially women users are more affected as most of the time male represent such meetings.

CHAPTER VI
6. CHANGED ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

Community Forestry was launched in Badikhel Village in 1988. During past 12 years, users managed to learn and experience many things through the Kumari Community Forestry Program. This Community Forestry also became effective to change attitude of users towards Community Forestry Program and Forest officials. The researcher observed following changed attitude knowledge and skill from the users of Kumari Community Forest.

6.1 Effectiveness of Group Work

Before the formation of user group, the condition of forest was very poor. At that time all the villagers had to travel four hours from their village for collecting firewood and fodder. At present they fulfill their need of firewood and fodder from the Kumari Community Forest. Now, they realized the effectiveness of their group work. They say, their group work made it possible to bring the forest near by their village. During the 10 years of their experience in Community Forestry they fully realized on its importance. This realization has changed their positive attitude towards Community Forest Program. Most of the respondents define community forest as the forest managed by the user group.

6.2 Importance of Forest

Before formation of forest User Group, they were using forest products for their domestic need and they are using it even today. In past, they did not realize the importance of forest but now every user is fully aware in the importance of forest. They said, "if we use forest with protection and conservation, it supplies forest products regularly.' They understand that the forest gives not only forest products but also it helps to increase wild life and natural beauty of VDC. They say, having good forest means having increase in wildlife population which ultimately attracts tourists to enjoy the natural beauty of the forest. They also know trees of the forest provide healthy air for them as well as around them and it helps in protecting from soil erosion and landslides during monsoon.

6.3 Importance of Wildlife

Before community forestry was launched in 1995, the users of the forest had negative perception towards wildlife. But at present the perception of the user has changed and they take the wildlife as a beauty of their forest. The hunting is restricted in Kumari Community Forestry. One respondent reported, in 1998, some people came from Kathmandu valley with the intention of hunting in the forest. The users restricted their

entry in the forest but the hunters disobeyed the user appeal. He told that they were from high profile family of Kathmandu valley. Immediately after their disobey, all the users gathered and clashed with the hunter and warn them not to come again. Since then nobody had tried to come again for hunting.

6.4 Skill on Scientific Management

The government forest officials are helping to the user group on how to apply scientific management of forest as well as other community forestry activities, which have led to change the past negative attitude of the users towards forest official to positive attitude. The improved skill in the implementation of operational plan has increased their knowledge about scientific management of forest. Many of the users know cleaning, thinning, pruning, and plantation. Some users may apply management operation without help of technician. Practice made them perfect.

6.5 Rules and Regulation of Forest Act

During the process of Community Forest, User Group became familiar with rules and regulation of Forest act. They prepared constitution of user group and operational plan of forest following rules and regulation of Forest Act.

6.6 Training on Difficult Issues

Users have got opportunity to involve in Community Forestry related training and gathered knowledge in community forestry. Users gain knowledge in income generation, Community forest management, resin tapping and medicinal plant production. Users were also involved in study tour. The know-how learning during the training program is shared among other users. Users planted some medicinal plants inside the forest using their knowledge and consulting related technician. They know the importance and economic value of medicinal plant. Now, they are planning to produce medicinal plant in large scale and increase user Group fund, which can be used for the development activities in the village.

6.7 Self Identification of Problems

The Kumari Community Forestry user Group managed to learn many things by doing. They made provision to discount in benefit sharing to those users who actively involved in community forest protection (for more details please refer Chapter 7 and 8). They have also allocated prize money for those who identify thief (stealing of forest products) and inform User Committee.

User group felt more need of community Forest management training to them. They organized such training themselves and requested a trainer form district Forest office.

For the effectiveness of Community Forest of whole VDC, they have taken initiative to form user Group Co-ordination within the VDC with the help of Ranger from the range post.

CHAPTER VII
7. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND ROCOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary

Forest of Nepal has great importance in fostering the agriculture system and in protecting the hilly and fragile land of Nepal. Most of the forest area of Nepal is being managed as communal forest by users themselves on the basis of locally accepted indigenous/traditional system before the forest was nationalized in 1957. The forest Nationalization Act had failed in managing and protecting the forest as expected. Ineffectiveness of Department of Forest in the protection of forest caused in the emergence of community Forestry Program in Nepal. In the same time, there is also an influence of international environmental movement and changed development paradigm with the concept of people oriented development.

Community Forestry is a people participatory approach in which the local users of the forest are involved in planning, development, implementation, protection, production and use of forest resources. The concept of Community Forestry came into practice in Nepal in the late seventies (1978). At present, the community forestry program is launched in most of the area of Nepal.

Although, Community Forestry program is one of the effective programs of Nepal, different scholars have pointed out some problems in the implementation of Community Forestry through their discussion paper and research work. Some problems related to the research have been found out they the literature review. Most of the scholars have pointed complex social and economic structure of Nepal as major effecting factor in community forestry program. Problems resulted from education, economic, caste structure of the society, gender, cultural value are identified in different literatures.

Subsequent literatures have been accessed relate to Community Forestry that helped to the researcher to know the real practice of Community forestry in different part of the Nepal. Through literature review, concept of Community forest, user group, people participation and benefit sharing were reviewed. During the research of Kumari Community forest, the researcher has set some research questions, which are 1) how the diversity of cultural group and interest group obstructs on the Institutional process? 2) How people are participation in implementation and decision-making process of Community Forestry? 3) How all interest groups are taking part in the process of decision-making and benefit sharing? 4) Is people's knowledge on rules and

regulations and managerial skill affect on the program? 5) And which factors are controlling people from active participation?

The main objectives of this research were; to access the institutional process of Community Forestry, to judge the people's participation in decision making, implementation amid benefit sharing, to find out the factors of effecting in participation and to examine the changes of peoples' skill and knowledge. To fulfill these objectives, Kumari Community forest of Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur District was selected as research area. Twenty-nine household member of Kumari Community forest were taken as sample and other key informants like Ranger, Teacher and VDC members were visited. Tools like observations, formal and informal discussion, interview and case study were used to collect the necessary information. For more information, primary data as well as secondary data were collected. Qualitative data were analyzed based on descriptive design. Quantitative data were also tabulated and analyzed. Simple statistical tools i.e. arithmetic mean and percentage were used for quantitative data analysis.

The research area, Kumari community Forest is located in Badikhel VDC of Lalitpur district of Bagmati Zone. Badikhel VDC is one of the VDC among 41 VDCs of the district. The VDC is located in northern east part of the district. There are six community forests in the VDC. In Badikhel VDC, community forestry program was launched since 1989. Among nine community forest, Kumari Community Forest was selected as study unit, which was handed over as community forest in 1995 by District Forest Office.

Kumari forest User Group is a multi ethnic group where Brahaman, Pahari, Chhetri, Newar, Magar and Damai are working together. Pahari are in majority group and then Brahmins other are the minority groups. There are 129 households with 645 beneficiaries. They all are Hindu. Brahaman and Chhetri group is economically rich, educationally ahead and forward in leading then other ethnic groups. Because of the majority of Pahari and Brahaman, they have dominated the Forest User Committee too.

Except agriculture, Brahaman and Magar have managed to extend their occupation in different organization of Government and non-government whereas; the main occupation of some Pahari and Newar is labor work in construction and agricultural labor. Most of the Damai are depending on their occupational job of tailoring.

The Kumari Community forest user Group has made operational plan and constitution with the help of the District forest official. They have made rules for protection, management and benefit sharing with the help of ranger of the range post. Community forestry is implemented following these rules and regulation. There is good leadership from Brahaman and Chhetri community. Participation of Brahaman is higher than other groups. Newar and Magar users were found as sleeping users. They have less interest and awareness towards Community forest activities. High level participation of women was found in benefit sharing then in management and protection. Forest User Committee has satisfactory leading capacity and good relation to District to District Office and other forest User Group of VDC.

Economy and education levels are the major effecting factors in participation of users of Kumari Community forest. Educated users occupy all leading positions of Forest user Committee. Since Community Forest launched there, forest user group are benefited by direct and indirect benefits from the program. Direct benefits are getting fire wood, fodder, leaf litter and grass easily as they need. Getting training and tour opportunities and gaining knowledge are indirect benefit of the Community Forest Program. Based on findings some recommendations are also suggested.

7.2 Conclusion

Community Forestry Program is the most priority program in the sector of forestry in Nepal. The program is launched in Nepal since 1978. The research unit "Kumari Community Forest" was handed over to the user group in 1995. User Group of Kumari Community Forest consists six caste groups; Pahari, Brahaman, Chhetri, Newar, Magar and Damai. The Forest User Group is heterogeneous in term of ethnicity and homogeneous in terms of religion. User Group is highly dominated by Pahari, Brahaman so; their representation in User Committee is also high. Although, the forestry policy mentioned that there should be representation of women in one-third seat of committee and must integrated ethnic group representative in community forestry Program, the findings of the study has shown that it is not applied satisfactorily in the process of Kumari Community Forest User Group formation and User Committee formation. In the past, two User Committees there was less participation of women and no participation of Magar and Newar. In the existing User Committee there is satisfactorily representation of women and Damai but no representation of Magar and Newar. The User Group has well adopted institutional process except proper identification of users. The findings reflect that user Committee is responsible body to take decisions in minor issues, whereas major issues are decided in the general assembly or group meeting. All decisions are being passed by consensus

but not by voting. Forest user Group has given full authority to user Committee to enforce implementation of Community Forestry activities. Firewood and fodder are main demand of users. All users are satisfied with the benefit sharing except. According to Committee member has good leading capacity. Excluding two women members, all committee members are educated and three of fifteen are job holder on government or non-government organizations. All committee members actively participate during decision-making, implementation and benefit sharing process. The findings reveal that education is the major influencing factor in decision-making and leading the group in User Committee. Newar users are some how affected by their economic situation and are unable to actively participate in Community Forestry activities. It was found that Newar and Magar Communities are more passive, they are not participating in decision making as well as benefit sharing due to lack of awareness as well as due to not being represented in User Committee.

During the process of Community Forestry practice, Users Group has managed also to benefit by gaining experience, knowledge and new skills from Community Forestry Program. It was found that most of the users could say more or less about community Forest, forest management and importance of forest. This is due to the result of their interests in Community Forest. Forest user Group has good relation with district Forest Official. District Forest Office evaluated Kumari Community forest as a best forest of Badikhel VDC and recommended to Department of Forest as a model forest.

7.3 Recommendations

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

- ➢ Newar and Magar Communities are not representing in user group. Hence efforts should be taken to make the representation of these communities too.

- ➢ More extensive awareness and communication training should be conducted by District Office to make active to the passive Users. Newar, Magar and Damai group should be given position in user Committee to avoid caste discrimination.

- ➢ User Group has no sufficient technical knowledge on forest management. Thus, more training should be conducted in this field.

- ➢ Training materials of technical aspect should be provided to User Committee as reference material.

➢ Woman participation in decision-making should be increased through awareness. They should be encouraged to hold responsible position in user Committee.

➢ Forest user Committee and forest User Group should change the existing rule of one representative from one household to the compulsory participation of all Users in Group meeting or assemblies.

➢ There are good potential medicinal plants i.e. Timur, Bojho and Sugandhawal production. Users are aware of the value of these products but lack technical knowledge on how grow. Therefore, technical knowledge should be provided to them and linked them to appropriate market.

➢ User group has given more emphasis only on protection but is not applying management operation effectively. They should increase their participation in forest management.

➢ Forest user Group should keep their relation with other NGO working in Badikhel VDC through which they can get support in forest activities.

➢ Feasibility study should be carried out on commercial value of tree such as lapsi, Gurans etc. and encouraged them to plant such trees.

➢ During fifteen years, this forest is well protected. Social aspect of equal opportunity to all level of the people should be taken as a condition in community forestry for equal participation. During the formation of forest User Committee, criteria regarding caste and ethnic group and religion should be included.

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ANNEXES

Annex – 1
Questionnaire for Household Survey

1. General Information

1.1 Name of respondents:

1.2. Age: 1.3. Sex: 1.4.Occupation:

1.5. Religion: 1.6. Marital Status: 1.7. Education:

2. Family Descriptions

Sn	Name	Age	Sex	Relation to Hh	Education	Occupation	Marital status	Remarks
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								

3. Economic Information

3.1 Land Ownership

Sn	Land type	Area in Ropani	Cultivation ownership			Remarks
1	Khet(irrigated Land					
2	Bari (non-irrigated land)					
3	Private Forest					
Total						

3.2 Production of Agricultural crops (Muri)

a. Rice   b. Wheat   c. Maize   d. Other cash crops   e. Others

3.3 Food sufficiency in month

a. 3 months   b. 6 months   c. 9 months   d. 12 months

3.4 Livestock ownership

    a. Buffalo:

    b. Cow:

    c. Goat :

    d. Hen:

    e. Other:

4. Need of Forest Products

SN	Particulars	Amount	From CF	From GF	From own farm land	Remarks
1	Fuel wood					
2	Fodder					
3	Timber					
4	Leaf litter					
5	Medicinal plants					

5. What you used for cooking food?

    a. Firewood

    b. Kerosene

    c. Biogas

    d. LP gas

    e. Others

Annex-2

Questionnaire for Interview

1. Information of Respondent

a. Name:

b. Age:

c. Sex:

d. Occupation:

e. Family size:

2. Institutional process of community forest

How did you make forest User group?

How did you make forest User Committee?

How did you make forest operational plan?

How did you make Constitution of Forest User Group?

3. *Participation in Community Forest activities*

3.1 Have you participate in the group meeting during the formations of Forest User Group and Forest User Committee.

3.2. Have you participate in the group meeting during the Preparation of constitution and operational plan.

3.3. How many times have you participated in-group meetings.

    I.   Always

    II.   Sometimes

    III.   Never

What is your frequency of participation in following Community Forest activities?

A. Protection

    -High

    -Moderate

    -Less

    -Never

B. Implementation of management operation

    -High

    -Moderate

    -Less

    -Never

C. Distribution of Forest Products

-High

-moderate

-Less

-Never

4. What do you think why you are participating?

5. What are the main obstacles to you to participate in every activities of Community Forest? Why?

       I.   Family size

       II.   Education

       III.   Economy

       IV.   Occupational nature

       V.   Cast/ethnicity

       VI.   Gender

       VII.   Age

       VIII. Any other

6. What factors encourage you to participate?

    I.   Family support

    II.   Education

    III.   Absent of male

    IV.   Self motivation

    V.   District Forest Office staffs

    VI.   With the request of general users

7. What is your opinion towards participating of women and lower cast?

8. What types of knowledge and skill have you gain through Community Forest Program?

a.   b.

c.   d.

9. Have you benefited from and Community Forest related training?

10. Are you satisfied with Community Forest Programme?

-If yes, why?

-If no, why?

Annex-3

Checklist for Key informants

1. Religion and culture of the area
2. Past and present condition of the forest
3. Past and Present forest management system
4. History of Community Forest
5. Formation Process of Forest User Group and Forest User Committee
6. Criteria for the formation of the Forest User Group and Forest User Committee
7. Preparation Process of constitution and operational plan
8. Decision making process
9. participation of users in decision making meeting
10. participation of users in other Community Forest activities
11. participation of lower caste and women users in overall Community Forest practice
12. Information dissemination system
13. What type of forest products found in the forest area
14. Problems and conflict within the Forest User Group
15. Changes Knowledge and skill of users
16. Trainee selection criteria
17. Opinion towards whole Community Forest programme
18. How is the relation to District Forest Office officials
19. What type of help and guidance are you getting from District Forest Office
20. Fund used and collection system
21. Rules and regulation of Forest User Group regarding the use of forest products
22. Solving pattern for forest offences
23. Activeness of users
24. Any suggestion or comments

Annex-4
Definition of Key Terms

Community Forest (CF): A Community Forest is a part of national forest handed over to Forest User Group for its development, protection and utilization for collective benefit.

Forest User Group (FUG): Forest User Group refers to the functional group of users of CF which are registered with their constitution in District Forest Office, is allowed to manage the forest and to use and distribute the forest products independently according to the approved Operational plan.

Forest User committee (FUC): FUC is an executive committee, whose members are selected by FUG on the basis of consensus or voting that are listed in the constitution of Forest User Group.

Operational Plan: Operational plan is a written document related to the protection, management and utilization of forest on a sustainable basis prepared by FUG with the assistance of District Forest Office (DFO) staff, which must be approved by District Forest Office under the act 1993.

Constitution: constitution refers in this study is constitution of FUG which is prepared with the help of DFO staff.

Interest Group: Interest Group is group of people with similar sets of interest or common problems. These include different in sex, cast, wealth and religious belief.

People's Participation: People's participation refers to the active participation of all forest users in all phases of Community Forestry planning that means from user identification to the benefit sharing as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Secondary Users: Secondary Users refers to the users who are only seasonal users. They do not take part in protection physically by economically they contribute.

Untouchable Castes: Untouchable Castes are those castes, which are not allowed to touch other cast upper than them in cast hierarchy according to Hindu Ideology.

Forest Management: Forest management means take care of forest applying different scientific operation like thinning, pruning, weeding and clearing.

Benefit Sharing: Benefit sharing means sharing of forest products to all users as equal to for the satisfaction of users considering forest stock