

**GOVERNANCE OF COMMUNITY BASED
INSTITUTIONS IN SIRAHA DISTRICT OF
EASTERN NEPAL**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of
Tribhuvan University in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in
SOCIOLOGY**

By

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April 2009

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that, this dissertation entitled **Governance of Community Based Institutions in Siraha District of Eastern Nepal** was prepared by Mr. Dhruba Raj Gautam under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for the final examinations by the Research Committee of the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in SOCIOLOGY**

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This dissertation entitled **GOVERNANCE OF COMMUNITY BASED INSTITUTIONS IN SIRAHA DISTRICT OF EASTERN NEPAL** was submitted by Mr. Dhruva Raj Gautam for final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FOHSS), Tribhuvan University (T.U.), in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in SOCIOLOGY. I hereby certify that the Research Committee of this Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted it for the degree.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The purpose of this dissertation would not have been realized without the help and support of many friendly and cooperative individuals and organizations. Foremost, I would like to thank Tribhuvan University, Deans Office, Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, for enabling me to conduct this research. I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude and profound appreciation to Dr. Padam Lal Devkota for his guidance, valuable suggestions and time devoted from the first day of the research. His support was particularly commendable in providing immense encouragement and inspiration including substantial guidelines to carry out this research. I am particularly indebted to Prof. Dr. Rishikeshab R. Regmi and Dr. Samira Luitel for their valuable suggestions on my dissertation, which largely helped me to accomplish this research on time. They all have provided genuine support and endurance, helpful comment and guidance for me from beginning to end.

My appreciation goes to Dr. Om Gurung, Head of Department of Sociology and Anthropology, for providing me intellectual support for this research. I would also like to extend my earnest thanks to all faculties and staff at the this Department for morale support and kind cooperation throughout the research period.

I would like to salute executive committee members of Kamala Uttarahini Water Users Association (KUWUA) and Nandababa Community Forestry User Group (NCFUG) for providing both secondary and primary information, the main basis of this research. Particularly, the role of Bholu Pokharel, Lekh Raj Dahal, Chandra Bahadur Poudel and Shyam Phuyal was commendable as they only supported me through out the fieldwork at Bandipur, Siraha but also provided me an environment to work as an insider. I would like to acknowledge the time and energy devoted by the farmers of Bandipur for participating in long discussions and consultations during the fieldwork. They have provided me much information, which was very helpful to understand inner dynamics of governance of both CBIs. The collective efforts of many people: support, comments, criticism, information and insights, helped me to think in greater depth in the governance of CBIs. The support made by my Research Assistant Anjani Kumar Dahal and Muna Dahal was appreciable. Sudarshan Kafle, Bisun Dayal Ray and Indrananda Chaudhary also owe my special thanks.

I would also admit the farmer's support of Rajapur, Bardiya and Motipur, Kapilvastu who taught me the dynamics of irrigation institutions and the farmers of Bagmati watershed residents who provided me enough information about the forestry governance and their underlying forces and factors. The knowledge gained from these areas helped me to understand irrigation and forestry governance issues in greater depth. The farmers of

Sipadol Bhaktapur also helped me to understand governance issues of irrigation and forestry related CBIs.

Mountain Resources Management Group/The Ford Foundation and Bagmati Integrated Watershed Management Project/European Commission respectively provided me a forum to work with in Bardiya and Bagmati watershed area to understand the irrigation and forest related governance issues. So, both institutions deserve especial thanks. Apart from these institutions, I would like to recognize the support provided by Development Pioneer Consultancy Services/Mott MacDonald/DfID to understand the irrigation governance with new horizon.

Many thanks goes to my colleagues, Simon Howarth, Dr. Gladdys Nott, Dr. Umesh Nath Parajuli, Dawn Hartley, Dr Jagadish Raj Baral, Basistha Raj Adhikari, Menuka KC, Raj Kant Jha, Santosh Poudel, Krishna Ghimire, Ishwor Sunwar, Indra Raj Pandey, Padam Bahadur Chand, Deepak Raj Subedi and Yadav KC for their constant encouragement and moral support.

Words are inadequate to thank my parents, for their love, inspiration, and patience, whom I owe and will owe forever. Last but never the least, heartfelt love and thanks goes to my wife Sita and wonderful children Urja and Arjan for their understanding, patience, sacrifice and inspiration to complete this research.

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ABSTRACT

The research explores the governance issues and the underlying principles, forces and factors that contribute to good or poor governance in community-based institutions (CBIs). It does this by assessing six elements of governance, viz. transparency, accountability, rule of law, equity, participation and predictability, in Kamala Uttarahini Water Users Association (KUWUA) and Nandababa Community Forest User Group (NCFUG) in Badaramahal VDC, Bandipur, Siraha district.

CBIs are facing several challenges in terms of good governance. This research addresses the gaps by exploring natural resource-based CBIs through governance perspective and explaining the driving forces and factors to result this situation. To address the gaps, two theoretical perspectives have been taken: Structural and Cognitive Social Capital for Participatory Irrigation and Community Forestry as a Social Process. The research attempts to assess the practice of governance in CBIs, taking the case of NCFUG and KUWUA, and to identify those forces and factors that contribute to good or poor governance in CBIs. Based on an analysis of findings, it further explores the strengths and areas for improvement in terms of their governance. The research design is qualitative and analytical based on a descriptive framework design, drawing on both primary and secondary information. The information is collected through some key participatory tools and techniques. The data for this study have been gathered from the field work during 2004-06.

The research concludes that when users and executives of CBIs have technical and managerial skills, there is proper documentation of processes and decisions. Illiteracy, social inequality, marginalization, social discrimination, social misbehaves and the attitude of the people not to question the powerful local political leaders contribute to lessening transparency. Clear dissemination of information in local dialects, using, if possible, oral or traditional methods, motivates users to attend meetings and discussions to share their ideas. The research also reflects that self-monitoring practices are more effective than guided monitoring in terms of ownership and social responsibility to abide by rules. Furthermore, creation of an inequitable environment and prejudice-led resource mobilization can lead to mistrust and poor transparency as well as poor ownership, while equitable resource mobilization ensures ownership. Delegated power is an instinct driver for promoting the sense of being accountable to the primary purpose of executives in the CBIs. Furthermore, accepted and conscious-based structuring and infrastructure is essential to achieve well functioning CBIs following governance principles. To achieve this, realistic planning and wider coordination is essential.

Thus, empowered users and education and advance communication practices are the forces for transparent CBIs. Size of CBIs and participatory approaches in management also

contribute to ensuring that rules are followed, concerns are heard and ownership is felt. Trust and confidence in representative committees keeps the system alive. Governance through informal rules and norms directs users to achieve the goals of CBIs. On the other hand, deliberate actions to delay communication, inability to enforce the established rules and norms, financial mismanagement and failure to audit the institution's financials reports negate governance in the CBIs. Poor social mobilization through poor sensitization, poor acknowledgement of social energy and trust weaken the binding force among users, thus affecting users' faith in the executives and executives' responsibility over users.

Glossary of Nepali Terms

<i>Ana</i>	It is the 1/16 and represents monetary unit of currency. 16 anas are equal to 1 Rupee.
<i>Baltiya</i>	A 'barren or pasture land'.
<i>Bhajan Mandali</i>	It is a group of people who sing a religious song called bhajan. There is a practice of organising bhajans as the last activity of big religious functions. This group usually has its own musical instruments for singing these songs and are respected in the society. It is believed that bhajans provide knowledge to throw light in life.
<i>Bhit khet</i>	It is up land with low water holding capacity and is targeted to cultivate maize and wheat.
<i>Bigha</i>	It is popular unit of land mostly used in the Terai of Nepal. 1 bigha equals 0.67 ha.
<i>Bighatti</i>	Annual water fee collected on the basis of land size hence more equitable and water users are happy to pay for O&M of the canal.
<i>Birta</i>	A birta owner is a person getting a big plot of public land with or without forest inside it from the then rulers, the Ranas, as a prize for doing good job to the state or just succeeding in pleasing them before 1951 Revolution. By this birta land he had to pay revenue in annual basis
<i>Budhi Paini</i>	It is the old alignment of the <i>mul paini</i> , which was shifted towards the south from the existing intake in 1982-83.
<i>Chaukidar</i>	Watchman, Guard
<i>Churia</i>	The first range arising north of the Indo-gangetic plain, up to 1000 m, geology and soil composition consists of clay stone, sandstone, conglomerate and loamy skeletal. The term Siwaliks is used throughout the Himalayan region. Churia (or chure) is a Nepali word for Siwalik range. Locally, the word chure is used to describe a single hill crest, and Churia to describe a group or a range of hill crests.
<i>Dachhin</i>	South
<i>Dalit</i>	The term <i>Dalit</i> refers to ' <i>Pani Nachalne</i> ' (untouchable) group or caste from whom water is not accepted according to Hindu social structure (Source: National Dalit Strategy Report 2002, ActionAid Nepal, CARE Nepal and Save the Children).
<i>Danuwar</i>	A special caste group of inner terai used live near forest, Danuwar are the indigenous ethnic caste group in Terai of Nepal. Their traditional

occupations were fishing, weaving local product that is made from bamboo, traditional healing and priest. Later they started practicing agricultural activities. About 149 households exist in Baltiya village in Bandipur, they belong to the irrigated area of *sakha* 3.

<i>Dhan khet</i>	Paddy land
<i>Gairi khet</i>	It is low land especially used for paddy fields. Irrigated rice land in Nepal is commonly known as <i>khet</i> .
<i>Ghar Lauri</i>	Mobilisation of one person from each HH irrespective of land size for canal O&M. It is generally mobilised once the situation is out of control and there is a need of more labour in O&M of the canal
<i>Haruwa and Jan</i>	Agriculture labourer, <i>Haruwa</i> work on yearly contractual basis whereas <i>Jan</i> works on daily contractual basis in wage labour.
<i>Hatiya</i>	It is the local market where people buy and sell their domestic and farm products. They are very popular for the social gathering where they can interact on other issues. They are becoming social platforms in many places.
<i>Khet</i>	Paddy land
<i>Khonda</i>	Direct outlets for the purpose of irrigation.
<i>Khola</i>	Small Rivers and creeks
<i>Kholsi</i>	A depressed part where usually small torrents flow. They remain damp most of the time.
<i>Kulo</i>	<i>Kulo</i> means irrigation canal in Nepali language, called <i>paini</i> in the terai of Nepal.
<i>Kuti</i>	It is a small hut away from community especially around the temples prepared to live for priest, sadhu, and sant.
<i>Mai</i>	As rivers are considered the mai (mother) and the mothers are treated as goddess for the contribution she makes to life. It is considered that during the menstruation, women should not be allowed to work in canal to maintain water's purity.
<i>Maithali</i>	It is a language and culture of people inhabiting the Terai plains between the districts of Rautahat and Morang in Nepal and in about nine adjoining districts of Bihar and West Bengal.
<i>Mul paini</i>	Main canal
<i>Paini</i>	Canal
<i>Paipatti</i>	Annual service fee for absentee landowner

<i>Panchayat</i>	'Village panchayat' was the lowest level administrative unit HMG/N during the 'panchayati system' in Nepal before 1990. A village panchayat was made up of several wards (small villages). Panchayati system was a single party political institution where sovereignty of the state was bestowed on the King, who was the absolute rule. Although the panchayat system was officially adopted by the state in only 1960, the notion of panchayat for local development and administration was one of the pre-historic institutions in Nepal.
<i>Panchayati</i>	It is a local informal court where local people along with community leaders come, listen the issues and concerns of both conflicting parties and try to resolve them in a social ground. The penalty may be fixed while managing the conflicts but it is very rare.
<i>Pani dhalo</i>	Refers to watershed
<i>Puja</i>	Worship
<i>Sakha Incharge</i>	They are responsible to manage the irrigation affairs at the <i>sakha</i> level. They are given high authority from mobilisation of water users in <i>urdi</i> , adoption of rotation practices, monitoring, collection of water fee, and charging penalty if needed. They are acting as chairperson of each BC, though BCs are informal institution and are not formally registered.
<i>Tar Pale</i>	A person assigned to guard the forest. Tar Pale, 'Tar' means wire and 'Pale' means watchman in local language. During the initial days of converting management of Nandababa forest to community from government, the forest was fenced by gabion wire (tar) in the strategic locations where the mobility of livestock was high. Hence, some people were assigned the job as Tar Pale to look after the forest.
<i>Terai</i>	It is marshy ground or meadow. It is the flat area lying to the south of the Churia range and extending to the Indian boarder. Geology and soil composition consists of recent alluvial plain, boulders, gravel sands, clay and fine loamy deep soils.
<i>Tole</i>	Toles are small clusters/hamlets comprising of 10-25 HHs
<i>Urdu</i>	Compulsory group labour

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYM

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADB/N	Agriculture Development Bank/Nepal
ASC	Agriculture Service Centre
BC	Branch Committee
CBI	Community Based Institutions
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEGG	Centre for Good Governance
CF	Community Forest
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
ChFDP	Churia Forest Development Program
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist and Leninist
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DANIDA	Danish International Development Program
DDC	District Development Committee
DfID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office/Officer
DIO	District Irrigation Office
DLA	District Line Agency
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DoF	Department of Forest
DoI	Department of Irrigation
DSCO	District Soil Conservation Office
DTW	Deep Tube Well
DWRC	District Water Resource Committee
EC	Executive Committees
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal
FGD	Focused Group Discussion

FIWUD	Farm Irrigation and Water Utilisation Division
FMIS	Farmer Managed Irrigation System
FOP	Forest Operational Plan
FSCC	Forest Sector Coordination Committee
FUG	Forest Users Group
GA	General Assembly
GoN	Government of Nepal
GTZ	German Technical Assistance
HH	Households
HMG/N	His Majesty Government/Nepal
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
ISF	Irrigation Service Fee
ISP	Irrigation Sector Project
KIP	Kamala Irrigation Project
KUIS	Kamala Uttarbahini Irrigation System
KUWUA	Kamala Uttarbahini Water Users Association
LSGA	Local Self Government Act
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCHW	Mother and Child Health Workers
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
MPFS	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector
NCFUG	Nandababa Community Forest Users Group
NFIWUAN	National Federation of Irrigation Water Users Association Nepal
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NRCS	Nepal Red Cross Society

NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PA	Public Auditing
PH	Public Hearing
PPP	Pocket Package Program
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
RA	Research Assistant
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantra Party
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAGUN	Strengthened Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources
SAP	South Asia Partnership
SFDP	Small Farmer Development Project
SHP	Sub-health Post
SI	Sakha In-charge
SSI	Semi-structured Interview
STW	Shallow Tube Well
USAID	United State Aid for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
VMGO	Vision, Mission, Goal, Objective
VP	Village Panchayat
WECS	Water and Energy Commission Secretariat
WSG	Women Sensitisation Group
WUA	Water User Association
WUG	Water User Group
WUS	Water Users School

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