Chapter - One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nepal is very rich in terms of forest resources and biodiversity. The economic well being of Nepal is very closely bound to the natural resources - agricultural land, wetlands, forests and protected areas (GoN 2002b:16, 62-86). The forest resources have made a significant contribution to economic and social development of the country. Besides, forests are indispensable as a life support system for people in the inner Terai, hills, and mountains, where agriculture, livestock and vegetation influence the ecology of the area and the lives of the local population in Nepal.

Forest resources play a crucial role in the livelihoods of the rural population. In Nepal, more than 80 percent of people rely on natural resources for their livelihoods (Maharjan et al. 2004:531-537). Forests provide food, firewood fodder, and leaf litter for mulching, medicines, housing materials and cash income from the sale of forest products. Forestland provides more than 40 percent of livestock nutrition (IFAD, 2004:4). Farm, forest and livestock are three highly integrated constituents of the hill farming system and cannot be separated from each other (Gilmour and Fisher 1991:212). Most hill farmers rely heavily on maintaining a flow of nutrients and energy from the forest to their farms. Nutrients contained in grass and leaves flow from the forest to the agricultural terraces to maintain agricultural productivity (Gilmour 1992).

Historically, forestland has been the prime source for the expansion of agriculture (Budhathoki 1992:9). It has also a crucial protection function with respect to soil and water conservation. Hence, the forest is an integral part of the agro ecosystem of

Nepal and is considered a wealth of the nation because it is important to sustain the economy.

Forest area is under great pressure in Nepal. Between 1979 and 1994 an estimated 1.3 million ha of the forest was lost, a significant proportion of which may have been converted to agriculture (IFAD 2004:4). Traditional forest management practices dealt with protection and commercial aspects through regulatory and punitive means. Forest policies, laws, by-laws, and regulations were formulated with a view to protect and conserve the forests. The nationalization of forestland in 1957 and the subsequent policing and protection oriented Forest Act of 1961 in reality was not able to prevent the alarming depletion of the country's forests.

To alleviate this situation, a major and far-sighted change of strategy came in 1978 when the concept of people's participation in forest management was written into forest law. The concept of community forestry (CF) has taken momentum only since 1989 after the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) came into effect. The overall forest policy strategy is to improve the management of the country's forest resources, with a sustainable balance between people's needs, the production systems and the environment. This created a new common ground, which seeks a balance in managing the forests in ways that both protect the environment and meet the people's needs.

The CF concept, which is now fully institutionalized through the Forest Act 1993 and Forest Rules 1995, is based upon the user-group approach. The basic system in CF is to hand over nearby national forest land to local communities. All the activities are carried out with the approach of "for the people, by the people." The user-group concept is used as the basis for sustainable forest management.

CF is a participatory management approach that has been developed over 25 years in Nepal's forestry sector. It has been demonstrated as a highly successful management approach that has resulted in rural farmers gaining increased access to forest resources, together with improvements to biodiversity and landscape values. So far, 1.1 million hectares of forest (about 25% of the national forest area) has been handed over to more than 13,000 Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) involving 1.4 million households that constitute about 35% of the total population of Nepal (Kanel 2004:5).

Moving beyond forests, FUGs have become the vehicle of development of community infrastructure such as community buildings, roads, drinking water supplies, bridges, water mills, schools, festival equipments and health aid posts. Many FUGs have become rural banks and been able to fund micro credit schemes (Nurse et al. 2004:42).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The assumption of the CF policy was that the benefits of improved forest resource conditions would accrue to all involved in CF management, especially the poor, women and deprived. The experience so far has shown remarkable improvements in the conditions of the handed-over community forests, and this trend is continuing. However, significant improvement in the lives of those that are dependent on local forest resources (women, poor and disadvantaged occupational castes) is yet to be seen across most CFUGs. Although CF has been hailed as a success overall, its contribution towards supporting the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded members of the society has been at best limits and at worst, negative (Pokharel and Nurse 2004: 19).

The success of CF has been spectacular, with around 13,000 CFUGs registered and community forests covering more than 1 million ha of forestland. However, as implementation has proceeded, a range of second-generation issues has emerged. Issues such as income generation, equity, active forest management (particularly the development of "appropriate" silvicultural systems), and commercialization of products from community forests and expansion of community forest modalities beyond the Middle Hills have assumed importance (Gilmour 2003:6). Thus, CF has been facing challenges to its sustainability, livelihood and governance aspects, widely referred to as second-generation issues.

Despite achievements and contribution that community forestry has made in Nepal, there are many unresolved issues and challenges in all areas of capital as well as governance. In worst cases, the implementation of CF policy has inflicted added costs to the poor, such as reduced access to forest products and forced allocation of household resources for communal forest management with insecurity over the benefits. Opaque decision-making and fund management reflect weak FUG level governance in many cases (Pokharel 2002, www.wrm.org.uy).

The existing patterns of CF management tend to be skewed towards fulfilling the livelihood needs of land-poor and serving the interests of well-off peasant farmers. Access to livelihood support for landless poor from CF remains limited/restricted even when they are included in the group, and this inclusion costs them more than the benefit they could potentially get. CF has not been able to make significant positive impact on livelihoods of rural community in general and of poor in particular (Tiwari 2002:60).

The success of the CF policy lies in building and/or strengthening a robust social institution of a group of people with collective concern over the forest they have

traditionally depended on. One must, therefore, examine how CFUGs have been evolving as an institution in the course of CF development process. CFUG has got legal recognition as a self-governed, autonomous and corporate institution to be operated under a collectively agreed constitution. The traditional users of a forest are expected to organize as a user group, recognizing individuals' collective use rights over a particular forest and drafting a constitution for them to function as an institution. But the majority of the CFUG members have often been found broadly little aware of the contents of their own constitution as well as the Community forest operational plan (OP). Experience and studies reveal that the majority of users have little knowledge about their own rights and responsibilities towards effective functioning of their CFUGs.

Active public participation in forest management such as planning and decision-making is necessary for successful implementation and sustainability of the program. An executive committee formed by the FUG members governs forest management. In some groups the decision making is handed over to only a few members – sometimes only one member–which runs counter to the ideal of a democratically achieved consensus (Gerrits and Gurung 2000:30). Poor and disadvantaged group are not adequately represented in the executive committee. Furthermore, the majority of women, landless, poor and disadvantaged groups remain silent observers and listeners of CF (Kanel and Kandel 2004:10). Very few of the CFUGs operate under the control of their general bodies, the majority being under the control of their executive committees, more specifically dominated by some powerful individuals within committees. Ideally, executive committees of CFUGs should be guided, steered and controlled by a users' assembly. But in real life situations, committees and powerful elite within CFUGs tend to keep the functioning of CF and users under their control.

Unless women and other marginalized members become capable of influencing the decision-making in CF, coming out of the existing social differences and power relationships, it is difficult to get an equitable process institutionalized in CFUGs (Nightingale 2002).

The above-discussed scenario of CF demands further investigation on certain issues and to come up with the solutions that could help in the smooth implementation of the CF program in the country. To explore and evaluate the existing situation in the areas of awareness, participation, forest resources distribution, income generation, CF fund management and functioning of the CFUGs in Dang district, this study basically will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent the users are aware about their constitution and operational plans?
2. To what extent the users participated in planning and implementation of community forestry activities?
3. To what extent the CFUGs are functioning democratically?
4. What is the flow and distribution of CF benefits among the users?

1.3 Importance of the Study

Although the study area is very small in comparison to the total area covered by the CF program in Nepal, it is hoped that the outcome of this study can give the indication of the trends occurring in the implementation of CF program in relation to the participation, awareness and the utilization of forest resources in the district. The findings seem to be useful to planners and implementers in making modifications in existing strategies that, in turn, could improve program implementation in the district and subsequently contribute to CF development in Nepal.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to identify and analyze the users' participation in and distribution of community forestry benefits in Dang district. Specifically, the study had the following objectives:

1. To access the extent to which the user groups participated in planning and implementation of the community forestry program; and
2. To analyze the distribution of community forestry benefits among the user groups.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

This study especially covered the few such community forests in Dang district from where the people are getting forest resources. The findings and recommended strategies can be applicable within the district as well as to some other parts of the country, but cannot serve as a basis for making a generalization of the true situation of CFUGs in the entire country.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study has included five chapters, which refer Introduction, literature review, research methodology, results and discussion and summary, conclusion and recommendation.

The first chapter describes the background of the study by identifying the problems of CF, which were rooted in the Community. The objectives are based to proof the research problem. The study has its own importance although there are some limitations.

Likewise, the second chapter discusses previous studies and other significant information related to this research. Encompassed subject areas include historical

background of forest management in Nepal, concept of social/community forestry (CF) in Nepal, people's participation in forest resource management, potential benefit of income generation through CF, and achievement and challenges of CF in Nepal.

The third chapter for research methodology, which is necessary to solve the research problem because it is also the way of systematic investigation to find answers to the problem and create the knowledge. It helps to analyze, examine and create interests on various aspects of research as data and information collection, analysis and presentation.

The forth chapter discusses of socio-economic characteristics of the respondent, participation of forest users on different community forestry development activities, benefit sharing patterns, CFUG fund creation and utilization. It also presents the awareness of the users in different term of the community forestry as well as right and duties towards the CF.

The concluding chapter five summarizes the findings that are derived from the present study regarding CF and its output at FUG level. Recommendations are forwarded based on findings, conclusion and observations. The key area for further research into various aspects of CF is also outlined.

Chapter -Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following sections discuss previous studies and other significant information related to this research. Encompassed subject areas include historical background of forest management in Nepal, concept of social/community forestry, CF in Nepal, people's participation in forest resource management, potential benefit of income generation through CF, and achievements and challenges of CF in Nepal.

2.1 Historical Background of Forest Management in Nepal

History indicates that interest of the government in forest management emerged only after the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1950. The first forestry policy was written in 1953/54. Though the policy recognized the importance of forests for meeting subsistence needs, it was never implemented. To prevent the destruction of forest wealth and to ensure the adequate protection, maintenance and utilization of privately owned forests, ***The Private Forest Nationalization Act*** was passed in 1957 and all forestlands were brought under the control of the Forest Department. However, due to lack of human, financial and other resources needed to put all accessible forests under proper management, government could not achieve the above objective and hence, widespread indiscriminate cutting of forests. The government passed ***The Forest Act, 1961*** to protect, manage and utilize the forest efficiently. For strengthening the role of the Forest Department, ***The Forest Conservation Act, 1967*** was introduced. However, these Acts also could not help to control the deterioration of forest. Instead the condition of forests further worsened.

In 1975, a conference was convened in Kathmandu to consider various issues relating to the management of forests in Nepal. It was attended by Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) from all over the country and senior members of the Forest Department and the concerning Ministry. It was remarkable in that the planned three-day meeting extended to 23 days because of the great interest that was generated and the desire to make strong statement on the need to address the deteriorating condition of the country's forests. The conference was followed by the formation of a working group charged with the task of formulating a plan to guide the future development of forestry in Nepal. This culminated in the publishing of the National Forestry Plan in 1976, which recognized the importance of encouraging the conversion of community or government land to "Panchayat Forests" (Gilmour 2003:5-7).

This was followed by the adoption of ***Panchayat Forest Rules*** and ***Panchayat Protected Forest Rules (1978)*** that would govern the handing over of government forestland to the local Panchayat, expecting people's participation in the forest management through local political body. These landmark regulations gave formal recognition of the rights of villagers to manage their own forest resources with technical assistance being provided by the Forest Department. The right of villagers was further strengthened by the provision of the Decentralization Act, 1982. The model was no longer sustained due to division of forest resources and people as well by political boundary and administration by elected political bodies.

Therefore, considering the urgent need to redress the deteriorating forest situation, the government of Nepal, with assistance of ADB and FINNIDA, prepared and implemented a long-term MPFS in 1989. Twelve programs have been formulated to meet its long-term and medium-term objectives of all aspects of forestry and forestry-related areas. Out of them, the government has led strong emphasis to

Community and Private Forestry Program. This is the largest program and recognized as the first priority program by the MPFS**.** About 47 percent of the whole forestry sector budget is allocated for the community and private forestry program alone. To develop and manage the forest resources through community participation to meet their needs is the main objective of the CF program (Khadka 1999:10).

The previous acts, rules and regulations were reviewed; drawbacks were identified with the reference of MPFS that recognize the concept of FUGs. Consequently, the Forest Act, 1993 and the Forest Regulations, 1995 emerged to implement the CF program efficiently. The concept of FUGs is simple in that one who protects and manages the forest shall also utilize its products. The central policy thereof is to develop and manage forest resources through active participation of communities to meet their basic needs of forest products. To achieve this, the strategy put forward is to handover all accessible forests to communities to the extent that they are able and willing to manage them. The management of the forests is to be regulated by people's own decision and through CF OP.

2.2 The Concept of Social/Community Forestry

During the succession of bottom-up development approaches, the pro-industrialization forest development model was challenged in the 1970s. Westoby, a former economist of FAO, became a strong advocate of a CF program in the 1970s, played a significant role against forest-based industrialization, and emphasized the mobilization of resources for socio-economic development.

The concept of CF emerged in response to the failure of the forest industries model to lead to socio-economic development, and partly to the increasing rate of deforestation and forestland degradation in the Third World (Gentle 2000).

The original concept of CF was based upon three main elements-fulfillments of the basic needs of fuel-wood, fodder and timber at the rural household, supplying food and the environmental stability for cropland and the generation of income and employment in rural communities. The eighth World Forestry Congress (Jakarta 1978) further endorsed the concept of CF, which was devoted to the theme “Forestry for People" (Gentle, 2000).

The Forest Act of Nepal, 1993, defines community forest as “that part of the national forest which the District Forest Officer hands over to the user groups for development, protection, utilization and management in accordance with the operational plan, with authorization to freely fix the prices of the forest products, and to sell and distribute the forest products for the collective benefit and welfare” (GoN 1995:3,11).

A key goal of CF is the long-term conservation of forest resources. Nevertheless, conservation goals must be integrated with efforts to generate a steady flow of products that meet the needs of local people. The fundamental idea behind social / CF is to support directly the sustainable use of forests that provide welfare to the community. Central to the concept of CF is the basic idea of “community.” A community is often defined as the human population that lives within a limited geographical area, shares common interests and carries a common interdependent life.

Different approaches have been adopted for involving local people in forest management in Nepal. For example, CF Program is intensively practiced in middle hills, Leasehold Forestry Program has been implemented with dual objectives- to alleviate poverty of people below the poverty line and generate the investment opportunity in the forestry sector, Collaborative forest Management is being implemented in some Terai and inner Terai districts for productive forest

management and Buffer Zone Management system is being practiced in the buffer zone of the protected areas (National Parks / Reserves / Conservation Areas) to make the local people self-sufficient in forest products (HMG/N 2002 b:16, 62-86).

Participatory forest management activities include CF, leasehold forestry, private forestry, taungya system of land management, and roadside and canal side plantations. CF that involves a large number of local people from growing trees to enjoying benefit is a more participatory approach than the other forestry activities (Pokharel 1999:15-19).

Hence, CF is a participatory forest management system in which local people are involved in the protection, development and utilization of the forest. Nepal has been implementing CF program through the active participation of local people, CFUG. The CFUG is an autonomous and corporate body having perpetual succession (GoN 1993:17). After the registration of its constitution in the concerning District Forest Office, the CFUG is entitled to take over the responsibilities to conserve, develop, use and manage any part of national forest as community forest. The OP is written by the CFUG in consultation with the field forestry staff. Management of the CF is outlined in the OP. The OP of the particular forest is approved by the concerning District Forest Officer. After the approval of OP, the concerning CFUG receives legal rights over the forest resource. The Forest Act, 1993 allows CFUG to control access to the particular forest and monitor resource extraction. Similarly, CFUG has a right of production and sale of forest product as prescribed in OP, generate funds from various sources, fix the price of forest products, spend the CFUG fund in forest development activities and for community development activities such as roads, education, health, irrigation and drinking water.

2.3 Community Forestry in Nepal

2.3.1 Historical Perspective

CF in Nepal evolved through an interaction of multiplicity of factors. This stems from a sense of collective spirit embodied in Nepalese society through generations. There were frequent cases, particularly in the hills, of communities having been involved in the conservation of forests and regulating of forest resources. Earlier experiences with different political turmoil, population growth, regulatory enforcement and adjustments, excessive dependence of the people over forest resources, and a paradigmatic shift in global development thinking are some of the other factors that contributed to evolve it to the present scenario of decentralization and devolution.

Earlier statutes have been specifically harmful to the development and conservation of the Nepalese forests. Their main shortcomings stem from their indifference to, or failure to address, the needs and aspirations of the people who continued to depend on forest products for their very subsistence. The Private Forests Nationalization Act of 1957 brought forests, which were earlier perceived to be private, under state jurisdiction. Forest Act 1961 and Forest Protection Special Arrangement Act of 1967 failed to democratize the regulation of forests. Coupled with population growth and government's continued inability towards effective protection, and misappropriations all led to consistent decline in the forest cover. As such, community forestry could have been adopted also as an ad hoc approach to timely halt the deforestation process.

The National Forestry Plan of 1976 listed the major constraints and proposed policies to tackle them. It recognized the critical forestry situation of the time and laid down as objectives for forest management the restoration of the balance of nature, economic mobilization, practices of scientific management, development of technology and promotion of public cooperation.

The CF thrust followed the formulation of Panchayat Forest Rules and Panchayat Protected Forest Rules in 1978. The CF project was introduced in 29 hill districts with assistance from the World Bank. CF was also promoted with bilateral assistance. Later, CF was also tried in 14 Terai districts with World Bank assistance (Tiwari 1990:113,120).

2.3.2 Policy and Regulatory Environment of Community Forestry

Constitution of the stat, forest act, local self act, forest regulation, master plan of the forestry sector, five year planning of the state etc are policy, rules and regulation of forestry sector which creates policy and Regulatory environment of community forestry for its management and development.

2.3.2.1 CF related Provision in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990

Part 4 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 contains Directive Principles and Policies of the State. No cases, however, can be filed in any court regarding the compliance of the State with the principles and policies. Selected provisions of the Constitution include (HMG 1990:13-15).

Article 25 (1): It shall be the chief objective of the State to promote conditions of welfare on the basis of the principles of an open society, by establishing a just system in all aspects of national life, including social, economic and political life, while at the same time protecting the lives, property and liberty of the people.

Article 26 (3): The State shall pursue a policy of mobilizing the natural resources and heritage of the country in a manner, which might be useful and beneficial to the interest of the nation.

Article 26 (4): The State shall give priority to the protection of the environment and also to the prevention of its further damage due to physical development activities by increasing the awareness of the general public about environmental cleanliness, and

the State shall also make arrangements for the special protection of the rare wildlife, the forests and the vegetation.

The constitutional provisions were conducive to promoting CF, in particular with respect to using the forest resources in the interest of the nation through establishing a just system of distribution of the resources through ecologically sound manner.

2.3.2.2 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector

The first national CF workshop held in 1987 contributed to the prioritization of the CF program in the MPFS (Acharya et al. 1998:2). The MPFS, prepared between 1986 and 1988 and approved in 1989 provides a 25-year policy and planning framework for the forestry sector. The main feature of the MPFS is an integrated and program-oriented approach. The idea to employ a program approach to support primary and supportive programs was a turning point in Nepal's history of forestry sector policy. The long-term objectives of the MPFS include the following (MFSC 2000:7).

- To meet the people's basic needs for forest products on a sustained basis
- To conserve ecosystems and genetic resources
- To protect land against degradation and other effects of ecological imbalance
- To contribute to local and national economic growth.

The plan guides forestry development within the comprehensive framework of six primary and six supportive programs to achieve its objectives.

Primary Forestry Development Programs (MFSC, 2000:7)

1. Community and Private forestry
2. National and Leasehold forestry
3. Wood-based industries

4. Medicinal and aromatic plants
5. Soil conservation and watershed management
6. Conservation of ecosystem and genetic resources.

Supportive Forestry Development Programs (MFSC 2000:7)

1. Policy and legal reforms
2. Institutional reforms
3. Human resource development
4. Research and extension
5. Forest resources information system and management planning
6. Monitoring and evaluation.

2.3.2.3 Forest Act 1993

Forest Act 1993 evidences a marked shift towards democratizing the regulation of forests. The 1993 Forest Act provides the legal framework for CF and CFUGs in Nepal (LFP 2003). It has repealed conventional forestry laws and paved way for liberalizing forestry initiatives in the Kingdom. Among 13 chapters, Chapter 5 (sections 25-30) and Chapter 9 (sections 41-45) of the Act furnish provisions relating to CF processes (GoN 1993). The Act empowers local people for their participation in decision making and sharing of benefits in terms of forest resources (Lamichhane et al. 2000:7).

Under the Act, the District Forest Officers may validate FUGs constituted for being desirous to collectively develop and manage specified forests and utilize products thereof. The Act authorizes the District Forest Officer to hand over portions of national forests so that communities may conserve and manage the forests and adopt independent distribution mechanisms for forest products. Community forest OP forms the basis of such handover and communities may make timely amendments in such

plans. It has provisions of penalizing user-group officials or invalidating user-groups and taking back community forests that fail to comply with groups' constitution and OP. The user-groups themselves can penalize their members contravening their codes. The Act also establishes precedence of CF over leasing.

2.3.2.4 Forest Regulations and Other Statutory Provisions

Forest Regulations 1995 is the procedural law that enables materializing the Forest Act and relevant policies on CF. Chapter 4 of the Regulations stipulates procedures and provisions concerning CF.

The provisions and procedures laid out in the rules impart increased autonomy of forest user-groups that are real actors of CF, and promote a changeover of governmental role from policing to facilitation.

Similarly, the Department of Forests (DoF) has prepared CF directives in 1995. The directives further simplify matters of determining community forests, formation of users-groups, and handing over of community forests. It further clarifies on registering of users-group, preparation of OPs, establishment of industries, transportation of forest products and withdrawal of community forests and so forth.

2.3.2.5 Five-Year Plans

Periodic planning in Nepal started in 1956 and infrastructure development was the prime focus till the Fifth Five-year Plan period. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) adopted poverty alleviation as its sole objective. The plan committed to launch sectoral poverty alleviation programs in a coordinated, unified, and effective manner. To this, the Plan had adopted, among others, a strategy to affect a high, sustained, and poverty alleviation-oriented economic growth through the integrated development and

leadership of agriculture and forestry. The Ninth Plan adopted the MPFS for the planned development of the forestry sector.

The Ninth Plan adopted a policy of perpetuating supplies of forest products (FPs) to the ordinary public through communal management of forests. As a sub-sectoral program of the plan, community and private forestry aims to promote employment and income- generation opportunities to marginal families. It further promotes accommodating non-timber forest products (NTFPs) under community forest management.

As a sub-sectoral programme of the Tenth Five-year Plan (2002-2007), CF aims to promote employment and income-generation opportunities to poor and disadvantaged families. It further promotes non-timber forest products under CF management (NPC 2002 a: 180-187).

2.3.3 Community Forestry Development Process

In order to implement the CF development process in phase wise with easier means CF Division, DOF has prepared and implemented the "Guidelines for CF Development Program." These guidelines are divided into five phases to facilitate the identification and formation of CFUGs, the preparation and implementation of operational plans, and review and revision of the process in the spirit of the Forest Act 1993 and the Forest Regulations 1995.

2.3.3.1 Identification Phase

This phase includes the following activities.

- Rapport- building with forest users.
- Interaction with potential users concerning CF policy and its importance to their communities.

- Collection of social and technical information regarding sustainable management of forests and utilization of forest products.
- Identification of users and potential community forest areas.

2.3.3.2 Forest User Group Formation Phase

This phase includes the following activities.

- Formation of the CFUG.
- Preparation of the CFUG's constitution and registration of the CFUG at the District Forest Office as required by the Forest Regulations.

2.3.3.3 Operational Plan Preparation Phase

This phase includes the following activities.

- Discussion and agreement by the CFUG of an operational plan related to forest management, institutional development of the CFUG, and community development.
- Preparation and approval of the CFUG's operational plan.
- Handing over of management rights for the community forest, and utilization rights for forest products and income to the CFUG.

2.3.3.4 Implementation Phase

This phase includes the following activities.

- Implementation of approved constitution and operational plan.
- Advice to the CFUG at its request.
- Technical and institutional support to the CFUG.
- Monitoring of implementation of forestry management activities by the CFUG, and assistance in resolving issues and problems that arise.

- Carrying out of activities related to institutional development of the CFUG.

2.3.3.5 Review and Revision Phase

This phase includes the following activities.

- Either at the CFUG's request or upon expiry of the OP's term, revision of the OP as directed by the CFUG's interests, objectives of management, forest conditions, and existing rules, regulations, circulars and directives of the government.
- Amendment of the constitution as required by the needs of the CFUG.
- Approval of revised constitution and OP.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of constitution and OP.
- Signed agreement with the CFUG.

2.4 People's Participation in Forest Resource Management

People's participation is an important decisive factor in any development effort. Forest resources have an obvious importance on the economic life of the people living in, around or adjacent to them. This is particularly obvious where people depend on forests for subsistence such as wild plant and animal foods, firewood and fodder for livestock.

Attempts to manage the forests are more likely to succeed if the people involved in collecting and harvesting forest products support management plans. They are much more likely to support management plans if the plans take some account of their economic interest. Significant role of forest users in the development of management plans is also important for the successful implementation of the plan. When plans override local interests, or when they are based on inaccurate assessments of these interests, the people are likely to ignore the rules and to continue their normal activities (Fisher, 1993 as cited by Gautam, 2002: 36). Fisher (1993) pointed an

example of women in Nepal, who mostly collect firewood, yet they are rarely involved (in any serious way) in planning forest management. Unless their concerns are recognized and incorporated in the plan, they are unlikely to support the plans.

Jackson and Ingles (1994) argue that FUGs are motivated to accept the responsibility for forest management because users have a vested interest in the fate of their local forests. This argument is particularly relevant when products from community forests have value in the market, because FUGs have an incentive to ensure that forests are properly managed in order that they can continue to obtain benefits from the sale of products. This argument is unique not only to community forestry but also to other participatory natural resource activities.

According to Gautam (2002:37) failures of some forestry programs in the past can be traced to the non-inclusion of communities during project planning, execution and evaluation. In many areas of Nepal, where community forestry has been successful, there has been a decrease in the rate of forest degradation and increase in the quality of natural forests, through plantation establishment on marginal lands and improved management of natural forests. Much of the improvement in forest condition, increased vegetation and species diversity can be attributed directly to forest user-group protection and management practices (Blockhus et al. 1995).

2.5 Potential Benefits of Income Generation through Community Forestry

Recent experiences in Nepal suggest that community forestry management can yield more subsistence needs and FUGs can generate income from a variety of sources, including the sale of forest products, fees, fines and donations (Hunt et al.1995). Forest products are the major source of CFUG income, which constitutes about 82 percent of the total income (Gaia et al. 2004:172). Niraula (2004:53) states that CF in Nepal can generate about Rs. 1.83 billion/year. It is the value of forest products

actually harvested from the CF. Despite the various achievements; CF program is questioned by commentators due at least in part to passive protection-oriented management (Nurse et al. 2004:128). Protection-orientation management is posing many negative impacts to the country (Shrestha and Amatya 2001:3-17) and the commercial potential of the forest is not being utilized (Grosen 2001:21-37; Khanal 2002:26-32). The value of directly used forest products can be way beyond if the forest is harvested in a sustainable way (Niraula, 2004:53). The income generated from community forests can, and does, play an important role in providing local employment and in developing local markets (Malla 1993; Jackson and Ingles 1994; Dev et al. 2004:213). In one study, Jackson and Ingles (1994) estimated that the 2,000 potential FUGs in one hill district could generate Rs. 19,000,000 (US$ 352,000) each year. They further suggest that the capacity for income generation will expand exponentially as the number of forests handed over to FUGs increases and the condition of new and regenerating forests improves.

The group fund generated from the sale of forest products, levies, and outside grants are the financial capital through the community forestry. The average FUG fund size of about NRs. 8,000 in 1996 has risen to NRs. 13,000. It is reported that there is a balance of about NRs. 100 million among 12,000 FUGs in the country. This amount is almost equivalent to the government's annual forestry development budget allocated to all districts (Pokharel and Nurse 2004:19-29).

2. 6 Rural Development through Community Forestry

Jackson and Ingles (1994) observed that effective participation of local people is essential for making community development work. Community Forestry encourages the participation of local people in decision-making by:

- Providing local control over forest management;

- Encouraging local participation in defining needs and setting priorities for development;
- Encouraging local participation in implementing solutions;
- Providing a direct a local source of funds for community development; and
- Strengthening local links between development and forest conservation.

Dev *et al.* (2004:208-217) identified that FUGs community development activities have led to improved village level infrastructure in the majority of FUGs studied. The main examples are as follows:

- Trail making
- Drinking water supply
- Support to schools in the form of teachers' salaries, fund and timber contribution for constructing school building
- Construction of community halls/agricultural group halls supported by donation of construction materials and funds
- Contributions for construction of temple and monastery
- Village electrification
- Extension of forest: for example, Dharma Devi FUG is in the unusual position of planning to buy land to create a new forest; from its own sources, it has raised NRs. 31,000 in order to buy 10 ropani (0.5ha) of land.

FUGs carry out many community development activities on their own. Construction of village trails, small bridges, community building, schools, drinking water, and temples are the examples of community infrastructure supported by CFUGs (Dev *et al*. 2004: 213). Evidences show that a large amount of FUG fund is being spent on various community development activities. For example, analysis of data of NSCFP

(2003) indicated that FUGs had spent 39 percent of their FUG fund for community development activities, mainly on construction (21%), education (8%), health (6%), and other (4%) (Pokharel and Nurse 2004: 21).

2.7 Poor and Poverty

There are no definite words to define the term 'poor'. Nepal is a economically poor country in comparison to USA. People of Karnali may be poor when we compare them with the people of Kathmandu. However, even in Karnali zone, there are rich and poor. Hence, poor itself is a relative thing and will remain forever (Kanel and Niraula 2004: 26). It is only its magnitude that matters. In the context of Nepal, poor are those who live in small huts having no ventilation, no land or having small piece of land, getting low diet, having unhealthy body, daily wage earners, illiterates, socially disadvantaged/marginalized, deprived of education, health care and modern facilities. In other words, person who is the most vulnerable to shock, stress and seasonality is a poor of Nepal.

According to World Bank, poverty is hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor, not being able to go school and not knowing how to read, not having a job. It is fear for the future; living one day at a time, losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water, and is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom (http://www.worldbank.org).

Poverty has two dimensions - low income, which is insufficient to maintain a dignified life, and low level of human capabilities, which restricts a citizen's options to lead a life of his or her choosing. Poverty is a form of deprivation with strong interactive linkage to other form such as physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness. It is a state of economic, social and psychological deprivation

occurring among people of countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to resources to maintain minimal acceptable standards of living (http://www.undp.org).

2.8 Achievements and Challenges of Community Forestry in Nepal

CF in Nepal is one of the pioneer programs of participatory Forest Management in the world. The innovative CF policy has widely implemented in the Middle hills areas. Nepal's forest policy has provided a platform to practice and learn more from community forestry and many more have been achieved in terms of capital formation, governance and policy reform, community empowerment and social change (Suman 2005:39). Many CFUGs have been operating for several years and have become firmly institutionalized. They represent an effective local development institution, increasingly involved in wider community development activities, often networking with a range of government and non- government groups (Baginski et al. 2003:17).

In Nepal, at the moment, an average of two CFUGs are being formed every day and they are given authority and responsibility to manage and use the national forest resources in the form of community forests (Nurse et al. 2004). If appropriately mobilized, CFUGs can be used for any kind of development activity. Potential of disseminating information to rural people through CFUGs is enormous. Besides, these CFUGs can be very effective organizations for delivering services in the remote part of Nepal.

Community forests handed over to communities are natural capital. Nepal's community forestry has proved that communities are able to protect, manage and utilize forest resources sustainably (Pokharel and Nurse 2004:20). Evidence shows that there are positive changes in forest condition once they are handed over to the communities (Malla 1997; Branney and Dev 1993; Dev *et al.* 2004:212; Kanel and Kandel 2004:7). The availability of the forest product also increased, with a

concurrent reduction in the time spent for collecting forest products. It was also found that an increased number of FUGs have harvested timber (19% increase), fuelwood (18% increase) and grasses (9% increase) (Pokharel and Nurse, 2004:20).

Certain groups in community forestry are able to gain access to and benefit from collective actions. This is because socio-economic attributes of households like land holding, livestock holding, and family size have direct impact on the extraction of forest resources and some of FUGs rule and regulations also tried to exclude poor societies. This exclusion from the forest use is a serious challenge to community forestry management and poverty alleviation (K. C. 2004:39).

The main challenge lies in integrating CF policy and practice with democratic governance and livelihood imperatives (Kanel and Kandel 2004:57). No group in the absence of democratic exercise can function effectively and smoothly. This mostly offsets the weaker section such as women, disadvantaged group and very poor thus depriving them of their share of benefits (Joshi 2003:21). Poor, women and other marginalized groups of people are not getting an equitable share of benefits (Pokharel and Nurse 2004:19-29).

In Nepal, community forestry has been taken as an innovative approach towards devolution of power and responsibilities of forest management from national government to the local communities. Despite rhetoric of devolution, the actual implementation of Nepal's community forestry policy is principally constrained by the problem of governance and institutional structure in public sector institutions (Dahal 2003:17).

Evidences show that poor households have not received adequate opportunity for training package offered in community forestry intervention. The majority of CFUGs are not taking advantage of community forests to improve the livelihoods of its

members (LFP, 2003: 49). Despite large-scale expansion of CF in Nepal, there is no clear and consistent contribution to the livelihoods, especially of the poor (Neupane 2003:55). The poor have not also been given sufficient loans from the FUG fund. Besides, the physical infrastructures constructed through FUG's funds have also not benefited the poor as compared with the better-off members of the same FUG (Pokharel and Nurse 2004:19-29). FUG use funds collected from fees and selling timber to develop some social activities like construction of irrigation canal, and temple. These have no direct implication to landless and lower caste households (K. C. 2004:39).

Forest products sharing mechanism is not well-defined in the OP of many FUGs. Although it is the role of the general assembly to decide the distribution mechanism, the executive committee takes most of the decisions regarding benefit-sharing mechanisms. As the representation of poor and disadvantaged group in the executive committee is meager, the sharing mechanism could hardly fulfill the demands of forest products for the poor and disadvantaged groups (Kanel and Kandel 2004:11).

Decision-making is a fundamental part in community forestry. The success and/or failure of community forestry is based mainly upon decisions made by user groups/committees (Paudel 1997:23). Failures of many community forestry user groups are due to wrong decisions. The Koidim community forest of Tanahu and Khordanda community forest of Lalitpur are such examples (Shrestha 1995:101).

Active participation of poor, women, and disadvantaged groups in decision making is critical for effective community forestry management and equitable benefit distribution among the users. Poorer households, especially those without land, cannot use fodder, leaf litter, and agricultural inputs from CF, which are benefits enjoyed mainly by better-off households. Also, timber is mostly purchased and used

by better-off households since the poor households do not have the need or ability to pay for timber. The poorest households do not benefit from the harvesting due to lack of a legal provision to sell unused products (Kanel and Kandel 2004:61). The distribution system in community forestry is criticized for failing to provide more benefits to the poor households (Malla 2001).

Equity is a serious issue in the success of CF program. CF must be understood as a process of equitable redistribution of local resource ownership, management and access (Bhatta 2002:116). According to Tiwari (2002:71), equity problems are rooted in: (a) traditionally existing attitude to discriminate on the basis of caste, class, sex and ethnicity; (b) significantly low level of awareness about CF policy; (c) inadequate representation and virtually non-involvement of all interest groups in setting institutional rules and arrangements; (d) lack of innovative and livelihood supportive forest management interventions and (e) control and dominance of executive committee and elite therein over user group. Even most transparent user groups often practice 'equality' rather than equity in sharing of costs and benefits of forest management. Therefore, CFUGs need to make more democratic efforts to improve their organizational, social and technical capacities to eliminate such shortfalls (Tiwari 2002:71).

Chapter - Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Systematic research methodology is necessary to solve the research problem because it is also the way of systematic investigation to find answer to the problem and create the knowledge. It helps to analyze, examine and create interest on various aspects of research as data and information collection, analysis and presentation.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the plan, structure and strategy conceived to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Karlinger 2004:300). It provides a way to reach research objectives. It describes the general framework for collecting, analyzing and evaluating data after identifying: (i) what the researcher wants to know and (ii) what has to be dealt with in order to obtain required information (Wolff and Pant 2002:74). A research Design refers to the entire process of planning and carrying out research study (Wolff and Pant 2002:74). This study has used both the exploratory and descriptive research design.

3.2 The Study Area

The study was conducted in Dang district, which is located in the mid-western development region of Nepal. The district was selected purposively because of the following considerations:

a) The district has an on-going user-group-based community forestry program implemented since 1990.

b) The district represents a typical Terai and hilly region of the country so the findings could be applied and may be useful to other similar districts of Nepal.

c) Relevant secondary data are substantially available in the District Forest Office (DFO).

d) The area is accessible by road.

e) The researcher is acquainted with the district and local situation.

3.2.1 Location of the Study Area

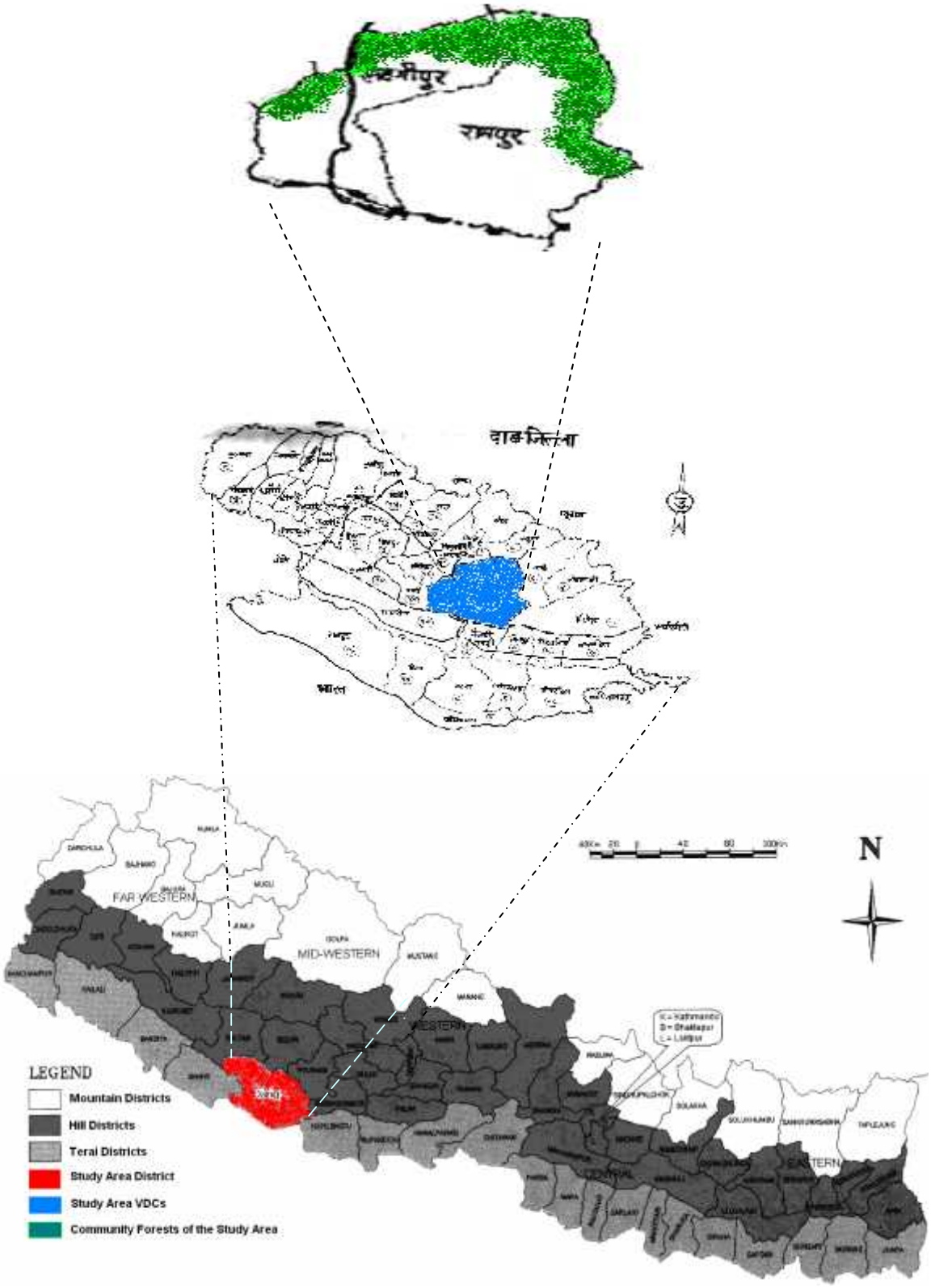
The location of study area is in Dang District of Nepal. Dang district is situated in mid-western development region, which is more developed in the trade and industrial sector and more fertile land among the five districts of Rapti zone of Nepal. It is made up of by two big valleys, Dang and Deukhuari. Within the two valleys, there are other small valleys, such as Tui dang

Dang district lies between $27^0$37' to 28.2 latitude and $82^0$2' to 82.54 longitude. It is 300 km away from Kathmandu valley. The elevation ranges from 213m to 2058m above mean sea level. The climate of Dang district varies from sub-tropical to tropical temperature and also there is mild and cool temperature in the hilly area. The district receives an average rainfall of 1254mm. It has three municipalities and 38 VDCs, 4 parliamentary representative election sectors, 13 DDC units. The district headquarters is Ghorahi. The total population of the district is 4,62,380 of which 2,28,958 (49.51%) are male and 2,33,422 (50.49%)are female. Population density is 56.47 persons per sq. km (CBS 2001). The number of household in the district is 82495 and average household size is 5.6o member per house hold is 5.60 persons. The literacy rate of this district is 59.9 percent. The female literacy rate is 49.4 percent whereas the male literacy rate is 70.5 percent. The occupation is agriculture that plays the important role for the livelihood of the peoples of this district. Main castes of this district include Brahmin, Chhetri, Kami (Blacksmith), Sunar (Goldsmith), Damai

(Tailor) and Sarki (Cobbler). Among ethnic groups there are Tharu, Magar and Raute.

According to the ICMOD publication, District of Nepal: Indicators of Development 1997 Dang district ranks 30th among the country's 75 district on development scale. The main touristically potential areas are Chamero Gupha in Halwar VDC, beautiful waterfall in Purandhara VDC, Brahakune Daha in Tribhuwan Municipality, Charinge and Bhote Daha in Rampur VDC, Jakhera Tal in Sonpur VDC, Ambikeswari Mandir , Sai baba Mandir, Gorakshya Nath Mandir, Siddha Ratna baba Mandir in Tribhuwan Municipality, Rihar Mandir in Satbaria VDC, Shivalaya Mandir Dharna VDC, Shiva Mandir in Dhan khola, Devikot Mandir Lalmatiya VDC, the route to Swargadwari Mandir, the hearty valleys, green community forests etc.

Figure 1: **Map of the Study Area**



3.2.2 The Community Forestry in Dang District

CF program began in the district after the Panchayat Forest (PF) Rules and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) Rules came into effect in 1978. The handing over of PFs and PPFs to local Panchayats continued until 1990. The democratically elected government, which followed the abolition of the Panchayat system in 1990, passed the legislation concerning the concept of community forestry and its respective laws. Hence, the handing over of the national forest resource to the FUGs could take off. CF concept, which is now fully institutionalized through the Forest Act 1993 and the Forest Rules 1995, is based upon the user-group approach. Total forest area in the district is 1,92,155ha. and out of this 72,522.02 hectares of national forest area have been formally handed over to the FUGs covering 66,230 households. A total of 374 FUGs have already been formed in the district as of June 2004 (DoF, 2004).

3.2.3 Description of Survey Site

There were 374 CF in Dang district up to the fiscal year 2059-60. Dang has 15 range posts Sunpur Range Post being one of them. Sunpur covers 2 VDCs, Rampur and Laxmipur. In this range post, the handed over CFs number 31.

3.2.3.1 Land and Population

This range post has 7266.92 ha land area and the average CF area is 234 ha. The household number is 5843 and the average household per CF is 188. In this way, the average land area of CF per household is 1.24 ha. In study area, the total number of households were 2,902 and total CF land area is 3097.57 ha within 10 CFs. where 96 hh and 198.5 ha land in Swarikot CF, 48 hh and 68 ha land in Paluthan CF, 256 hh and 125 ha land in Basantapur CF, 303 hh and 320 ha land in Syalapani CF, 500 hh and 210 ha in Sunpur CF. 141 hh and 149.25 ha land in Charinge CF, 192 hh and 109

ha land in Lahareni CF, 501 hh and 1203.75 ha land in Maljhakri CF, 800 hh and 701.75 ha land in Danphe CF and 64 hh and 12.32 ha land in Maniya danda and Kafli Sota CF (newly afforested man made CF).

3.2.3.2 Boundary

Sunpur range post is surrounded by the Tribhuwan Municipality, SyujaVDC and Kabre VDC, in the North. Hansipur VDC in east and Sonpur VDC, Lamahi municipality, Satbaria VDC (Deukhari Valley) in south, Dharna VDC and Saudiyar VDC in the west.

3.2.3.3 Climate

The climate is varied in the study area. The Swarikot CF is very cool even in the summer season. This CF lies in 2000 m elevation. The other CFs have same climate except the newly afforested man made CF. The climate in this newly afforested man made CF has a little difference in temperature than the other natural CF. In this CF, the climate is sub tropical climate**.** According to the publication of Forest development Program "Ek Jhalak 2059" the maximum temperature is 35.30^0C and the minimum is 4.1^0C which is similar to the temperature in the study area.

3.2.3.4 Forest, Vegetation and Other Resources

Three types of forest have been found in this study area: natural forest newly afforested man-made forest and private forest. The study covers only the natural and newly afforested man made forests.

The forest of the study site of Sunpur range post is of complex type. Different types of trees and other plant species are found in that forest. It consists mainly of Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Saj, Sajan, Khayar (*Acacia catechu*), Chiuri and several medicinal

plants in natural CF. in Sishau (*Dalbergia sisoo*), Bans (*Bambusa spp*), Khar (*Saccharum spontaneum*) in newly afforested man made CF. However the CF which above 2000m elevation has also other trees like rhododendron, Tinju fruit, Chutro and other herbal plant Harro, Barro, Amala, Kurillo, Malagedi, Timoor. Now the users are practicing to agro forestry product like pear, zinger, kurillo, Sarpagandha, Tejpat, and Dalchini etc. however still, they are not succeeded to earn money from these plants.

Most of the people use fuel wood for cooking due to lack of infrastructure and less purchasing capacity of the people. Although there are female groups all management affairs are in the hand of male. Most the forest user group committee has 13 members and the average female number in the committee is 4 and male number is 9. In the main position like treasurer, Chairperson and secretary there are male rather than female members.

3.3 Method of Data Collection

The survey and review methods were used to collect the data. The household heads were selected through a two-stage sampling method. A Range Post (RP) was selected purposively having at least 10 numbers of community forests (Dabphe, Manaiyadanda, Paluthan, Sawarikot, Basantapur, Syalapani, Sunpur CF of Laxmipur VDC and , Charingedaha, Lahareni, Maljhankri CF of Rampur VDC.) handed over before 2054 B. S. From the list of households for the selected RP, household heads were then selected randomly.

The study used both primary and secondary data. FUG members were the source of primary data. FUGs' approved OPs, minutes of the meeting, and progress reports were also used as sources of data. Information related to the FUGs gathered from

DFO's official records, DDC, VDCs, published reports, maps and statistics served as sources of secondary data.

The household heads were selected randomly from the list of households available in the DFO for selected RP. The sample size was calculated using the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = number of total households (total population)

e = desired margin of error, allowance for non-precision for using the sample for the study instead of the whole household population.

Here,

N = 2902

e = 10% = 10 / 100 = 0.1

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{2902}{1+ 2902 \times 0.1^2} = 96.67$$

Although the sample size is 96.67, researcher got the data from 100 respondents to fulfill the optimum sample size. In this study, allowance for non-precision is assumed 10 percent, because Kidder et al. (1981, as cited by Gautam 2002:65) stated that even

a small sample size would give reliable results if the respondents were aware of the problem. It has been assumed that respondents in the area are aware of the forestry problems.

The following research and data collection methods are used in this study:

(i) One set of survey questionnaire; (ii) Review of User Groups' approved OPs, constitutions, minutes of the meeting and progress reports, and (iii) Field observations.

Before conducting formal interviews, questionnaires were pre-tested to see whether the schedules would generate the required information. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and appealed for their cooperation prior to the interviews. The researcher stayed in the field during data collection.

3.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, averages, and ranges were used to describe the findings of the study. The computer based Excel program was used to analyze the data.

Chapter – Four

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses of socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, participation of forest users on different community forestry development activities, benefit sharing patterns, CFUG fund creation and utilization. It also presents the awareness of the users in different term of the community forestry as well right and duties towards the CF.

4.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

The description of the socioeconomic profile includes describes the respondents' age, gender, civil status, occupation, household size, educational level and landholding size.

4.1.1 Age Groups of the Respondents

The age of the respondents varied from 18 to 70, with an average of 45 years. Further, the respondents have been classified into three categories, viz., young adult and old. as shown in Table 1. Among the various age groups, the majority (68%) falls in the age group of 26 to 50 years. The reason for higher proportion of the respondent in this group was due to more intensive attachment with forest activities. This group is most active and its involvement in all CF management activities is higher. A similar observation was reported by Thakur (2001:63) and Kunwar (2002:36). It was also useful to find out the opinion of young generation and experienced upper age groups in different forestry activities, as they comprise 12 percent and 20 percent respectively, among all the age groups.

Table 1: **Age Structure of Respondents**

Age group	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Below 25 years	12	12.00
From 26 to 50 years	68	68.00
Above 50 years	20	20.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.2 Gender

Gender is an integral and inseparable part of rural livelihoods. The study was intended to collect information from large number of female respondents because they are the prime users and they know how to conserve and manage the forest and fulfill the needs efficiently and sustainable. They are the local experts for quality fuelwood and fodder, and it is generally their responsibility to collect these products. But in the list of household there was no name of female household. Though the efforts were made to collect more information from female members, the percentage of the female respondents was only 25 (Table 2) owing to their household workload and lack of time. The proportion of male respondents who participated during interviews was 75 percent.

Table 2: **Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Gender	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Male	75	75.00
Female	25	25.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.3 Ethnicity

The study area has two typical tribal groups: Magar and Tharu, and other has Brahmin Chettri, Dalit (Kami, Damai, Sunar) etc. The study area has heterogeneous society in terms of caste and ethnicity. There are multitude of castes and ethnic group in Ten

CFUG. There were both hill migrants and Terai castes and ethnic groups. The study area consists of a multicasts and multi cultural community. The detailed ethnicity composition is given in Table 3.

Table 3: **Ethnic Affiliation**

Cast or ethnicity	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Brahmin	35	35.00
Magar	24	24.00
Tharu	19	19.00
Dalit	12	12.00
Chhetri	8	8.00
Others	2	2.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.4 Civil Status of the Respondents

Table 4 presents the civil status of the respondents. Married respondents constituted more than ninety five percent (96%), while single and widowed were less than five (3%) and (1%) percent, respectively.

Table 4: **Civil Status of the Respondents**

Civil status	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Married	96	96.00
Unmarried	3	3.00
Widow/widow/ed	1	1.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.5 Educational Status

Literacy is an important indicator of development, having multiplier effect on community forest management. It increases awareness in the people towards their socioeconomic condition empowering them to act towards the changes to use the opportunities.

Respondents' educational level is presented in Table 5. It was found that most of the respondents (91%) were literate through either formal or informal education. Informal education refers to non-formal adult education without schooling and illiterate refers to those respondents who were not able to get either formal or non-formal education and could not read and write. Majority of them (28%) had primary level of education. About one fifth (19%) each of the respondents had informal education and college education while 9 percent were illiterate. Only 15 percent had secondary level of education. Furthermore, only 10 percent of the respondents had lower secondary level of education. Literacy rate in the area was found higher as compared to the average literacy rate (59.9%) of the district (CBS 2001). The result could be the impact of the Pairabi classes. The education level in the area indicates that the people could provide more information and probably were more aware of the development of CF.

Table 5: **Educational Status of the Respondents**

Category	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Illiterate	9	9.00
Literate by adult education	19	19.00
Primary	28	28.00
Lower secondary	10	10.00
Secondary	15	15.00
Higher Education	19	19.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.6 Occupational Status

Many rural people can be described as being in an 'energy trap' i.e. having to maintain subsistence through high levels of energy expenditure leaving little time and energy for other activities (Longhurst, 1997). They are locked into low productivity

occupations (Jafry, 2000). The respondents' occupational status is presented in Table 6. The majority of the respondents were in agricultural occupation (71%). The rest of them were in service and teaching 6 percent each, merchants 5 percent, tailor 4 percent, blacksmith 3% and mason or carpenters 2%. At least one each was goldsmith, laborer and in social service.

Table 6: **Occupational Status of the Respondents**

Occupation	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Agriculture	71	71.00
Service	6	6.00
Social service	1	1.00
Teacher	6	6.00
Tailor	4	4.00
Blacksmith	3	3.00
Goldsmith	1	1.00
Maison/Carpenter	2	2.00
Marchant	5	5.00
Labors	1	1.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.7 Household Size

More than half of the respondents (59%) had a medium size family (5 to 8 members). The average family size was 6.79 and the range varied from 2 to 18. The average family size in the area was found more compared to the district average of 5.60 members per household (CBS 2001).

Table 7: **Household Size**

Household size	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Small (Up to 4)	20	20.00
Medium (5 to 8)	59	59.00
Large (8+)	21	21.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.1.8 Land Holding Size

Landholding size refers to the area of land owned by an individual household from where they derive income. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) owned 6 to 20 Kattha of farmland (Table 8). Only 11 percent owned more than 40 Kattha. The area was not found better in terms of landholding than the rest of the district average where 44.52 percent of households owned 20 - 30 Kattha of farmland (DADO, 2001).

Table 8: **Landholding Status of Respondents**

Land holding size	Respondents	
	Number(f)	Percentage
Very small < 05 kattha* (0.17ha.)	23	23.00
Small o6 - 20 kattha (0.18ha. to 0.7ha.)	49	49.00
Medium 21 to 40 kattha (0.68ha. to 1.33ha.)	17	17.00
Large > 40 kattha (>1.33ha.)	11	11.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005

* 30 kattha = 1 hectare.

4.2 Users' Participation in Community Forestry Activities

Communities are important spearheads of sustainability in forest landscapes. Conservation of forest ecosystem and their diversity has relied heavily on participation of local community. CF is not simply a technical process; it is rather also a process of socioeconomic change based on structure and nature of societal justice (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:212) that requires continuous participation of the community in planning, implementation and problem solving. Participation is the voluntary involvement of people in self-determined change (FAO, 1989) in which the people are directly and actively involved in planning, implementation, management and benefit sharing.

The involvement of FUG members on the formation of user groups, preparation and implementation of OPs and benefit sharing reflects the users' participation on various activities on the CF program in the area. FUGs are group of people residing around forest vicinities who are entrusted to manage, develop the forest resources and utilize the forest products.

Participation in this study refers to the involvement of forest users in various activities of the CF program such as formation of user groups, preparation and implementation of OPs, and on-going management and benefit sharing.

4.2.1 Participation in FUG Formation Process

Respondents' participation in various activities during the formation of FUG is presented in Table 9. The majority of the respondents (84%) were aware of the FUG, while 52 percent of them attended in FUG formation process.

Among the respondents, only few participated in executive committee selection (1%) only. Likewise, those who participated in meetings and discussions were 4 and 3 percent respectively. Thirty eight percent of the respondents participated in all activities. Only few were involved in both selecting executives and discussions. On the other hand, 4 percent participated in meetings and discussions while 48 percent did not participate in FUG formation process. The reasons cited for non-participation were: 'was not at home', 'was not informed', 'did not have time', and 'other member of the family participated'. One of the reasons given indicates that other members of the family also participate in the FUG formation process. This trend could improve the participation of the users. The result clearly indicates that FUG formation process could not include a wider mass.

Table 9: **Participation of Respondents in FUG Formation**

Types of participation	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Attendance in the meeting	4	4.00
Executive committee selection	1	1.00
Discussions	3	3.00
All of the above	38	38.00
Attending meeting and discussion	4	4.00
Selecting executives and discussion	2	2.00
Did not participate	48	48.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Awareness among resource users being a critical factor in the success of the CF program, it is of utmost importance that the facilitators of this program invest significant time and resources in building and raising this. Quality outcome and sustainability of CF program hinges on the level of mass awareness among the participants. The process of selection and organization of FUGs involves social mobilization, which is a key step and raises awareness about the program. Adequate social mobilization can also help in empowering the marginalized people within the community by making them aware of their status and rights leading to their real participation in the program. This would also ensure their strong presence in the executive committee, which at present is just nominal in terms of number and/or expression and assertion. The result demands that the facilitators of the program (program implementers) especially the district forest office should focus more on social mobilization aspect during the FUG formation process in the area.

4.2.2 Participation in OP Preparation

Participation of the respondents in OP preparation is presented in Table 10. Sixty percent of the respondents were aware about their operational plans. Majority of them (51%) participated in various activities during OP preparation. About one-third (33%) participated in all the activities of OP preparation while 9, 1, and 2 percent

participated only during discussions, field survey and preparation of rules and regulations respectively. Likewise, only 5 and 1 percent participated in discussions, survey, and preparation of rules and regulations and survey respectively. Nearly half (49%) of the respondents did not participate in the process of OP preparation.

Table 10: **Participation of Respondents in OP Preparation**

Type of participation	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Discussion	9	9.00
Field survey	1	1.00
Preparation of rules and regulations	2	2.00
All of the above activities	33	33.00
Discussion and survey	5	5.00
Survey and preparation of rules and regulations	1	1.00
Did not participate	49	49.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Attempts to manage the forest resources in community forests are likely to succeed if the users involved support the OPs. Significant role of forest users in the development of OPs is important for the successful implementation of the plan. The findings show that significant number of the users did not participate in the preparation of the OPs is useful to the program implementers and other stakeholders in the district. This would enable them to make the concerned users aware and become involved in the development of the plans so that the approved OPs will be successfully implemented.

The large numbers of the respondents (92%) perceive that they were aware of the constitution of CFUGs. Table 11 presents the awareness of the respondents regarding the provisions of the approved constitutions. Almost all of the respondents (93%) knew the chairpersons of their CFUGs. Likewise, 57 percent and 63 percent of the respondents knew the number of users and the number of members in FUCs of their respective CFUGs, respectively.

Table 11: **Awareness Regarding the Content and Provisions of Constitution**

Provisions of constitution	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
CFUG chair person		
Knew the name	93	93.00
Did not know the name	7	7.00
Total	100	100.00
Number of users in CFUG		
Knew the number	57	57.00
Did not know the number	43	43.00
Total	100	100.00
Number of members in FUC		
Knew the number	63	63.00
Did not know the number	37	37.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Awareness of the respondents regarding their rights, roles and duties towards CF is presented in Table 12. The majority 85, 80, and 75 percent of the respondents were aware about their rights, roles and duties respectively towards CF.

Table 12: **Awareness Regarding the Rights, Roles and Duties of the Respondents to CF**

Category	No of Respondents	
	Number(f)	Percentage
Rights		
Aware	85	85..00
Not aware	15	15.00
Total	100	100.00
Roles		
Aware	80	80.00
Not aware	20	20.00
Total	100	100.00
Duties		
Aware	75	75.00
Not aware	25	25.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Respondents' awareness regarding some of the specific provisions of their approved operational plans (OPs.) is tabulated in Table 13. Majority of the respondents (58%) were not aware of the specified month for coal collection in their operational plans.

Similarly, 65 and 62 percent of the respondents were not aware of the area of community forests (CFs.) and number of blocks in community forests respectively. Although 75 percent were aware of the price of a bundle of firewood in their operational plans. The results indicate that majority of the users do not care about the various provisions of operational plans. It also shows that users are only concerned about what they get from their community forests rather than the management aspects of the operational plans.

Table 13: **Awareness Regarding the Content and Provisions in OPs**

Provisions of OP	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Month of Coal collection		
Aware	42	42.00
Not aware	58	58.00
Total	100	100.00
Area of CF		
Aware	35	35.00
Not aware	65	65.00
Total	100	100.00
Blocks in CF		
Aware	38	38.00
Not aware	62	62.00
Total	100	100.00
Price of a bundle of firewood		
Aware	75	75.00
Not aware	25	25.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

The results discussed above clearly indicated that FUG formation process could not include a wider mass. Similarly, a significant number of the users did not participate in the preparation of OPs. The finding also revealed that users did not care much about the provisions of OPs showing that they were much concerned about what they get from their CFs rather than the management aspects of the OPs. The results demand that the programme implementers should focus more on social mobilization

aspect and take more time to discuss the provisions of OPs during the CF handing over process in the area.

4.2.3 Participation in Implementation of Operational Plans (OPs.)

Table 14 shows that the majority of the respondents (93%) participated in the implementation of OPs. The activities in which the respondents participated in were forest protection, plant production, plantation, weeding, pruning, thinning, natural regeneration management, timber stand improvement and fire line construction and/or maintenance. Approximately 87 percent of the respondents participated in forest protection; plantation, weeding, pruning, thinning and timber stand improvement while less participation was observed in plant production, natural regeneration management and fire line construction and maintenance.

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents who did not participate in OP implementation cited that they "were not aware of it" while other 28.57 percent, said "did not consider it as important". And the remaining 14.28 percent “did not get time".

The participation in forest protection clearly indicates that users are aware of the importance of their community forests. Data also shows that the participation is high in thinning and pruning activities rather than natural regeneration management, and fire line construction and maintenance. In most of the user-groups in the area, pruning and thinning activities were the major source of firewood collection and distribution. Hence, high participation in those activities enabled them to meet the immediate need of firewood. On the other hand, less participation in other activities such as natural regeneration management, and fire line construction/ maintenance could be an indication that silvicultural treatments are carried out for the benefit of users but not for the benefit of the forests in many instances. This finding could help the program implementers to determine the causes and come up with appropriate measures to

correct such problems so that all users can participate in the implementation of the OPs.

Table 14: **Participation of the Respondents in OP Implementation**

Item	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Did not participate	7	7.00
Participated	93	93.00
Total	100	100.00
	Multiple Responses	
Participation in activities	Number (f)	Remarks
Forest Protection	87	
Plant production	7	
Plantation	88	
Weeding	88	
Pruning	80	
Thinning	73	
Natural regeneration management	51	
Timber stand Improvement	73	
Fire line construction /Maintenance	12	
Reasons for not participation	Number (f)	Percentage
Was not aware of it	04	57.15
Did not consider it important	02	28.57
Did not have time	01	14.28
Total	07	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.2.4 Participation in On-going Management

CF conducts the meeting for its ongoing management. The meeting takes the steps to do the major activity like OP amendment process, decision making and other activities. But this type of meeting could not do all the activities at a time. On the basis of necessity it should be done time to time that's why it is called ongoing management of the CF. Here the result shows the participation of respondent in various activities of on going management of CF.

4.2.4.1 Participation in OP Amendments

Table 15 shows the response on amendment of OPs. Amendment of OPs refers to the change in certain rules or provisions in the OPs. Majority of the respondents (54%)

knew that their OP was amended while a considerable number (32%) did not know whether the OP was amended or not. However, verification of FUG minutes showed that there were several amendments of OPs.

Table 15: **Responses on Operational Plan Amendment**

Responses on OP Amendment	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Amended	54	54.00
Not amended	14	14.00
Don’t know	32	32.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Table 16 presents the response on consultation during OP amendments. More than half (51%) of the respondents were consulted during the OP amendments. A significant portion (32%) of the respondents did not know whether their OPs were amended or not. Likewise, 17% were not consulted in the amendment process. The result shows that the users’ participation was not satisfactory in OPs amendments.

The reasons for non-consultation were the following: "women, Dalit and Illiterates are neglected by committee" (35.29%), "Conflict with executives" (17.65), "Committee thinks there is no need of voice of users" (17.65), "Committee neglects students and children" (17.65), and "Absence in General Assembly" (11.76). The responses showed that FUCs were not unbiased in many instances.

Table 16: **Consultation during OP Amendment**

Consultation on OP amendment	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Consulted	51	51.00
Not consulted	17	17.00
Did not know	32	32.00
Total	100	100.00
Reasons for non-consultation		
1. Women, Dalits and Illiterates are neglected by FUC	06	35.29
2. Conflict with executives	03	17.65
3. Committee thinks there is no need of voice of users	03	17.65
4. Committee neglects students and children	03	17.65
5. Absence in General Assembly	02	11.76
Total	17	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.2.4.2 Participation in CFUG General Assembly

Participation is seen as an integral and inseparable aspect of any definition of development leading to a wider process of social transformation and potential challenge to existing power structures. Participation may be an "end it self" to increase self-esteem, confidence and the individual sense of power or empowerment i.e. everybody's right to have a say in decision concerning their own lives (Lane, 1997; Mikkelsen, 1995). This study analyses the number and percentage of respondents through attendance in meeting in CFUG's General Assembly.

Participation of respondents in CFUG meetings is presented in Table 17. It showed that the vast majority of the respondents (91%) participated in FUG meetings. The majority (73.62%) attended meetings 1 to 5 times in a year, followed by 6 to 10 times a year (6.60%) and 10 and more times a year (19.78%). This finding indicates that generally FUG meetings are held 1 to 5 times a year. The researcher during the

field visit observed that many users participate even in the monthly meetings of FUCs.

Table: 17: **Participation of Respondents in CFUG Meeting (General Assembly)**

Item	Respondents	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Participation		
Did not participate	9	9.00
Participated	91	91.00
Total	100	100.00
Attendance in the meeting		
1 to 5 times	67	73.62
6 to 10 times	6	6.60
11 and more times	18	19.78
Total	91	100.00
Reasons for non-participation		
User Committees' job	2	22.22
Did not consider important	2	22.22
Was not informed in time	5	55.56
Total	9	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

There were no similarities between the CFUGs to conduct the General Assembly. Some groups conducted the meeting less than necessary and some conducted more than necessary (Yadav, 2003). This system was also seen in the study area. Generally, the General Assembly should be conducted twice a year (in summer and in winter). If they could not conduct the General Assembly two times in a year but the compulsion is one time in summer. The household or representative who could not participate in the General Assembly have to pay fine. There are more groups, which conducted the General Assembly 1 time in a year. So the participation is high 67%, in the first category than other two categories. But the participation is 18% in third category because the executive committee had decided to conduct the meeting with user group but not only the executive committee. In this way they have more than 11+ meetings due to the emergency meeting and the monthly meetings with all user so that they could be more aware about the ongoing management and decision-

making process. Likewise, the second category is very small because those respondents whenever they would like to participate in the monthly meeting, they used to go there.

The reasons for not attending the meetings were the following: 'was not informed in time' 55.56%, 'did not consider important' (22.22%) and 'forest user committee's job' (22.22%). The reasons indicate that not all users were informed before the meetings and some of the users were not well aware about the importance of the FUG meetings.

4.2.4.3 Participation in Decision-making

Decision-making is a crucial element for the success of any project. In the decision-making process, if majority are involved they feel projects to be their own. This research has found that participation is affected not only by those who make and implement decision but also by how decisions are made.

Transparency in decision-making is a key component of a democratic governance system. In several instances, decision could be reached only through a negotiation process, which ideally requires full and transparent sharing of information by all stakeholders (Habermas1984). Absence of transparency means the members of FUG are denied their rights or are not interested in knowing about it or do not know what they are supposed to know (Bhatta 2002:95-123).

Regarding the participation in decision-making, 91 percent of the respondents participated in decision-making process. Table 18 showed that more than forty percent of the respondents that participated in decision-making process perceive their participation as active. Nearly thirty-one percent of them perceived that their participation was moderate and other twenty five percent were inactive in decision-making process.

The reasons given for the non-participation in decision-making process was that 9 percent of the respondents were absent in the meeting. But the inactive participation also just likes the non-participation in the meeting. In the reason of inactive participation were the following: "no body encouraged speaking" (17.39 %), and "Did not consider it important" (8.70%), users' committee job (26.08%). The remaining 47.83 percent expressed other reasons such as they did not know what to speak in the meetings (17.39%), decisions of earlier meetings were not implemented (21.74%), and user committee feel the person as an anti-group if some one express concerns over the decisions (8.70%).

Table 18: **Participation in Decision -making Process**

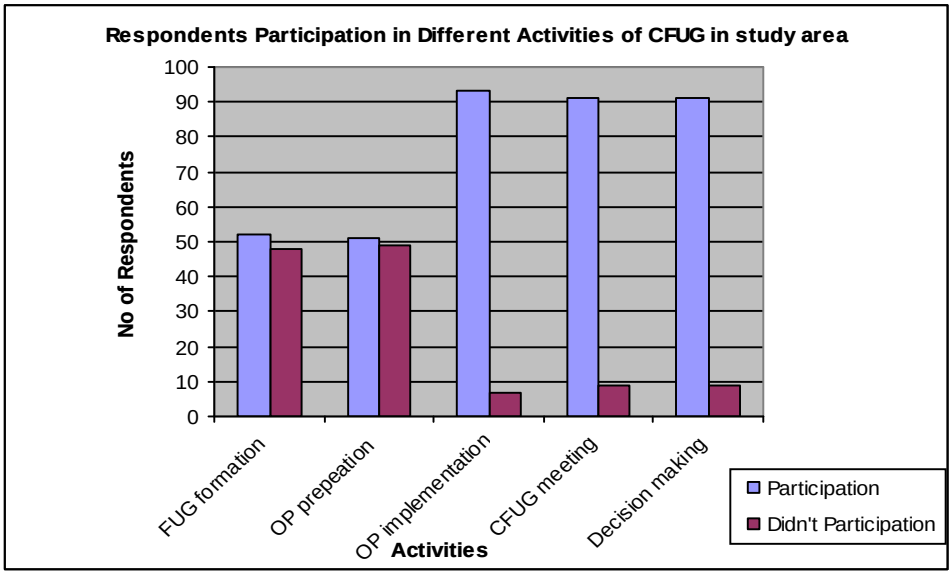
Item	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Participation		
Participated	91	91.00
Did not participate	9	9.00
Total	100	100.00
Form of Participation		
Inactive	23	25.27
Moderate	28	30.76
Active	40	43.97
Total	91	100.00
Reason for inactive participation		
UC's job	6	26.08
Nobody encouraged	4	17.39
Did not consider it important	2	8.70
Others		
Did not know what to speak	4	17.39
Recommendations of earlier meetings not mplemented	5	21.74
Committee feel us Anti- groups	02	8.70
Total	23	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005**.**

FUG level decision-making processes are crucial to determining the impact of CF. In the majority of the FUGs decision-making processes are weak and not completely inclusive. Although poorer households are generally benefiting from the improved

security of the forest product flows, they are often marginalized from decision-making processes to some extent, leading to dissatisfaction. Women are also generally not involved in decision-making (Springate-Baginski et al. 2003:21-36).

Figure 2: **Respondent's Participation in Different Activities of CFUG in Study Area**



Based on: Table 9, 10, 14, 17 and 18

4.2.4.4 Decision-making Process

Decision-making is central to analysis of distributive justice within community forests. How are the decisions made? How transparent are the decision-making processes? These questions point to the actual focus or locus of power (Ghimire 2004:23).

FUG decision-making is supposed to be very participatory, but due to lack of quorum in general assemblies, more often it is not so. The poor and disadvantaged group members are more concerned and busy earning their livelihood elsewhere than attending a general assembly. Even if some of these people are present at meetings, influential people overshadow their authority in decision-making and their investment

priorities are not considered (Bhatta 2002:95-123). Effective participation would involve their representation in user groups and labor contribution but also membership of management committees, attendance in meetings, their voices effectively taken into account and views influencing decision-making (Agarwal 1997:23-52).

General assemblies are not taking place in the way it is envisioned in the CF policy, and this leads to autocracy in the committee. The FUC is supposed to be responsible to the FUG, which is institutionally and functionally represented only during the general assembly. But the level of presence of FUG members at such meetings makes the general assembly virtually non-functional and empowers the FUC (Bhatta 2002:95-123).

4.2.4.5 Decision-makers in General Assembly

Usually the FUG members take part in decision-making process during the general assembly where they review the implemented activities and decide the future plan and course of action. Ideally, general assemblies are meant to have presence of all members of FUGs. Table 19 presents the responses of the respondents regarding the decision-makers in users' assemblies. Majority of the respondents (51%) expressed that users' committees make the decisions in users' assemblies while only 25% said that assemblies make decisions. The chairpersons make 10% decisions in the assemblies and 9% of the respondents did not know the decision makers in the assemblies. The result indicate that committee members dominate the decision making process. Such situation could lead to the formation of autocratic institutions where committee members monopolize the decision making process. This finding is consistent with Nurse et al. (2004:42).

Table 19: **Decision-makers in General Assemblies**

Responses on Decision-makers	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Do not know	9	9.0
Users' assembly	25	25.0
Users' committee	51	51.0
Chair person	10	10.0
Some elites	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2005.

4.2.4.6 Inclusion/Exclusion in Decision-making Process

"Poor people rarely meet; when they meet, they often do not speak, when they speak, they are often cautious and differential and what they say is often not listened to, or brushed aside, or interpreted in a bad light (Neupane 2003:55-61). The poor do not speak up. With those of higher status, they may even decline to sit down. Weak, powerless and isolated, they are often reluctant to push themselves forward. (Chamber 1983:18) In Paul Devitt's words:

> ...The poor are often inconspicuous, inarticulate and unorganized. Their voices may not be heard at public meetings in communities where it is customary for only the big men to put their views. It is rare to find a body or institution that adequately represents the poor in a certain community or area. Outsiders and government officials invariably find it more profitable and congenial to converse with local influential than with the uncommunicative poor. (1977)

Table 20 presents the responses of the respondents regarding the voice heard in decision-making process. The reasons for not hearing the voices in decision-making were as follows: among 17 respondent 23.53 percent were illiterate, another 23.53 percent were children and they have same comment that they were behaved as a in humanization. The 52.94 percent may have the political issue, no priority for the user groups' voice.

Table 20: **Voice Heard in Decision-making Process.**

Voice Heard in Decision- making Process	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Yes	51	51.00
No	17	17.00
Inactive participation (who didn't speak)	23	23.00
Absentees in the meeting	9	9.00
Total	100	100.00
Perception of respondent about the voice heard		
Fully	23	45.10
Partially	28	54.90
Total	51	100.00
Reason for not heard about the voice		
1. Illiterates are not believed	4	23.53
2. Voice of Users aren't considered	9	52.94
4. Behave us like children	4	23.53
Total	17	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

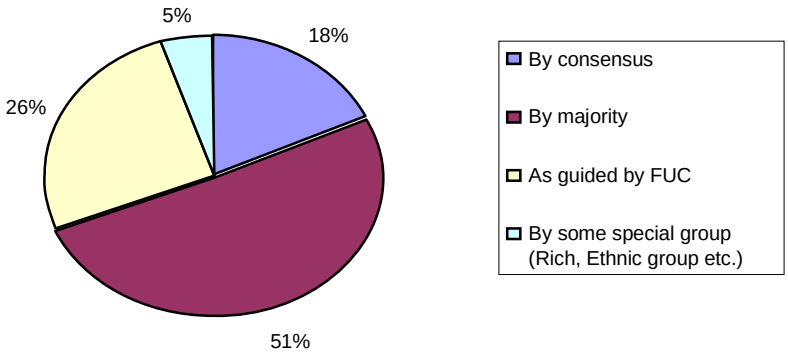
The perception of the respondents in decision-making process is presented in Table 21. The majority of the respondents (51%) perceive that the decisions are taken by the majority. More than 25 percent express that decisions are taken as guided by FUC. Nearly 20 percent express, decisions are made by consensus. There seems to be some problem in decision-making process. Ideally, almost all decisions should be reached by consensus after discussion for the smooth implementation of the CF program.

Table 21: **Perception of Respondent in Decision-making Process**

Decision making process	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
By consensus	18	18.00
By majority	51	51.00
As guided by FUC	26	26.00
By some special group (Rich, Ethnic group etc.)	05	5.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Figure 3: **Perception of Respondent in Decision-Making Process**



Based on: Table 21

Although the community forest program has achieved many successes but its contribution in livelihood is still questionable. The lack of transparency, unbalanced representation, outsider's control, and unequal distributions are the major factor in this situation that is evident from the above results and discussions. Person who participated in the preparation of OP, and consulted its amendment, they were succeeded to make the decision process. This shows that the literates, elites, and active people are only participating in ongoing management but to protect the forest in nighttime, to show the large number participation in the minutes they are using the household by showing the fear of fines which is proved by the inactive participation and non participation of the respondents in decision-making process. Further, the decision should be taken in assemblies by consensus but the majority of the respondent said the decision is made by the majority. There is no provision to understand about the rules and regulation for the inactive and non-participated respondent through the discussion of the CF. The meetings are conducted during harvesting time for the extraction of the forest products.

4.3 Distribution of Benefits from CF

Benefit of CF refers the forest product, cash, opportunity of capacity building training or workshop and others. If the condition of community forest is good, user can get the benefit from the CF in different aspect. The result shows the benefit sharing system from different angles including the CF condition.

4.3.1 Condition of Community Forest after Handing Over to FUGs

Table 22 shows the responses about the improvement in the condition of the community forests. Improvement in forest condition refers to the increase in vegetation cover and availability of timber and non-timber products from the respective community forests after it was handed over to the users. The large majority of the respondents (85%) perceived a moderate improvement in forest condition during the implementation of the program. More than ten percent of the respondents perceived the significant improvement in forest condition. This clearly indicates that forest cover increased considerably when it was handed over to the users. Improved forest condition was attributed to the protection provided by the villagers. At the same time, the users planted trees and managed natural regeneration to improve the forest condition. The finding supports the findings of Blockhus et al. (1995), Gerrits and Gurung (2000:29-31), Kunwar (2002:36) and Gautam (2002:36, 65). This finding is also consistent with Dev et al. (2004:208-217) that qualitatively, the forest condition had improved after CF practice.

Table 22: **Improvement of Forest Condition**

Condition of CF	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
No idea	2	2.00
Not improved	2	2.00
Moderately improved	85	85.00
Improved significantly	11	11.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2005.

Table 23: **Respondents According to the Responses about Benefit-sharing**

Item	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Not getting forest products	1	1.00
Getting forest products	99	99.00
Total	100	100.00
Type of product*	Multiple responses	Remarks
Timber	65	
Fuel wood	99	
Poles	72	
Fodder	96	
Bedding material for livestock	90	
Non- timber products	80	
Others (Haris, Juwa, Halo, Gol, Lahara, Patawa)	13	

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Regarding the participation in benefit sharing, Table 23 shows that almost all users (99%) were deriving benefit from their community forests in some forms. Fuelwood, followed by fodder and leaf litter was the major products that users were getting from their community forests.

4.3.2 Fulfillment of Basic Needs of Forest Products

The percent of respondents who fulfilled the basic needs through their CF was 92 (Table 24). However there was complaint that the Tharu community (37.5%) who have to cook more food rather than the Brahmin and Kshyatri. Due to lack of sufficient forest resources the forests are opened for few days providing not sufficient

time to collect the forest product even for the fulfillment of basic need. Likewise, 12.5 percent of the respondents felt that the forest area is too small in the comparison of household and members of the CF so it was not fulfilling the basic need. Another 12.5 percent of respondents reported there was an undesired plant species in the CF which is known locally as "Ban mara". If the user group could destroy this undesired plant from the CF, there would be enough empty land where the users' could produce forest products to meet their basic needs. In the other reason, 37.5% respondents said due to the Maoist problem the users were not allowed to go to the forest even to collect the basic forest products. The result shows that community forests were not able to meet the timber demand of the users as the handed over forests either were too small in area or there was not enough timber to meet the demand of the users. The finding demands the management of CF for more timber production and also to plant more tree species on the private land of the users to meet the need of timber. Promotion of agro forestry and private forestry program is essential to reduce the pressure on community forests for supplying timber and fuel wood.

Table 24: **Responses on Fulfillment of Basic Needs of Forest Products from CF**

Availability of forest products	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Yes	92	92.0
No	08	8.0
Total	100	100.0
Reason for not being available		
Forest area too small	1	12.5
Forest resources are small	3	37.5
There are undesired spices planted	1	12.5
Security Problem	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.3.3 Fair share of Forest Products

Respondents' view on fair share of the forest product is presented in Table 25. Thirty percent of the users perceived that they were getting a fair share of forest products. On the other hand, 75 percent of the users perceived that they were not getting a fair share. For those not getting a fair share, the reasons expressed were the following: "Can not bid an auction" (52.86%), "price is high" (28.57%), "only influential people get them" (14.29%) and "do not care" (4.28%).

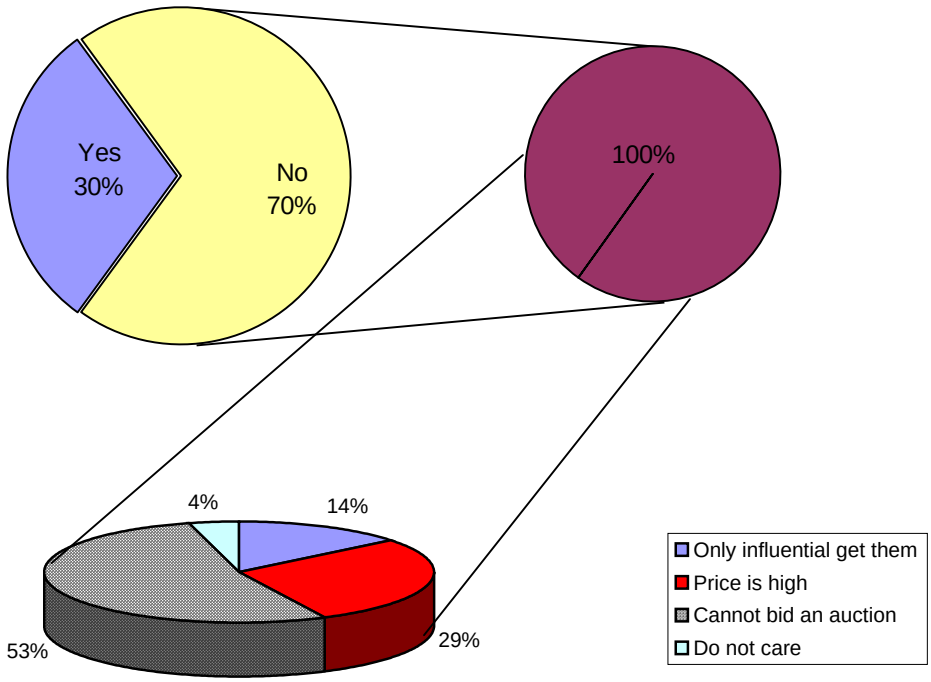
The reasons indicate that there is still domination of the elite group or elites on benefit sharing within the FUGs. The result also showed that users do not get the required product because they could not bid in the “auction.” as well as the price of the products was beyond the capacity of many users. This again indicates the low influence of poor users in decision-making process and / or probably OPs could not include the concerns of the poor users. Another indication is that the products from the community forests have value in the market so FUGs are interested to sell it for more money than to meet the demand of a member of the group. This probably shows the changing scenario of community forestry program from subsistence utilization to commercialization. The result is useful to the program implementers and other concerned stakeholders in the district to work on the issue of equitable distribution of forest products within the FUGs, and develop a mechanism to evaluate the decisions made by the users, and make the groups aware about the equitable distribution of the forest products.

Table 25: **Respondents According to the Responses on Fair Share of Forest Products**

Fair Share of Forest Products	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Yes	30	30.00
No	70	70.00
Total	100	100.00
Reason for not getting a fair share		
Only influential people get them	10	14.29
Price is high	20	28.57
Can not bid an auction	37	52.86
Do not care	03	4.28
Total	70	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Figure 4**: Fair Share of Forest Product**



Based on: Table 25

Table 26 shows facts about the respondent's access to forest products. Users are not getting forest product except fuel wood, fodder, and bedding materials for livestock. Most of the users are getting these products but only getting these products because

CF is also selling the timber from forest does not satisfy some. So 47 percent of the respondent felt the access was reduced.

Among 47 percent of the respondents, 42.55 percent said that they cannot get timber from forest when they needed due to the weakness of committee, competition in the bid of auction, high price, queue of the demanded users, monopoly of the influential person, bounded time to collect the forest product etc. Nearly 20 percent of the respondents expressed that the forest area is deteriorated due to the disease in newly afforested man made forest, and lack of plantation from long period. If there will the provision to improve the deteriorated areas, the access of the users would increase.

About the 11 percent of the respondents who used to get the timber illegally from the forest before handing over of the CF, were not satisfied because they had more access to get forest product in that time but now it is reduced. Over 21 percent of the respondents reported that the Maoist problem is one of the reasons for the reduced access. The forest should open according to the OP and constitution. The Maoist bands the process of renewal, and users fear to go to the jungle to get the forest products. More than 6 percent of the respondents do not have access due to the physical weakness who used to get not only the forest product but also give the valuable suggestions for their CF in their younger age but now they do not have energy to get the forest product from the CF. There is no provision to give the forest product for those users who are older and could not come to cut the coupon (Purji) for forest product.

Table 26: **Access of Respondents to Forest Products**

Access of respondents	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Increased	56	56.00
Reduced	47	47.00
Total	100	100.00
Reason for reduced access		
1. No available when needed	20	42.55
2. The forest area is deteriorated	9	19.15
3. Not available just like before CF.	5	10.64
4. No consumption after restriction	10	21.28
6. Users' do not have power and energy	3	6.38
Total	47	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.4 Benefit-sharing System

Table 27 shows the benefit-sharing system in CFs. More than half of the respondents (51%) perceived that the benefit sharing system is elite biased. Thirty-two percent said that it was the equal distribution to each household. Only 11 percent feel that the distribution system was equitable. Another 6 percent expressed that the individual plots were given to the users to collect the forest products. The result shows that there is an opportunity to work for equitable distribution system.

Table 27: **Benefit-sharing System in CF**

Benefit-sharing System	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Equitable	11	11.00
Equal	32	32.00
Elite Biased	51	51.00
Individual plot	06	6.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Forest product distribution systems in many CFUGs are supposed to be on an equitable basis but they are not even equal in many cases. Most of the CFs are managed for timer production, which is not the priority product of the poor. The poor neither can afford the timber even though the price is subsidized than the out side nor

do they need it. They are not allowed to sell their share outside because of the group's restrictive rules on the distribution and sale of forest products. The table 27 shows there is less equity in the CF. The equity in benefit sharing encourages the individual to work effectively and efficiently in management operation. However, its successful functioning benefit sharing mechanism must involve rural poor and women (Acharya 1999:36-39).

The decision-makers of the GA are the decision- makers of the distribution of the forest product so the result in Table 19 is the same in Table 28. Only one fourth of the CFUGs sampled carried out decision-making on distribution of forest product through the CFUG general Assembly, whereas decision-making by CFUG committee occurred in 51 percent. Decision -making by Chairperson is 10 percent and 9 percent did not respond about the question. The result shows that FUCs were more powerful than the assembly in making decisions on distribution of forest products.

Table 28: **Decision-makers to Distribute the Forest Products**

Decision-makers	Respondent	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Do not know	9	9.00
Assembly	25	25.00
FUC	51	51.00
Chair person	10	10.00
Some elites	5	5.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.4.1 Who is Getting More Benefit from CF?

It is generally argued that common property resources are of greater importance and relevance to the livelihoods of the poor than the non-poor and access to them has potentially a particular redistributive role to play. But in the study area the rich received more benefit (Table 29). Although the fodder and fuelwood was equally

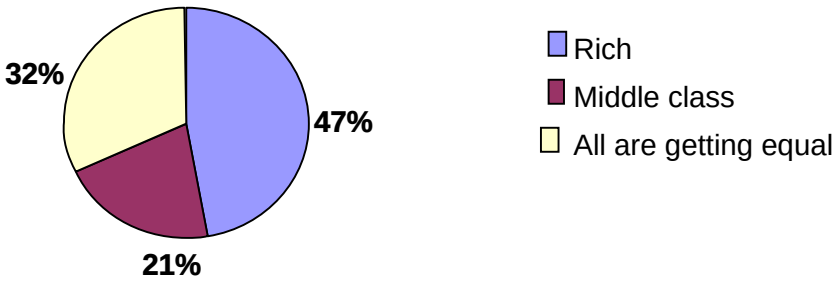
distributed to all users but the valuable timber was not accessible to majority of the members of the groups. The result is consistent with Bartlert and Nurse (1992). There was no provision to get more benefit to the poor and land less. Twenty three percent of the respondent said that almost all the middle class families owned livestock and they were able to get more fodder and bedding materials and even khar from CFs. In this way the middle class are getting more benefit from the forest. Thirty two percent said the benefit sharing system is based on equal basis because whatever they get from the forest product, they get equal. The result revealed that there was not even equality on the benefits from CFs. The result supports the finding of Kanel et al. (2003) that rich and middle groups get more benefits than poorer households in CF program.

Table 29**: Responses on Getting More Benefits from CF**

Beneficiary	Respondent	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Rich	47	47.00
Middle class	21	21.00
All are getting equal benefits	32	32.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2005.

Figure 5: **Responses on Getting More Benefits from CF**



Based on: Table 29

A wide variety of forest products are collected from CF. However, some major products of collective concern are firewood, leaf fodder, grasses, compost material, leaf litter, timber (small timber for agricultural implements and poles and wood for construction).

The distribution pattern of forest products has been rapidly changing in many CFUGs. In many cases, a tendency to export specially the timber to the nearby urban centers and even to the distant urban centers for high prices has been rapidly increasing even while within group demand for the basic products remained inadequately addressed. Many argue in favour of such econo-centric approach of CFUGs in claiming that the fund generated would anyway accrue to CFUGs for the welfare of the group in general for the creation of economic opportunities. Such an approach seems deviated from the original objective of the concept of CF that intended to meet the basic forest products need of the rural people residing near by the forest.

It was observed that the distribution system of forest products in some FUGs where the forest products was sufficient to meet the demand of the users, was very simple: a user who needed a product had to buy it by paying its specified price. But must of the groups have the provision of bidding an auction to buy the timber. One of the critical problems in this system of distribution is the inability of the poor users to pay for the products that they need. This issue demands an immediate solution to make the CF programme to benefit the poorer section of the community in real sense.

4.5 Fund Generation, Management and Mobilization

A variety of forest products are collected used or sold by CFUGs and generate fund. Community forest users charge nominal fees for the use of forest products, if they sell them to outsiders, they charge the market price. The income of the CFUGs includes income from the forest products plus the income from other sources. The other

sources of income could be fine/punishment, membership fees, entrance fees, GO/NGO grants, interest from the loan etc. CFUGs are now generating some income depending upon the forest type and age. Fund use of the CFUGs was not consistent with their income and most of the time it was on ad hoc basis. There was a lack of planning for the effective use of funds.

4.5.1 Sources of Income of CFUG Fund

Table 30 indicates sources of income of CFUGs in the study area. The identified sources of income were selling of timber, fuelwood, medicinal and aromatic plants (only healers are using) , other NTFPs, membership/entry fee, grant from other institutions such as DFO, LFP etc., fines and others. In the other sources Pots on rent is playing a vital role to increase the CFUG fund. Instead of these income the bee rarer from other districts like Chitwan and Nawalparasi were coming in the study area, which was one of the income source of the CFUGs.

Some respondents reported that selling of charcoal was also the income source but it was too small because only Blacksmith, tailors, and goldsmith use it. One of the CF was able to sell the khair. The users also expressed that there is a lack of the market for khair in the district so the CFs could not sell this product. Only few of the respondent said the interest of loan is also the source of income but it is very small in amount. The source of income also included the selling of stone from the forest area that is legally prohibited. The concerned authorities need to monitor and stop such activities before it is too late to correct such illegal activities.

Table 30: **Sources of Income of CFUG Fund**

Sources of income [X]	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Remarks
Sale of timber	88	
Sale of fuel wood	84	
Sale of Jadibuti	03	
Sale of other NTFPs	72	
Membership fee (entry fee)	60	
Grant from other institutions	17	
Fines	89	
Others	21	
Pots and chairs on rent	8	
Charcoal	5	
Money from bee rearing farmers	2	
Selling of stone from forest	2	
Selling of khayar	2	
Interest from the loans	2	
Total	21	

Source: Field Survey, 2005. [X] Multiple Responses

4.5.2 Decision-makers for Use of the CFUG Fund

Table 31 shows the responses regarding who decides on what to use the FUG fund. Generally, FUC in the study area are exercising their power, but some elites and the chairperson guide them because they are more aware of legislation, have access to information and are capable to use them for their benefit. Many user group members and even the women and dalits in committee member are hardly aware of their own community forest constitution and operational plans. Lack of adequate knowledge and technical skill among users might be the reason for the less participation of FUG assembly in decision- making process.

Table 31: **Decision-makers for Use of the CFUG Fund**

Decision–makers	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Do not know	9	9.00
FUG assembly	25	25.00
FUC	51	51.00
Chair person	10	10.00
Some elites	5	5.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4. 5.3 Place for Depositing the Fund

The lack of transparency in account keeping system allows the limited group of elites a good chance to make personal gains. This has created mistrust against the CFUG committee among the users. As a result, frequent changes in the executive committee members have occurred. Delayed or not handing over of the account records to the new executive committee members has increased the chances of misuse of the CFUF fund. In this way, in the study area 69% of the respondent did not know the total amount of the CF, which indicates the lack of transparency regarding the CF fund in the area.

The majority of the respondents (68%) expressed that CFUGs have opened the bank accounts and the fund was deposited in the banks (Table 32). Some of the fund was also with committee members for the petty cash. A clear record keeping is essential in such cases otherwise; there could be a chance of misuse of CF fund.

Table 32: **Place for Depositing the Fund**

Place	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Bank	68	68.00
Invested as loan	02	2.00
With committee members	06	6.00
Both (Bank & with Committee members)	12	12.00
Others	04	4.00
Shop	08	8.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.5.4 Area of Investment of FUG fund

Regarding the awareness about the operators of CF accounts, the large majority of the respondents (81%) were aware about the account operators. Almost all of the CFUGs have the provision that the annual expenditures need to be presented in assemblies for final approval. Majority of the respondents expressed that expenditures were presented in their assemblies but most of them were not able to know the details of the expenditures. Generally assemblies were called from 10 to 11 am but usually started at 1 to 2 pm, as most of the people gathered late. Planning of the assemblies are also done in such a way that there were many speeches, which consumed most of the time. Thereafter, the committee would present some agenda related to the preceding year's program and plans for next year. By the time these agendas were presented it would be late for many that were present and they would start leaving the assembly. At the end, all that had been presented by the committee would get approved in a hurry. Virtually there was very little or no time for discussion and questioning.

Table 33: **Area of Investment of FUG Fund**

Area of investment	Respondents[X]	
	Number (f)	Remarks
Forest development	96	
Community infrastructure dev.	96	
Credit, loan	02	
Tea, snacks	71	
Meeting allowances	19	
Allowances for forestry staff	64	
Training for institutional development	12	
Stationary (office expenses)	66	
Others	39	
Support to others CF building	02	
Helped DFO by buying carpet	01	
Purchase of Pots and Chairs	07	
Helped victims (users') of Natural calamities and fire	02	
Buying plants	01	
Preparing watchman's dress	01	
Buying sports utilities	07	
Prize distributing for honest users	01	
Helping blinds and disabled	01	
Teacher's salary	04	
Sewing training for Women	02	
Rent for CF building	06	
Paying temple's priest	01	
Running Pairawi classes regularly	01	
Keeping audit like HMG system and salary for auditor	02	
Total	39	

Source: Field Survey, 2005. [X] Multiple Responses

The area of investment of CF fund is shown in Table 33. It showed that equal priority was given to the forest development and community infrastructure development. The results showed that the expenditures on tea and snacks, stationary, and allowance were given more priority than the institutional development related activities. The result also shows that mobilizing the CF fund for income generating activities was not in the priority of CFUGs. There appears to be lack of control of the investment in unproductive activities. Therefore, there is a space to minimize the spending in

unproductive activities like stationery, buildings, tea/snacks, allowances, etc. This finding is useful for the program implementers to work in such issues.

4.5.5 Invested Activities for Forest Development

Table 34 shows the activities that were included under the forest development. The expenditure was mainly on watcher's salary, forest management training, fencing, buying seeds and plants, fencing, nursery/plantation establishment, buying harvesting equipments, thinning and pruning, etc. Majority of the fund was spent on forest watcher salary in the name of forest development. From the view point of the role of community forestry in employment support the watcher's salary might be justifiable otherwise major forest development activities should include the forest management practices to optimize the productivity of the CFs.

Table 34: **Invested Activities for Forest Development (Multiple Responses)**

Activities	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Remarks
Watchers Salary	96	
Nursery/ Plantation establishment	13	
Fencing	15	
Improved tools purchasing	4	
Forest management training	17	
Buying Productive seeds & plants	14	
Thinning and Pruning	2	
Training for Bee keeping	2	
Prize distributing for honest users	1	
Running Pairawi class regularly	1	
Maintenance of Dhik	1	

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Although the existing Forest Act has a provision to spend 25% of the income in forest development activities, there is not a clear-cut menu of the activities. There is a need to have clear policy guide in this regard and to orient the users towards the forest management activities.

4.5.6. Investment in community infrastructure development

Table 35 presents the CF funded community infrastructure development items. Mobilization of fund in community development was the major activity prioritized by the users. This is one of the highly demanded activities in the community as it is directly linked with the welfare of the community. Community forestry has also been a major contributor to community infrastructure development. Besides rural infrastructure development, community forestry has also supported its users in case of illness, literacy classes, social mobilization etc. CFUG fund was mostly invested on construction or maintenance of school buildings, small drinking water projects, Village trails, irrigation canal maintenance, culverts and others. As the demand for such activities is high, community activities should be prioritized.

Table 35: **CF Funded Community Infrastructure Development Items (Multiple Responses)**

Items	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Remarks
School	81	
Trails	21	
Culverts	07	
Drinking water	43	
Irrigation	10	

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Area of improvement of community infrastructures under FUG support is tabulated in Table 36. It clearly shows the contribution of community forestry in rural infrastructure development. The result also shows the importance of CFUG fund and also indicates that efforts should be made for investment of the fund for fund generation opportunities.

Table 36: **Area of Improvement of Community Infrastructure under FUG Support**

Area of Improvement [x]	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Remarks
Village trail	18	
Kulo	11	
Drinking water	38	
Health post	05	
Temple	57	
School	81	
Chautaro	22	
Community building	68	
Others	07	
Walls surrounding temple	01	
Cole	02	
Kanji House	02	
Agricultural road	02	

Source: Field Survey, 2005. [x] Multiple responses

4.5.7 Support for Income Generating Activities:

Table 37 shows the responses regarding the support of FUGs on income generating activities. The large majority of the respondents (84%) expressed that there was not any support from the FUG fund for income generating activities. Only 16 percent of the respondents expressed that the income generating activities supported by the FUG were vegetable production, small livestock raising (mobile fund for the goat keeper), bee keeping and small business. While reviewing the meeting minutes and OPs it was revealed that interest rate for the invested amount from the FUG fund for income generation activities varied from less than five percent to 24 percent per annum. The finding shows that fund mobilization for income generation activities is low in priority than rural infrastructure and CFUGs administration. At the same time, the finding also indicates that interest rate was not in favor of the poorer households.

Table 37: **The Income-generating Activities Supported by FUG**

Item	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Support in Income generating activities		
Yes	16	16.00
No	84	84.00
Total	100	100.00
Income generating activities		
Vegetable production	02	12.50
Small livestock rearing	11	68.75
Bee- keeping	01	6.25
Small business	02	12.50
Total	16	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

4.5.8 Use of FUG Fund for Welfare of the Poor

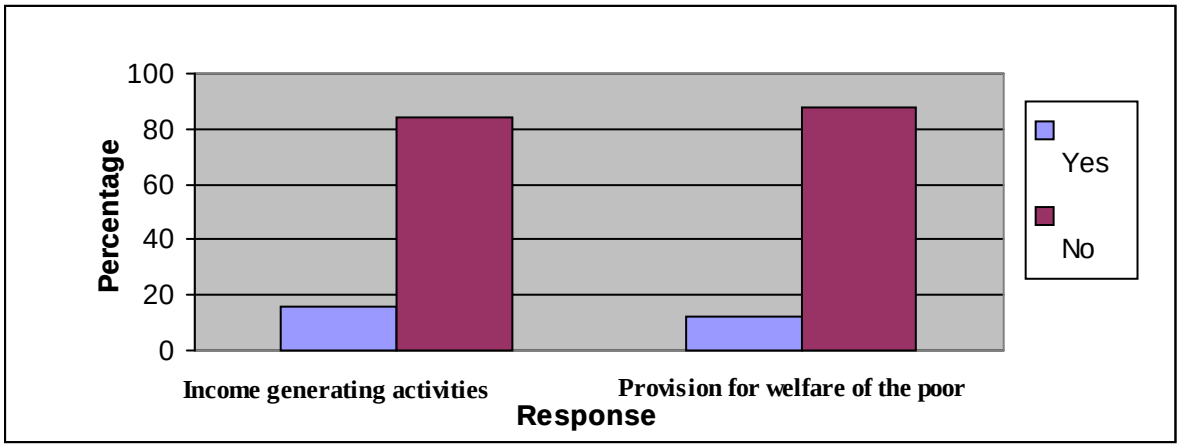
Table 38 presents that the more than ten percent (12 %) of the respondent said the mobile fund for income generation is for the welfare of the poor but the 88 % did not respond because there was no any provision to invest the fund for the welfare of the poor.

Table 38: **Provision to Use the FUG Fund for Welfare of Poor Users**

Item	Respondents	
	Number (f)	Percentage
Provision for welfare of poor		
Yes	12	12.00
No	88	88.00
Total	100	100.00
Invested activities		
Mobile fund for goat production	08	66.67
Rs.100 for vegetable farming	04	33.33
Total	12	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2005.

Figure 6: **Fund Mobilization**



Sharing of benefits from the CF, especially income was another aspect where poor and marginalized members did not benefit significantly. The money that was generated by selling the forest products was mostly spent on activities related to infrastructure building and community development, besides spending on forest development activities. Other most common activities that they have invested in were donation to schools, drinking water, gravelling of local roads, construction of culverts etc. The poorer families in the community could not draw significant benefit from all these investments made from the income of the CF.

Chapter - Five

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This concluding chapter summarizes the findings that are derived from the present study regarding CF and its output at FUG level. Recommendations are forwarded on the basis of findings, conclusion and observations. The key area for further research/studies into various aspects of CF is also outlined.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study was conducted in the Dang district of Nepal. The general objective of the study was to identify and analyze the users' participation and distribution of community forestry benefits of Sunpur range post, Dang district. Specifically, the study aimed at (i) assessing the extent to which the user groups participated in planning and implementation of the community forestry programme; and (ii) analyzing the distribution of community forestry benefits within the user groups.

One hundred FUG members were selected randomly from the 10 FUGs in two VDCs. Survey method was used to collect information through one set of pre-tested questionnaires. Some of the information was collected by reviewing the OPs, meeting minutes and progress reports and field observation of the selected FUGs. The data collection was conducted in February and March 2005.

5.1.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

The majority of the household respondents were male and belonged to the middle age group. Predominantly, respondents were married. The major occupation of the respondents was farming. The large majority of the respondents belonged to medium-sized family with 5 to 8 members. Most of the respondents were literate through

either formal or non-formal education and had medium-sized farm (less than 1 hectare).

5.1.2 Users' Participation in CF Activities

Participation in this study refers to the involvement of forest users in various activities of the community forestry program such as formation of user groups, preparation and implementation of operational plans, and on-going management and benefit sharing.

5.1.2.1 Participation in FUG Formation and OP Preparation

The majority of the respondents were aware of the forest user-group and 52 percent of them attended in the process of FUG formation. The result showed that participation of the users in different activities of FUG formation process could not include a wider mass. Sixty percent of the respondents were aware about their OPs. Nearly half (51 percent) of the respondents participated in the preparation of OPs and took part in the discussions, field survey, and preparation of rules and regulations during the preparation of OPs. The majority of the respondents perceived that they were aware of the constitution of CFUGs. However, majority of them were not aware regarding some of the specific provisions of OPs.

The results clearly indicated that FUG formation process could not include a wider mass. Similarly, a significant number of the users did not participate in the preparation of OPs. The finding also revealed that users did not care much about the provisions of OPs showing that they were much concerned about what they get from their CFs rather than the management aspects of the OPs. The results suggest that the programme implementers should focus more on social mobilization aspect and need to ensure the wider participation in the development of OPs during the CF handing over process in the area. Social mobilization is a process of empowering communities

for social change. It is, in fact, a capacity building process through which groups within a community plan, carry out, and evaluate activities on a participatory and sustained basis to meet their needs and to improve their standard of living. Wider participation in all phases of community - based activities is essential in order to achieve sustainable socio-economic development.

5.1.2.2 Participation in Implementation of OPs

The majority of the respondents participated in the implementation of OPs. The activities in which the respondents participated in were implementing rules and regulation of forest protection; plantation establishment, plantation protection, weeding, pruning, thinning, natural regeneration management, fire line construction/maintenance, and timber stand improvement. Participation in thinning and pruning was found to be high as compared to other management activities. In most of the user-groups in the area, pruning and thinning activities were the major source of firewood collection and distribution. The result indicates that silvicultural operations are carried out to derive the products from the forest rather than for the improvement of the forest condition.

5.1.2.3 Participation in On-going Management

Majority of the respondents knew that their OP was amended while a considerable number did not know whether the OP was amended or not. Likewise, some users were not consulted in the amendment process. Major reasons for non-consultation were as committee neglected Dalit, women and Illiterates, there were conflicts with executives, Committee thinks there was no need of voice of users, and Committee neglected students and children. The responses showed that FUCs were not unbiased

in many instances and the users' participation was not satisfactory in OPs amendments.

The majority of the respondents attended the FUG meetings 1 to 5 times a year. Some of the users were not well aware about the importance of the FUG meetings.

Regarding the participation in decision-making, the majority of the respondents participated in the decision-making process. The majority of the respondents perceive that their participation was not active. The finding indicate that committee members dominate the decision making process and the users' voices were partially heard.

The majority of the respondents perceive that the majority takes the decisions. About one fourth of the decisions were taken as guided by FUC and only about one fifth decision was made by consensus. The result indicate that committee members dominate the decision making process. Such situation could lead to the formation of autocratic institutions where committee members monopolize the decision making process.

5.1.3 Distribution of Benefits from CF

Forest cover increased considerably after it was handed over to the users. Improved forest condition was attributed to the protection provided by the villagers. At the same time, the users planted trees and managed natural regeneration to improve the forest condition. Almost all respondents were getting the benefits from their community forests. Fuelwood followed by fodder and leaf litter were the major products that users were getting from their community forests.

Regarding the fulfillment of basic forest product needs the result shows that community forests were not able to meet the timber demand of the users as the handed over forests either were too small in area or there was not enough timber to meet the demand of the users. The finding demands the management of CF to meet

the basic forest product needs of the users. Promotion of agroforestry and private forestry program is essential to reduce the pressure on community forests for supplying timber and fuelwood.

The majority of the respondents expressed that they were not getting a fair share of forest products due to elite dominance and auction of timber. The finding indicates the low influence of poor users in decision-making process and / or probably OPs could not include the concerns of the poor users.

5.1.3.1 Benefit-sharing System

The majority of the respondents perceived that the benefit sharing system is elite biased. About one third of the respondents expressed that it was the equal distribution to each household. The result shows that there is an opportunity to work for equitable distribution system. Most of the decisions were taken either by committee or the chairpersons of the CFs. The result shows that FUCs were more powerful than the assembly in making decisions on distribution of forest products.

The result also revealed that rich and middle groups get more benefits than poorer households in CF programme.

It was observed that the distribution system of forest products in some FUGs where the forest products was sufficient to meet the demand of the users' was very simple: a user who needed a product had to buy it by paying its specified price. But most of the groups have the provision of bidding an auction to buy the timber. One of the critical problems in this system of distribution is the inability of the poor users to pay for the products that they need. This issue demands an immediate solution to make the CF programme to benefit the poorer section of the community in real sense.

5.1.4 Fund Generation, Management and Mobilization

A variety of forest products were collected; used or sold by CFUGs and generate fund. The identified sources of income were selling of timber, fuelwood, medicinal and aromatic plants (only healers are using), other NTFPs, membership/entry fee, grant from other institutions such as DFO, LFP etc., fines and others. The source of income also included the selling of stone from the forest area that is legally prohibited. The concerned authorities need to monitor and stop such activities before it is too late to correct such illegal activities.

The majority of the respondents expressed that expenditures were presented in their assemblies but most of them were not able to know the details of the expenditures. The result also shows that majority of the respondents did not know the total amount of the CF fund, which demands a transparent account keeping system and proper public auditing of CFUG fund.

The expenditure was mainly on watchman's salary, forest management training, fencing, buying seeds and plants, fencing, nursery/plantation establishment, buying harvesting equipment, thinning and pruning, etc. Most of the fund was spent on forest watcher salary in the name of forest development. There is also a scope for minimizing the spending in unproductive activities like stationery, buildings, tea/snacks, allowances, etc.

Mobilization of fund in community development was the major activity prioritized by the users. This is one of the highly demanded activities in the community as it is directly linked with the welfare of the community. CF has also been a major contributor to community infrastructure development

The finding shows that fund mobilization for income generation activities is low in priority than rural infrastructure and CFUGs administration.

Sharing of benefits from the CF, especially income was another aspect where poor and marginalized members did not benefit significantly. The money that was generated by selling the forest products was mostly spent on activities related to infrastructure building and community development. Other most common activities that they have invested in were donation to schools, drinking water, gravelling of local roads and construction of culverts. The poorer households in the community could not draw significant benefit from all these investments made from the income of the CF.

5.2 Conclusions

Forest user-groups participate in various community forestry activities. Increased participation on planning, implementation, on going management and benefit sharing empower the users and also has a positive effect on the adoption of community forestry policy and continuity of the program.

The success of the community forestry depends upon the proper implementation of the community forest OPs. Community Forests has provided tangible benefits to rural communities with easy access to rural communities. However, equitable distribution of forest products has not been practiced because of less involvement of poor, women and dalit in decision-making.

Community forests are generating substantial amounts of forest products and income. There is also a substantial potential for generating income from the management of community forests. These funds can be better utilized to benefit the poor and marginal groups.

Transparency of fund management is a major concern for the majority of forest users. Mobilization of fund in community development was the major activity prioritized by the users. This is one of the highly demanded activities in the community as it is

directly linked with the welfare of the community. CF has also been a major contributor to community infrastructure development. Besides rural infrastructure development, CF has also supported its users in case of illness, literacy classes, social mobilization and so on.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, conclusions and observations, the following recommendations are forwarded:

5.3.1 Recommendations for Program Implementers

The program implementers need to consider the following points:

- Although the existing Forest Act has a provision to spend 25% of the income in forest development activities, there is not a clear-cut menu of the activities. There is a need to have clear policy guide in this regard and to orient the users towards the forest management activities.
- Program implementers should focus more on social mobilization aspect and need to ensure the wider participation in the development of OPs during the CF handing over process.
- The result indicates that silvicultural operations are carried out to derive the products from the forest rather than for the improvement of the forest condition. Program implementers should encourage the users to implement the provisions related to silvicultural operations to improve the forest condition.
- The source of income also included the selling of stone from the forest area that is legally prohibited. The concerned authorities need to monitor and stop such activities before it is too late to correct such illegal activities.

- Planners, implementers and other concerned stakeholders should work on the issues of equitable distribution of forest products within the FUG, develop a mechanism to evaluate the decisions made by the users, and make the groups aware about the equitable distribution of forest product.
- Promotion of agro-forestry and private forestry programme is recommended along with the CF program to reduce pressure on community forests for supplying basic forest products.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Forest User Groups

FUGs need to consider the following points:

- FUGs should work for the wider participation of the users in all CF activities.
- The finding shows that fund mobilization for income generation activities is low in priority than rural infrastructure and CFUGs administration. Efforts should be made for investment of the fund for income generation opportunities. At the same time, the interest rate should be minimum for the poorer households.
- FUC members should not dominate the decision making process. All decisions should be reached by consensus after discussion for the smooth implementation of the CF program. FUGs need to work on to improve the influence of poor users in decision-making process.
- The trend of distribution of forest products especially the timber on the basis of auction shows the inability of the poor users to pay for the products that they need. This issue should be solved immediately to make the CF programme to benefit the poorer section of the community in real sense.
- Transparent accounting system and public auditing is recommended to reduce the chance to make personal gains for elites and some special groups.

- Users should give the attention in natural regeneration management and fire line Construction/maintenance following the following the provisions of OP for the sustainable development of their CF.
- FUGs should work on equitable distribution of community forestry benefits.
- FUGs should invest to establish the nursery for easy access of different seedlings for plating in private land of the users to reduce the pressure on CF for basic forest products.
- The FUCs should not focus in fines for users to show the higher participation in General Assembly but they should make them aware to realize the importance of user's participation in meetings.
- The committee members should not dominate the decision-making process. FUCs should create an environment to hear the voice of the poor, women, and marginalized group. Domination by committee members could reach to the formation of autocracy institution.

5.3.3 Recommendation for Further Research

- Impact of community forestry in poverty reduction.
- Income generating opportunities in community forests.
- Mobilisation of FUG fund for community development activities.
- Gender and equity issues in community forestry.
- The study of soil conservation due to community forest management in sub watershed.

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Annex - One

User- participation and Benefit-sharing in Community Forestry around Sunpur in Dang, Nepal

Questionnaire for Forest User Group members

Interviewer: _____ Date of interview: _____

1: Respondent No. _____

2: Respondent's name (optional) _____

3: Name of Forest User Group _____

4: Municipality/VDC _____

Basic Information

Please answer the following questions by placing a check (√) sign or the appropriate answers.

5: Age (Last birthday) _____ (years)

6: Sex ⊃Male ⊃Female

7: Civil status ⊃Married ⊃Single ⊃Widow/er

8: Ethnic origin _____

9: Major occupation _____

10: Other occupations _____

11: Household size (no. of family members) _____ persons
No. of children _____

12: Educational attainment

⊃Informal education ⊃ Primary ⊃Lower secondary ⊃ Secondary ⊃ College education

No. of children (if any) attending School _____

13: Farm size (at present) _____Bigha (1ha = 1.5 Bigha)

Participation

14: Planning

14 a: Are you aware of Forest User Group?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

14 b: Did you participate during the formation of Forest User Group?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If yes, what was your participation?

⊃Attendance in the meeting ⊃selecting the executive committee

⊃Discussion ⊃All of the above ⊃ others _____

14 c: Are you aware of a prepared forest operational plan for your community forest?

⊃ Yes ⊃No

If yes, did you participate in the preparation of the plan?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If yes, what was your participation in the preparation of the plan?

⊃Discussion ⊃Field survey

⊃Preparation of rules and regulations

⊃All of the above ⊃Others _____

If no, Why?

⊃ Was not aware of it ⊃Did not consider it important

⊃ Did not have time ⊃Others _____

14d: Are you aware about the content of constitution of your user group?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, 1. Who is the chairperson of your FUG? _____

2. Specify the total number of members in your group _____

3. Specify the number of FUC members _____

4. Specify your any two rights, roles and responsibilities as per the constitution of your CF.

Rights _____

Roles _____

Responsibilities _____

14 e: Are you aware about the content of your operational plan?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, 1. What is the prescribed month for collection of charcoal from your CF?_

2. Specify the area of your community forest _____ ha

3. Specify the number of blocks in your community forest _____

4. Specify the price of one head load of firewood in your OP Rs. _____

15. Implementation

15.a Did you participate in the implementation of operational plan?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If yes, what was your participation in the implementation of operational plan?

⊃ Forest protection ⊃ Seedling production

⊃ Plantation establishment ⊃ Weeding ⊃ Pruning ⊃Thinning ⊃ Natural regeneration management ⊃Timber stand improvement ⊃ Fire line construction/maintenance ⊃ Others (specify) _____

If no, why?

⊃Was not aware of it ⊃Did not consider it important

⊃Others (specify) _____

15.b Do you have a plantation in your community forest?

⊃Yes ⊃ No (if no, skip to 16)

If yes, did you participate in afforestation work such as clearing the site, pitting, seedling transportation, and planting?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If no, why?

⊃Was not aware of it ⊃Did not consider it important

⊃Did not have time ⊃Others _____

15.cDid you participate in the protection of the plantation?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If yes, what was your participation in the protection of the plantation?

⊃Financial/physical contribution

⊃Self participation ⊃others _____

If no, why?

⊃Plantation site far away ⊃Protected by watcher

⊃ FUC responsible for protection

⊃Others _____

16. Ongoing management

16.a Has your group amended the operational plan?

⊃Yes ⊃No

16 b: Were you consulted during the amendment process?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If no, why? _____

16 c: Are you aware of the user group's meeting (FUG general assembly) ?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, do you participate in such (forest user group’s) meetings?

⊃Yes ⊃ No

If yes, how often in a year? _____ times.

If no, why?

⊃It is user committee's job ⊃Do not care about it

⊃ Was not informed on time ⊃Others _____

If yes, did you get opportunity to express your concerns in those meetings?

⊃ No ⊃ Little ⊃ Full

If yes, was there enough time available for discussion and questioning?

⊃ No ⊃ Little ⊃ Enough

16 d: Do you participate in decision-making process of FUG meetings?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, how do you rate your participation?

⊃ Inactive (just showing the presence)

⊃ Moderate active ⊃ Active

If inactive Participation, why?

⊃ It is user committee's job ⊃ Nobody encouraged to talk on

⊃ Do not care about it ⊃ Others ____

16 e: Who makes decision in your FUG meetings?

⊃ Do not know ⊃ Users' assembly ⊃ Committee

⊃ Chair person ⊃ Some elites

16 f : Is your voice heard in decision-making?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, how do you judge that your voice is heard?

⊃ Fully heard ⊃ Partially heard

If no, why? _____

16 g : What is the decision making process in your FUG meetings?

⊃ By consensus ⊃ By majority ⊃ As guided by FUC ⊃ By some special group (rich, ethnic group etc) ⊃ Others (specify) __

Benefit Sharing

17: Flow and distribution of benefits from CF (resource outcomes)

17 a: Is there any change in forest condition after handing over as CF?

⊃ Don't know ⊃ Deteriorated ⊃Moderately improved

⊃ Improved significantly

17 b: Have you been getting forest products from your community forest?

⊃Yes ⊃No

If yes, what are those products?

⊃ Timber ⊃Fuel wood ⊃Poles

⊃Fodder ⊃Bedding material for livestock ⊃Non-timber products ⊃Others (specify) _____

17 c: Did the CF fulfill your basic needs for forest products?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If no, why?

⊃ Forest area too small ⊃ Forest resources are small

⊃ There are undesired species planted

⊃ Undesired species are naturally growing up?

⊃ Others (specify) _____

17 d: Do you think you are getting forest products as per your need?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If no, why?

⊃Only influential people get them

⊃Price is high ⊃ Cannot bid an auction

⊃ Do not care ⊃Others _____

What do you think about your access to forest products?

⊃ Increased ⊃ Reduced

If reduced, Why? _____

17 e: What is the benefit sharing system in your CF?

⊃ Equitable ⊃ Equal ⊃ Elite biased

⊃ Individual plot ⊃ Land allocation ⊃ Other (specify) _____

17 f : Who decides on how to distribute the products from your CF?

⊃ Do not know ⊃ Chairperson ⊃ Some elites

⊃ Assembly ⊃ FUC ⊃Others (Specify)_____

17 g: Is there any exemption on charge for timber, fuelwood and other products to poorer users in your FUG?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

17 h: Who is getting more benefit from CF?

⊃ Rich ⊃ Middle class ⊃ Poor

⊃ Landless ⊃ All are getting equal benefits

How? _____

18: Fund development: fund generation, management and mobilization

18 a: Are you aware of FUG fund?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, what are the sources of income of your CFUG fund?

⊃ Sell of timber ⊃ Sell of fuelwood ⊃ Sell of Jadibuti

⊃ Sell of other NTFPs ⊃ Membership fee ⊃ Grant from other agencies

⊃ Fines ⊃Others (Specify) _____

If yes, do you know the balance?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

18 b: Who decides how the FUG fund is to be spent on different activities?

⊃ Do not know ⊃ FUG assembly ⊃ FUC

⊃ Chairperson ⊃ Some elites

⊃ Others _____

18 c: Where is the CF fund deposited?

⊃ Bank ⊃ Both (Bank and UCM)

⊃ with UCM ⊃ Invested as loan

⊃ Other _____

18 d: Do you know who operates the FUG account?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

18 e: Did your FUG's general assembly discuss about the expenditure of FUG fund?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

18 f: What is the area of investment of FUG fund?

⊃ No idea ⊃ Forest development

⊃ Community infrastructure development (CID) ⊃ Tea, snacks

⊃ House hold infrastructure ⊃ Credit, loan ⊃ Meeting allowances

⊃ Allowances for forestry staff ⊃Trainings for institutional development

⊃ Stationary (office expenses) ⊃ Others _____

What is the priority area of investment of FUG fund?

⊃ Community infrastructure development ⊃ House hold infrastructure ⊃ Forest development ⊃ Institutional development

If invested in forest development, what are those activities?

⊃ Watcher's salary ⊃ Nursery/plantation establishment ⊃Fencing

⊃ Improved tools purchasing ⊃ Forest management trainings ⊃Others_

If invested in CID, what are those items?

⊃ Schools ⊃ Trails ⊃ Culverts ⊃ Drinking water

⊃ Irrigation ⊃ Electrification/telephone ⊃ Others _____

18 g: Do you think that village infrastructure is improved under FUG support?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, what was the area of improvement?

⊃ Village trail ⊃ Kulo ⊃ Drinking water ⊃ School ⊃Temple

⊃ Health post ⊃ Chautaro ⊃ Community building ⊃Others __

18 h: Is there any provision of loan for income generating activities?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, what are the activities supported by FUG?

⊃ Vegetable production ⊃ Small livestock rising

⊃ Small business ⊃ Others_____

If yes, what is the rate of interest?

⊃ < 5% ⊃ 5-10% ⊃ 18% ⊃ 24% ⊃ 36%

18 i: Is the FUG fund invested for the welfare of poor?

⊃ Yes ⊃ No

If yes, on what purpose? _____

19 Other comments regarding the CF program.

_____

Thank you

Annex - Two

Comments regarding the CF program

The following table presents the comments of the respondents.

Comments	Respondents (Multiple Responses) Number(f)	Remarks
There should be the peace in the country	51	
Forest product should get the market	29	
New plants should be available	80	
Technician should check the soil of artificial forest	10	
Income generation activity should be Identified to get more benefit	81	
Poverty, unemployment and illiteracy should be excluded in the user groups	25	
Awareness program should be available from the other organization.	80	
Timber should be available in cheap just like the fuel wood and fodder.	45	

Annex - Three

Photographs

P.1: Settlement of User Groups Around the Sunpur Range Post

P.2: User groups carrying fuelwood and leaf litter from their CF

P.3: User groups getting fund from bee grazers

P.4: The Researcher taking an interview with the respondent of CF