Making community forest management active and equitable: conceptual framework and lessons from Nepal mid-hills

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Enhancing livelihoods and food security from agroforestry and community forestry in Nepal
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Many partners

University of Adelaide

University of New South Wales

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF Bogor Indonesia)

International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Nepal)

Forest Action Nepal

Nepal Agroforestry Foundation

SEARCH-Nepal

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Presentation overview

Paper aim:

present a conceptual framework for active and equitable community forest management and suggests pathways to make it active and equitable based on lessons from Nepal mid-hills

1. Context of active and equitable community forest management
2. Conceptual framework
3. Lessons from Nepal mid-hills
   a) Reasons for passive and inequitable community forest management
   b) Pathways for active and equitable forest management
4. Concluding comments
1. CONTEXT

Environmental degradation

Millennium development goals

Pic of degraded forest

Pic of forest rehabilitation

Pic of participatory forest management

Pic of silviculture practice + CFEs

Paradigm shift in FM from state-centred to people controlled FM

- through policies and institutional arrangements - CF

Forest peoples have

- done reforestation
- protected forest
- sustainably used forest

*forest people remained poor*
Nepal community forestry context

- More than 3 decades of community forestry (CF)
- Nepal’s CF is widely acclaimed as one of the best examples of the successful participatory and decentralised forest management (Springate-Baginski et al 2003, Pokharel et al, 2007, Dahal and Chapagain 2008).
- CF in Nepal is successful in forest protection but improving livelihood and food security through CF remained a challenge
- Reason: CF management is inactive and inequitable
What is active CFM? What is equitable

- **Active forest management** implies the application of ‘hybrid’ approach to forest harvesting practices and silviculture treatments are scientifically informed and locally accepted, meeting ecological, socio-cultural and economic goals.
- **Equity** = ‘fairness’ (procedural and distributional)
- Philosophical proposition of fairness
  - Equal opportunity
  - Merit-based compensation
  - Priority to the poor
Enhancing livelihoods and food security from agroforestry and community forestry in Nepal

2. Conceptual Framework

Forest Policy 2015 and legal and regulatory framework

- Forest bureaucracy and regional market

Planning and management process at community level

- Quality, quantity and diversity of forest products and services defines marketable products
- Market and value-adding activities defines silviculture practice
- Local planning and governance processes defines enterprise sustainability
- Available resource defines level of forestry planning
- Sets scale of timber enterprise

Management plan determines silviculture operations

Active and equitable forest management involves

- Inclusion of local knowledge on forest use and science-based silviculture practice
- Improving forestry value chain and markets
- Inclusive forest planning

Improves livelihood and food security

- Social and economic diversity of households having differential forest needs and abilities
- Alleviates poverty
- Allocates labour
Methodology

• Participatory Action Research
  – Silviculture demonstration and trials plots
  – CF Operational plan revisions
  – Trialling innovations for market-responsive institutions

• Data collection methods
  – Key informant interviews
  – Field observation/journals (ethnography)
  – Focus group discussions
  – Archival of records
  – Literature review (including grey literature)
  – Tree measurements
Map of Nepal showing the districts and village development committees where EnLiFT Project is being implemented
Reasons for inactive and inequitable forest management

- Conservation and forest protection ethos in Nepal
- Complex regulatory requirements for forest products harvest and marketing
- Lack of silviculture skills
- Poor timber value chain and lack of entrepreneurial skills
- Elite capture, local politics and social discrimination

Manifestations of conservative ethos

- subsistence-based timber harvest
- annual allowable cut – 50% of the annual growth (grossly underestimated)
- lack of forestry-based enterprises
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