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Ministry of Forests and
Environment Government of Nepal

Theories and practices of community - based planning and management of natural resources

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Executive Summary

Planning remained a task of the experts and centralized bureaucracy until the mid-twentieth century. This process was also true in the management of natural resources, which witnessed a massive surge of deforestation, encroachment and forest degradation in Nepal. The centralized approaches failed to recognize the historically nurtured relationships between people and natural resources. Bottom-up approach of planning and policy reform gradually received an attention with the emergence of community-based natural resource management in the global south. A series of bottom-up or participatory planning approaches are being applied and tested in various contexts such as participatory rural appraisal, bottom-up planning, consultative processes, integrated land-use planning, scenario-based planning, social learning process, etc.

Communicative turn of planning and policy processes have been evolved over the past couple of decades in the form of planning studio, adaptive collaborative management and deliberative planning. The key to these approaches is to provide greater recognition of customary and local authorities, indigenous territorial rights, and women's rights. The participatory planning capitalises perspectives and knowledge of local communities, legislatures, bureaucrats, experts in the field and any other relevant actors.

The literature on planning theory has been evolving fast, and it would be worth taking stock of the existing knowledge around planning theories that could inform our attempt of synchronising planning processes of community forestry and local governments.

We primarily use planning studio and deliberative planning approaches in designing a more inclusive and iterative process of planning that integrates research and analysis with inclusive-democratic processes of planning and decision making.

Introduction

In the past few decades, the global South has witnessed the surge of planning and policy reform in natural resource management (NRM) including forestry as most of the developing countries have recognised the customary authorities and indigenous practices of forest conservation and use. Planning theories and practice have evolved from the so-called blueprint planning in which professional experts controlled the ways problems were identified, defined and solutions proposed, to the communicative turn in planning practice in which divergent voices have been deliberated for identifying negotiated problems and solutions. While planning theories and practice have evolved further in the age of globalisation and digitisation, communicative planning remains, despite various criticisms, one of the most widely used ideals for developing plans of the government, communities and business enterprises around the world today.

The communicative turn in planning thought influenced a number of governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America to have reformed their land and forestry planning approach to provide greater recognition of customary and local authorities, indigenous territorial rights, and women's rights (Larson, 2010: p2, Larson et al., 2010b). The reforms were made possible because of the range of reasons including limited capacity of the government authorities and private sector in conserving forests and generating economic benefits, growing awareness among local people and other actors on their roles and rights over forest resources and changing political landscape for greater decision-making space for local communities and non-state actors. Local initiatives and institutions of governing forest during the pre-centralisation stages also helped create space for locally devolved forest management (Gilmour, 1990).

One of the major changes are reflected through decentralization and devolution in forestry sector, that is characterised by some degree of transfer of rights and responsibilities away from the centralised forest authorities to customary authorities, local resource users or local governments (Larson and Soto, 2008). Depending on who receives the ultimate rights and authority of forest governance and to what extent the rights over resources are shared among government forestry agencies, local communities, local governments and private sectors, the forest reforms can be defined as de-concentration, decentralization and devolution (Knox and Meinzen-Dick, 2000). Local people have long nurtured natural resources to support their livelihoods, but the state started alienating the people from these resources in more recent periods of the history. The process of centralisation evolved when states started to intervene by consolidating the central government's authority over the management of natural resources as well as encouraging the private sector in order to generate revenue, and satisfy the growing market demand for the resources.

The centralized approaches failed to recognize the historically nurtured relationships between people and natural resources; in fact, people were considered a threat to conservation until the 1970s (Fisher et al., 2005). By capitalising on the indigenous institutions and practices of resource management, community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) has evolved as an effective, or at least popular, approach to conservation and development (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991, Fisher, 2000). Recent history of

natural resource planning and governance seeks to increase space for communities, government, civil society and market actors in natural resource management. The shift in policies and practices in developing countries have shown promise for democratic decision making (Vedeld, 2003). Until the 1970s, environmental and natural resource policies and planning promoted 'experts' led centralized approaches to development. Environmental conservation, natural resource management and overall development paradigm endorsed that underdevelopment is caused by a lack of local knowledge, capacity and resources, and that development should be defined from above. In this process customary tenure arrangements were ignored or penalised. The top-down approach to development was later criticized for undermining local practices and wisdom on resource management.

The purpose of this report is to review literature on planning theory and practice as relevant to participatory natural resource planning and management. In so doing, it focuses on reviewing the literature related to Nepal's community forestry planning and management and identify some existing and emerging areas for further research in EnLiFT2. By nature, and necessity, this report enables developing a methodological approach, in the form of a Planning Studio, by which planning and governance issues and opportunities at the local community level can be identified and deliberated among the stakeholders, with a purpose of exploring a new planning practice that helps to generate community-based solutions to the problems of equity, justice and environmental sustainability.

Planning Theories and Practice: A Conceptual Overview

Planning as a field of study and as a systematic response to solve problems has developed over time. From the emergence of the City Beautiful Movement in the 1930s, the conceptions of planning was about making sure of the orderly society by the application of technical know-how. The rise of the blueprint or comprehensive planning approach was about decision-making by professionals often through elections. In this planning model professional experts were employed by the government and developed the plans as if they were an "omniscient ruler" ...without interference or question (Hall, 1992, p. 61). In the early 1960s blueprint planning was challenged by the system or synoptic model of planning (Faludi, 1973; McLoughlin, 1969). The planning models in this approach were actually a modified form of rational comprehensive planning models but they were remarkable for the institutionalisation of public comment and the inclusion of actors from outside of the formal policy making arena. In this planning model, society was assumed as a homogeneous entity, and the policies made under such practice were parochial and only required to legitimise the planning goals (Hall, 1983; Lane, 2005).

Peter Hall identified 1965-1980 as the crucial period for planning practice which he named "City Grass Rooted" (Hall, 1992). The demand of community participation in the form of advocacy planning, which is based on grass roots involvement, was first marked. Advocacy planning offered an important change for community participation from traditional planning to the pluralistic nature of planning (Davidoff, 1965). In the advocacy planning system, planners would work as advocates in the interest of less articulate, under-represented groups as lawyers represent a client.

It was the ‘communicative turn’ in urban planning, or some such as John Forester would imply it as ‘deliberative turn’ in planning that started placing local communities and divergent voices in the centre. In the late 1980s onwards, communicative planning theories emerged when participation took its place as a central ideology (Forester, 1987; Healy, 2005; Innes, 1996). The emphasis of planning practice was on the communication, interaction and deliberation of various stakeholders to which the planning is closely related. Drawing on Habermas’ (1987) theory of communicative action, a body of theoretical knowledge developed on how to connect the systemic side of human life and the value-driven side of human introspection—the latter being defined as the “life world”. Prominent writers in this field were Healey (1988, 2006) and Forester (1989) who attempted to interpret and apply communicative action theory to planning decision-making focusing on ways that planning decisions can better account for the language of practical conversation and communication. Its early conception can be traced back to works of Friedmann in 1970s (1973, 1987).

Friedmann was one of the pioneers who introduced two-way communication in planning practice, instead of traditional one-way communication between planners and clients. He emphasised dialogue, which is combined with learning, and ‘transactive’ planning and which turns knowledge into action. According to him, if dialogues are conducted in such a way to accept other’s views, fused with moral judgment, thinking, shared interest, commitment and sympathy, ways of complete communication, maintain reciprocity and mutual obligation, people would accept decisions through dialogue, which ultimately will lead to transactive planning (Friedmann, 1973). Though he wrote of the inequality between client and planner when addressing the issue of the communication gap, there is no clear indication of how to overcome it. His ideas were further developed in Forester, Healy and Innes’s works. Communicative planning theories can be seen from three dimensions:

- a) Planning as a power struggle process (e.g., Forester, 1993)
- b) Planning as a collaborative process (e.g., Healy, 1992; 1998); and
- c) Planning as a consensus building process (e.g., Innes, 1996).

Planning as a power struggle process

John Forester, one of the prominent contemporary planning scholars who was inspired by the German Philosopher Habermas’s concepts of “communicative action”, argued for the “ideal speech situation” and the “force of better argument” (Habermas, 1983, 1985, 1987). Habermas summarised communicative action as:

... the conviction that a humane collective life depends on the valuable forms of innovation-bearing, reciprocal and unforcedly egalitarian everyday communication (Habermas, 1985, p. 82).

An ideal speech situation is a set of general and unavoidable communicative assumptions which a subject capable of speech and action must make every time he or she wishes to participate seriously in argumentation (Habermas, 1985). The simplified form of Habermas’ hypothesis is that in absence of coercion the force of better argument will prevail. Introducing this idea in planning theory and practice, Forester emphasised the practical arts of negotiation and mediation in planning practice (Forester, 1989). To make possible

democratic deliberation he argues for some normative pre-requisites. Forester offered a number of diagnostic questions regarding the comprehensibility, sincerity, legitimacy and truthfulness of planners speaking when they communicate with stakeholders or clients in planning practices to insure that they are effective in their communicative action and argumentation in the face of power. He warned against the effects of “distorted information” which can further boost the power differences and argued that planners, by proper use of information, can shift power relations. Marginalised people can also be empowered through democratic planning processes (Forester, 1989).

Forester analysed the effects of political and social influence on social action and showed how planners can modify the exertion of political power in planning processes. He demonstrated in conflicting situations, how city planners can use a number of strategies to bring together the developers and the neighbourhood people to achieve an optimum planning outcome (Forester, 1987). These are: professionally judging of appropriate facts, anticipating concerns well before open conflict, encouraging clients to meet, probing and advising both sides, acting as a mediator, acting as or hiring negotiator or advisor and mediator. He not only emphasised the importance of planners’ skill of speaking and writing comprehensively, sincerely and legitimately but also the planner’s attention towards the context of the interaction (Forester, 1996) and anticipating pressure (Forester, 1996).

Forester particularly emphasised planners’ skilful mediation (Forester, 2006). He argued that public deliberation should consist of three interlinked processes of dialogue, debate and negotiation which require promotion through deliberative practices of facilitating, moderating and mediating (Forester, 2008). In a similar way, Sager (1994) used Habermas’ critical theory of communicative action to examine how mainstream planning theories are related to the concept of power and conflict (Sager, 1994). He showed that a critical communicative perspective provides an informative lens to view these old debates in a new way.

Forester suggested a number of diagnostic questions for successful negotiation and mediation among planner to planners or planner to politicians or to planning stakeholders. In regard to communication with community groups, given their heterogeneity and limited capacity, the critical question is whether and to what extent this approach of using practical arts of negotiation and mediation is compatible today. Though Forester suggested skills for planners to use in the conflicting situation of a highly capitalist society, it is time to rethink their suitability in the context of current globalisation and economic neo-classicism. The suggested strategies to address the pre-existing power imbalance depend mainly on the planner’s significant professional discretion rather than involving weaker parties in the power sharing process. As Huxley (2000) pointed out, communicative planning theory considers planners to be capable of reflecting on their own framing in a knowledge network, their rationality, and their power as well as being able to explore that of others. But she questioned the objectivity of planning as well as the planner’s role as a critical friend in practice because planning is contextualised in its institutional, administrative/legal and discursive framework.

Planning as a deliberative/ collaborative process

Forester's work of developing theories from a planner's practical day's experience inspired others, like Patsy Healey. Her article "A Planner's Day" showed how planners' ways of communication are of utmost importance. By analysing detailed stories of practitioners she elaborated on how to make planners' expertise, skill and resources available and transparent to clients and the community they serve (Healy, 1992). She emphasised not only planners' choice in picking the right option but also the institutional surroundings which compel the planner to act with an "honest, open and reasoning approach". The importance of ethical conduct and the need for further studies on ethical dimensions were also highlighted (Healy, 1992). However, the study mainly deals with relations between planner and politicians or clients, not between planners and the individual community members or the suburban local people. Here, the need for institutionalisation of accountability measures is highlighted, along with providing information (which should be transparent, open and not distorted) and about the institutional surroundings, which should enable planners to act in a deliberative, democratic way.

Healy (1998; 1999; 2005) further refined communicative planning theory in relation to its societal and institutional capacity. Healey defines institutional capacity as a combination of social, intellectual and political capital. As this capital grows and spreads through collaboration and networks, the "civic capacity" of a society will grow and participants will be more confident in their ability and competencies to solve their problems (Healy, 2005, p. 428). (Healy, 1999, p. 428) She offered an institutional approach to collaborative planning, outlining, in detail, from the starting of collaboration, such as taking initiatives or selecting stakeholders, then how to engage in discussion, which style to follow, what kind of language to use, how to build trust through interaction, the translation of jumbles, sorting ideas, how to create a discourse or how to convert discourse to policy and finally, how to monitor or appeal.

Although the process follows every step of the conventional rational planning process; for example, information collection, analysis, evaluation, choice of strategy and monitoring; the difference is in the process being parallel rather than sequential and based on interactive actions (Healy, 1999; 2005). To act against domination in discussion or in dialogue she continuously referred to Habermas and Forester's communicative ethics. However, her suggested institutional approach requires the long-term engagement of stakeholders to build trust and networks. This can be difficult in some cases where there are limited resources and time constraints. It is also difficult to guarantee participant's commitment particularly for community participation, where drop-outs and community's apathy are the problems. However, collaborative planning is predominantly based upon the belief of consensus building, as explained by Innes (1996).

Planning as a consensus building process

Judith Innes (1995) and her associates claimed, “communicative action” and “interactive practice” as an “emerging paradigm” of planning theory (also see Hillier and Healy, 2008, p. 118). Innes argued that exercising “communicative rationality” in planning could assist planners in their dilemma with instrumental rationality or in answering many unanswered questions. She emphasised that by cautiously creating a process of social interaction, where the planner’s role will be to guide and facilitate, then social information can be turned into knowledge and knowledge into action. In collaborative planning stakeholders apply a variety of methods to “play” with the discourses, which might turn into “collaborative tinkering”, which is consensus building (Innes and Booher, 1999a; 1999b; Susskind, McKearn and Thomas, 1999). It has more discretion than scientific inquiry.

Criticising Forester’s views on communicative action, Innes questioned about the planner’s role in drawing attention in dialogue or how much to emphasise or what the structure is. She suggested communicative rationality to be integrated into planning through a deliberative process but indicated the need for further research on institutionalism and ethics. Innes (1996) advances the concept of consensus building in her seminal article with equality in the collaborative process. She argued that all types of stakeholders—public agencies, powerful private interests and disadvantaged citizens—are supposedly treated equally within the process of collaborative decision making where actors reciprocally share knowledge and meanings and have the potential to create a consensus building process (Innes, 1996).

In her further explanation of consensus building, Innes and Booher (1999a) described it as a deliberative process which begins with something like storytelling, a dialogue where all stakeholders play their own roles and, through exploring the discussions, laws and practice, slowly participants reach a decision which is both satisfactory to all and spontaneous. Based on their participant observation studies and long-term experience, the term has been defined by Innes and Booher as:

...a long-term effort to develop a shared understanding and agree on a strategy to deal with an uncertain and evolving future, while addressing a broad, shared concern with planning and policy (Innes and Booher, 1999a, p. 11).

The method of interaction has been referred here as “role play simulation” and the mode of collective reasoning as “bricolage”. According to their thesis, this type of planning not only creates solutions which are acceptable to all and allows each of the participants to claim of them ownership but also social learning, team spirit, trust and networks are created among stakeholders as by products.

One major challenge of collaborative planning, as identified by Innes and Booher (2010), is its coexistence with formal government and its mismatch with the bureaucratic tradition of decision-making. In the current government system, planning officials are cynical about any type of public decision making other than that of representative government, whereas the practice of collaborative planning offers an open-ended decision making approach to deal

with the current complex, changing and fragmented societal system. To overcome this challenge, a fundamental change of current governance and institutional arrangements is urged.

Though it is acknowledged that the power of consensus building inheres in making participants play their role, which needs motivation, in-depth understanding and careful facilitation, a question remains concerning the viability of such an exercise which demands a long term-commitment from the participating stakeholders. Such a commitment is especially hard for community groups, where the dropout rate in community participation practices is high. Innes also warned that ethical aspects are more important for planners in communicative planning.

Critiques of communicative planning

Communicative planning theories brought pragmatic ideas to the planning practice in adopting a practically situated and social learning oriented approach to deal with conflicting issues. However, communicative planning theories are criticised by many scholars on several fronts, such as the ignorance of power relations, the further marginalisation of less powerful stakeholders and the question of expertise, or scientific knowledge, of the planning discipline. It is argued that Innes's consensus building approach is misrecognised and misrepresented, while Healy's collaborative planning has been used and misused by politicians and policy makers (Hillier and Healy, 2008). Some of the major critiques are discussed below.

- Communicative planning theory ignores issues of power. The main criticism regarding communicative planning is its ignorance of a credible strategy to deal with biased power relations in planning practice (Flyvbjerg, 1996; 1998; Hillier, 2003; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Margerum, 2002; McGuirk, 2001; Neuman, 2000). The argument of communicative rationality, which is the basis for communicative planning, is criticised on the grounds that any process that ignores power relations is simply "meaningless or misleading" as claimed by Flyvbjerg (1998, p. 227). He contrasted power with rationality with his empirical study and argued that the greater power an actor possesses, the less is their need for rationality as they can achieve their aims by other means (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Flyvbjerg also argued that in practice opportunities for community groups to participate are set in such a way and in such a stage that (to give input through formal channels about some predetermined sets of issues/agendas) they have very little or no influence on the policy outcome compared to the other big stakeholders. This is due to their less powerful position compared to business groups or political lobbyists who have informal connections and channels to determine the outcome (Flyvbjerg, 1996).
- Many case studies supported the argument that communicative planning theories pay insufficient attention towards the practical context of power. One of them is McGuirk's research from Newcastle, Australia, where planners collaboratively tried to make a Development Control Plans (DCPs) for the Local Government Area. Through her case study she concluded that to reach a consensus was quite difficult because of the impossibility to set power and differences aside. She analysed the nexus between power, knowledge and rationality, where she identified power

variations between expertise, knowledge and rationality which have been validated already and the knowledge/rationality forms of other knowledge such as experiential, local, intuitive and moral inputs which finally were undermined for the sake of lesser validity. In this study, the position of local communities clearly depicts how and why participation became ineffective in terms of influencing the outcome. There is a call for figuring out how to advance planning practice without consensus and in conflicting situations and to define institutional conditions (McGuirk, 2001).

- In response to the above criticisms, Innes emphasised an ideal speech situation, and drew attention to the difference between power around the table and power outside the table and network power for consensus building (Innes, 2004; Innes and Booher, 2002). Including of a full range of stakeholders, setting ground rule behaviour at the outset, creating a dialogue where all should be equally able to participate, fully sharing information, instilling a self-organising capacity, exploring all the interests and making every effort are the conditions for successful consensus building (Innes, 2004). She argued that the skilful management of dialogue; shared information and the education of the stakeholders neutralize power around the table. This is also mentioned by Forester (2006). But the role of facilitators as skilled managers of dialogue is questioned on the grounds of their little knowledge of planning (Neuman, 2000). Regarding the power outside of the table, she recommends its redistribution prior to the dialogues by giving resources to marginalised stakeholders either to hire experts or to provide them with enough information (Innes, 2004). However, a number of other ideas have been developed to cope with power imbalances in communicative planning; for example, network power, transaction costs or using trust and reasonableness.
- In communicative planning theories, network power and transaction cost alterations are often proposed in facing power issues (Healy, 1999; Innes, 2004; Sager, 2006). Network power is created when stakeholders collectively have the power to change/influence/ produce their desired outcome. This is a form of power from which both the most and least powerful stakeholders can benefit (Innes, 2004; Innes and Booher, 2002). Sager uses the argument of transaction costs in communicative planning. He defined transaction costs as the costs which are incurred when transacting parties are brought together for exchange of information and arguments, and when procedures are established to make them deal with each other according to an informal agreement (Sager, 2006). However, he proposed that in communicative planning a planner can advocate increasing transaction costs to counter the repressive power of the powerful stakeholders. Though it is agreed that in the consensus building process, as proposed by Innes and Booher, transaction costs are already high (Sager, 2006).
- Contrary to the perspectives of power being central to understand legitimate social processes, including planning, Stein and Harper (1996, 2003, 2005) proposed the idea of “Trust” and “Reasonableness”. They counter the Foucauldian, and Flyvbjerg’s concept, that those who have more power are more influential in getting their stake in the planning process. They believe that trust is as basic as power because it is a necessary condition for any type of communication, knowledge or learning. So not just power, but the assumption of trust needs to be understood. Harper and Stein also analysed the Wide Reflective Equilibrium (WRE) of Rawl’s

procedural theory of social justice (Rawls, 2001) and compared it with Innes and Healey's consensus-building planning process. Indicating the similarity of reflexivity and critical mutual learning between these two ideas they pointed out the contrast of the planner's roles as both facilitator and mediator in Innes's concept and Rawls's detailing of the elements and ways of interaction, transformation in the WRE idea, even in the context of serious conflict.

- Instead of beginning with the universal concept of power and then explaining everything, the concept of WRE starts in the middle then goes back and forth between the principles of rationality and reasonableness. By "reasonable" Rawls meant an acceptance of the fair terms of cooperation, and a commitment to abide by them, provided everyone else is also similarly committed. Thus reasonable entails the notion of reciprocity. Finally, Stein and Harper (2005) argued that if citizens and professional planners were to believe that power is inescapable there would seem to be no hope. On the contrary, reasonableness embodies rationality and morality, which gives hope and purpose to the public planning. Here, to deal with power, there should be reasonableness and morality, which are also indicated by Innes and Healy when identifying importance of the planner's ethical position.
- Consensus building produces insubstantial and vague agreements. Communicative planning theories are often criticised for producing bland and overly processed agreements, sometimes failing to address the tension between the knowable world and social problems, avoiding important issues, overlooking norms and meanings, working with a vague agenda and general agreements, and lacking a clear boundary of subject matter (Cameron, Grant-Smith and Johnston, 2005; Huxley, 2000; Neuman, 2000). However, Innes argued that any agreement or plan can be flawed but consensus made in an ideal speech situation fulfilling all the criteria can produce joint learning, intellectual social and political capital, feasible action and innovative solutions (Innes, 2004). Sometimes so many other things are achieved as by products, agreements are the least outcomes (Innes and Booher, 1999a). However, the question remains on the plausibility of creating an ideal speech situation particularly in a highly conflicting context.
- One of the important roles of a professional planner is to define problems, which are required for public action. But when local solutions become a professional tradition, the success of the expert role of the professional planner, in short-term interventions, is doubtful (Sandercock, 1997). Neuman (2000) questioned the position of the graphic image based representation and maps in the discursive planning practice. He raised the issue of immense role of the image in planning which texts cannot replace. Some argue that collaborative planning also pays too much attention to the planner as the central element of communication, at the expense of dealing with the visions, content, and distribution of the outcomes of planning (Campbell and Marshall, 1999). This is critical for community participation, as local communities have often seen to possess lay knowledge about planning issues and can provide significant local knowledge to improve the plan quality which indicates the dichotomy of local versus expert knowledge in the final outcome. Rafael Fischler, by analysing Foucauldian social theory, offered to understand planning theory not simply as a discursive practice of interpersonal communication but also as a practice of Government (Fishcler, 2000). He questioned whether "open

dialogue among equals” can be achieved in fundamentally unequal societies (Fishler, 2000, p. 194). Communicative planning to be successful requires institutional changes - as recommended by these studies.

- In consensus-based decision making, open communication channels let the actors be open about their individual values, needs, feelings, fears and vulnerabilities. However, there is a critical question of whether this transformation of personal and cultural issues into the public forum leads to further economic exploitation (Fraser, 1995). Innes emphasised the need for the specific leverage of each stakeholder to avoid this type of co-optation. She claims that open dialogue creates empathy among stakeholders rather than the action of some marginalisation (Innes, 2004). However, sometimes in dialogue, marginalised stakeholders might remain dissatisfied but voiceless (Neuman, 2000). This is particularly important in the case of community participation when community groups are the subject of exploitation in the name of community based management or decentralisation (e.g. Ribot, 1999; 2003).
- There are criticisms made about the use of the term ‘stakeholder’ and the account of context. The term ‘stakeholder’ implies some strategic interest, yet there is little discussion in communicative planning theories how individuals or community groups can be induced to give up instrumental and strategic action (Neuman, 2000). This is consistent with the concern raised by Horelli (2002) in collaborative planning about the position of women as a comparatively weak stakeholder competing with a number of stakeholders. He identified gender neutrality or gender blindness as detrimental to achieving the goal of communicative planning. Besides, there is a limited emphasis on context. Communicative planning practice often relies on detailed studies of planning practice with reduced emphasis on external constraints. This ethno-methodological approach downplays social relations which contribute to understanding context (Neuman, 2000), whereas social relations are important in understanding stakeholders relationships in a planning process aiming for consensus based planning outcome.

Now, it is important to analyse how and to what extent the ideas of planning theories and practice have been implemented in natural resource management (NRM).

Natural Resource Planning and Management: Historical Overview

Local control or limited human intervention

Before formal statutory provisions centralised the governance of forest resource, most of the forests were under customary or indigenous authorities or open access resources. Since 1970s, governments in developing countries started to recognise customary, indigenous and traditional rights of access and use of forest resources.

Historically, before the 16th century A.D., physically accessible forests were used and regulated by local communities, while others were left pristine. Common resources such as forests have been managed by local communities since time immemorial in different forms:

informal institutions like in England (Rachham 1986 cited in Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:1) and Nepal; through traditional leaders and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe till the pre-colonial era (Mapedza, 2007); customary authorities in many of the Latin American and African countries (Larson and Dahal, 2012, Pacheco et al., 2009). Well formalized institutions were reported before the sixteenth century in Switzerland (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). These formalizations were mostly for the regulation of use of a resource, i.e. defining use and ownership rights. Since livelihoods and cultures of people living in rural areas were intrinsically linked with the natural resources of the area, such institutions existed in the form of locally accepted principles, norms or values as in most parts of Africa (Leach and Mearns, 1996) or formalized by the communities as in England and Switzerland well before the 16th century. Murombedzi (1998) provides a brief history of natural resource management in Africa and shows that before colonial states started imposing European ideologies in the management and governance of natural resources, a wide range of arrangements existed including state, private, common property and communal tenures depending on the local context. Regulatory institutions were developed locally when local people perceived the threat of resource scarcity. Some places or certain species were considered sacred, helping to protect the forest and species (Mapedza, 2007, Gilmour and Fisher, 1991) or migration, translocation and other responses from the communities occurred when resources became degraded (Murombedzi, 1998, Feeny et al., 1990: p10, Ghimire, 1994). Large tracts of forests were, however, outside the reach of human intervention.

Regulation of commercial timber extraction in developing countries started largely after colonial intervention through centralized top-down bureaucratic departments, which was absent until the nineteenth century (Guha 2000 cited in Charnley and Poe, 2007: p 305). Colonial powers started expropriating land and natural resources by bringing these resources under central control (Murombedzi, 1998) supporting the agents of new European (i.e. colonial) capital and markets to extend their areas of operation and sources of raw materials (Grove, 1995: p2) particularly timber and firewood.

Similarly, the politics of land was also a key feature of the conservation culture of Africa where struggles over land surfaced between indigenous groups and government (Neumann, 1997), later being backed by international NGOs funded by international organizations such as the World Bank. A similar case was observed in Indonesia when the government-declared forest zones undermining the ancestral 'Adat' rights over forest resources (Colchester, 2002). In many parts of the developing world, particularly in the less accessible remote areas, communities often continued their traditional practices despite the intervention of formal regulatory framework of the state (Colchester, 2002, Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). With the modernization approach to development dominating in the developed countries, the notion of conserving pristine nature has got attention since the 1970s, though western world has started to symbolise untouched parts of tropical islands as paradise since fifteenth century (Grove, 1995: p5). Pristine discourse invoked normative images of human free nature and a conservation ethos (Neumann, 1997).

Centralized approach to NRM

As stated above, people have nurtured natural resources for their livelihoods since time immemorial but the state started alienating them from these resources in later periods of the history. Particularly, the process of centralized governance of natural resources was pertinent in Europe after the industrial revolution started in the 16th century, while developing countries observed this in later centuries either by being imported into these countries by the colonial powers such as in Indonesia, India, most parts of Africa, or as an extension of the feudal production system in countries such as Nepal. When central governments drew the control over natural resources from local communities, they either governed themselves by using state apparatus or privatized them. These steps were often justified by the resource economists such as Gordon (1954 cited in Feeny et al., 1990) and Scott (1955 cited in Feeny et al., 1990), demographers such as Lloyd (1968 cited in Feeny et al., 1990), or Biologists such as Hardin (1968). In general, libertarian agenda of 'free market environmentalism' extended free market and trade as the solution for environmental problems (Anderson and Leal, 2001), and government should supposedly release all the barriers of free market economy.

Either the state control and centrally managed systems or privatization of natural resources such as forest has been promoted as a strategic attempt of rejecting communal governance of resources. Privatization served central states' purpose of economic growth and production efficiency logics against conservation and livelihoods goals of natural resource management. There were several logics espoused the centralized forestry and natural resource management.

First, initial government interest and centralization emerged with the growing needs of forests products and other natural resources to the burgeoning population in the cities and industrial areas. Similarly, the industrial revolution in Europe in the 16th century, showed tremendous increase in demand for raw materials and energy sources for the newly growing industries. To support industrialization, governments promoted privatization of some of the resources and developed massive plantation projects. In this process, governments allocated communal lands including forested areas to private companies for forest plantations and logging. The industrial forestry process was subsequently transported to the developing countries by their colonial patronage (Murombedzi, 1998).

This became more prominent after the World War II, since the centralization process was further legitimized by the larger economic, developmental and academic purviews. The modernization paradigm promoted the concepts of specialization, intensification and large scale production, and thereby segregated rural agriculture, for example, from other activities (van der Ploeg et al., 2000: p393). The focus was on 'macro economic growth' (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991: p3-4), 'large scale industrial growth', and 'large scale modern agriculture' (Ellis and Biggs, 2001: p440) and it was assumed that this would have a 'trickledown effect' to rural people particularly the poor. Subsistence-oriented livelihood support systems such as farming, forestry, fisheries, and small scale businesses were discarded or blamed as the reasons for backwardness or seen as stumbling blocks to development just because they were falling short of harnessing 'economies of scale' (Ellis and Biggs, 2001, emphasis added). When the scale of a resource became bigger and discourses around economic

growth model became widespread, the governing role of central government received less resistance. In this condition, call for strong and controlling bureaucracy backed by the experts in the overall development process became stronger (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993).

While the move towards privatization of the means of production such as forests has, unsurprisingly, resulted in privatization of forest land. In Nepal, for example, about one third of the forest was granted by the government to rulers or their allies (Regmi, 1978). The allocation of the productive forests to a small number of elites was along the lines of the traditional feudal production systems of Nepalese society where land endowments defined the socio-political status of a family more than other features.

Second, the logic of centralised approach stemmed from blaming local communities for resource degradation. The 20th century observed rapid land use change in developing countries. In this period, fast conversion of forested land into agriculture occurred in association with wider political and economic changes (Arnold, 2001). Similarly, resource degradation in most part resulted from the increasing demand for a 'land and vegetative base from urban centres and industries' (Guha, 2002: p554) and the great appetite for over consumption (Galbraith 1958 cited in Guha, 2002). Guha (2002: p553) places the blame for the current global ecological problems on the 'disproportionate share of resources consumed by the industrialized countries as a whole and urban elite within the Third World'.

Others such as Fairhead and Leach (1996, 1995), through the use of a range of methodological techniques such as oral and archival historical analysis combined with remote sensing, rejected the notion of human induced deforestation and environmental degradation of the African savannah, and established from the available evidence that the forests were rather promoted by the local population. As they found, the deforestation discourse was inherited by the technocrats (foresters, botanists and biologists) from the oral testimony of their seniors and predecessors, who often strategically created the negative image of local people, labelling them as the main destroyers.

Despite the claims that local people were the culprits of deforestation, in places where major land use changes were observed, conversion of forestland to agriculture often resulted from government policy. For example, when a government promulgated the policy and other regulatory instruments to bring forests under government control, local people tempted to clear parts of forest areas in fear that they might otherwise lose the piece of land they had been inheriting for generations. Similarly, degradation of forest resources, for example, has also been attributed to the perceived threat of local people over their rights or ownership (or tenure) to resources when government has expropriated the locally appropriated forests under government control (Charnley and Poe, 2007, Feeny et al., 1990).

Eckholm (1976) argued that environmental devastation in the Indian sub-continent resulted largely due to deforestation in the hills and mountains triggering to massive soil erosion and resulting sedimentation in the plains of Nepal, India and Bangladesh, putting lives of millions of people at risk (Ives, 2004). Policy makers and scholars used the argumentations coming from these degradation theories including that of Hardin's (1968) 'tragedy of the commons' to rationalize central government control over natural resources (Ostrom et al., 1999). The deforestation is often attributed to the state enforced abdication of the existing communal and private tenure systems (Feeny et al., 1990: p6).

Third, one of the most important aspects justifying the central state's role in natural resources is to securing revenue for central treasury from the sale of these resources. In colonial and non-colonial countries equally, when natural resources started generating income, governments saw them as a key source of income. Large tracts of productive forests were thus used either to satisfy the domestic needs in the cities or exported. For example, during colonial rule in India, Nepal's government cleared a large area of forest to supply railway sleepers to India. About 40% of the total national income of Nepal came from the productive forests of Terai alone in the 19th century. In the 1950s, when the formal planning process started in Nepal, this dropped to below 15%. The relative contribution of forests to the national economy of Nepal has been steadily declining since (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991).

In particular, ensuring regional equity through the collection of taxes and revenue, and redistributing them in the resource poor areas have been advocated in welfare states. This line of argument maintains that when productive resources such as forests are concentrated in certain parts of countries and others lack resources, a government should legitimately draw some resources from resource rich areas and provide that to resource poor areas. This is one of the reasons why defining forest management modality¹ in Nepal's terai has been a contested issue (Bampton et al., 2008, Ojha, 2008).

Fourth, the rationalization of the top-down approach to natural resource management also rests on the supremacy of 'scientific' (or expert) knowledge over local (or indigenous) knowledge (Mapedza, 2007: p842). Fisher (2000: p7) mentioned that state forestry departments held a false assumption that an institutional vacuum existed among local communities and that they lacked useful knowledge for forest management. When local people and their knowledge systems were categorized into 'stupid', 'ignorant' and without scientific 'objectivity', they became insignificant, or obstacles, to scientific resource management. The discourse of scientific management grant the superior space to 'technical experts' in defining purpose, goals and implementing strategies for natural resource management. Continuous and pervasive persuasion and discourses kept people in the condition to accept the charge and often did not contest, which the scholars consider as symbolic violence (Ojha et al., 2009). 'Scientific management' has been one of the key reasons given to justify the central control of resources particularly when they have high profitability (Shackleton et al., 2002). These expert led perspectives are often known as techno-managerial perspectives (Bryant, 1991, p164), administrative rationalism (Dryzek, 1997, pp63 to 83) environmental managerialism (Bryant and Wilson, 1998) or techno-bureaucratic perspectives (Ojha, 2006).

Fifth, the strong rationale provided for centralized natural resource management, which was extended in developing countries, have been the western conception of the expert-led 'scientific' management. In most parts of the colonial states, this was accepted without question. However, the post-colonial period also carried over the colonial legacies in most part of developing world, particularly in forestry domain such as Zimbabwe (Mapedza,

¹ *Within the broader participatory forestry conception, Nepal is experimenting as well as implementing several specific forms of forest management which are called forest management modalities. These modalities differ in terms of sharing power, responsibilities and benefits among different stakeholder groups particularly between communities and government.*

2007), India, Indonesia, the Philippines, PNG and others. Similarly, Nepal, which had never been colonized, borrowed the colonial mode of forest management indirectly from India, which continued the colonial approach to forest management in the post colonial era. However, the move in bringing the forest under government control was taken without building minimum level of state capacity to manage them (Feeny et al., 1990: p12). Often in the reform process also, local concerns and knowledge systems were ignored for the supremacy of scientific knowledge, leaving local people and peasants as mere recipients and dominated subjects of experts (Mapedza, 2007).

Sixth, several developmental and environmental discourses supported the promotion of a centralized form of resource governance. One of the discourses of degradation advocating centralized roles, and against communities' potentials was around Garret Hardin's (1968) concept of the 'Tragedy of the Commons', which provided an exaggerated and misconstrued logic of rampant resource degradation and accused humans of not holding any attributes of cooperation and collective action (Ostrom et al., 1999). The tragedy metaphor Hardin used 'highlighted the divergence between individual and collective rationality', that is, gaining extra individual benefits at the shared costs with other competing users (Feeny et al., 1990: p2). Similar to Hardin's propositions there were country-specific exaggerations of resource degradation such as 'Theory of Himalayan Degradation' promoted by Eckholm (1976) (see Ives and Messerli, 1989 for categorical rejection of the theory) that projected the dire consequences to the environment and livelihoods because of the disappearance of forests in the hills of Nepal in 30 years. The World Bank also warned of the complete loss of forests from the developing countries in 60 years due to competing land uses such as conversion to agriculture (World Bank, 1978). These amplified narratives could draw worldwide attention (Varughese, 2000) that triggered donors to impose external intervention through technology and resources. Emphasis was given to the strict rules and enforcement measures for restricting the use of natural resources such as wildlife, forests, rangeland or fisheries. This was performed through centralized, bureaucratic structures in the name of regulating natural resources such as forests in order to 'manage' them scientifically. Institutions and their enforcement strategies ignored the local sentiments, and the only basis of the livelihoods of the people living in the area.

Centralized, command-and-control, and segregation of people and the natural resources approach could not meet the expectations of resource conservation and contribution to economic development. Rather, resources have become further degraded, millions of poor people have become more marginalized and vulnerable, and conflict over ownership and use of natural resources has escalated. Similarly, people displaced from conservation areas were reportedly worse off, inadequately compensated (Fabricius, 2004, p9), have lost of access to natural resources, and cultural and social fabrics have largely been fragmented. In many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries, local people have become more hostile to conservation and conservationists (Fabricius and de Wet 2002 cited in Fabricius, 2004). The hostility of people against conservation, degrading natural resource base, worsening livelihoods of the natural resource dependent poor people, and largely failure of the government controlled centralized forms of stringent governance measures propelled for the alternative forms of natural resource governance.

Decentralization and devolution

In the 1970s, the world faced two pronged energy crisis: i) world oil crisis – cartel of OPEC countries for rising petroleum price by four times – had triggered a shift in energy focus from fossil fuel to renewal energy; and ii) pressure on forest land for timber and fuelwood gave rise to think beyond woodlots in natural forest areas resulting into the emergence of the concept of social forestry. Rapid upsurge of social forestry in this period witnessed plantation projects in communal land to reduce the pressure on the existing, often deteriorated, natural forests (Arnold, 2001: p11-12). Similarly, there were certain local responses to declining natural resource conditions such as i) enforcing for restrictive use of certain resources; ii) setting out certain areas for not use particularly around water holes or in the religious locations; and/or iii) planting in agricultural incursions or in communal land. Similarly, civil society and market forces are rapidly seeking their role in the governance process through demanding or facilitating for certain standards or ‘changing consumer preferences’ (Agrawal et al., 2008: p1460).

The centralized form of top-down governance characterized much of the 19th and 20th centuries (Agrawal et al., 2008). Critics of the state-centric traditional way of natural resource governance and management (largely environmental governance) argue that it ignores or bypasses the historical human-environmental interactions (Bryant and Wilson, 1998). There has also been criticism of the hidden power and interests implicit in the command-and-control approach to natural resource management rather than a genuineness of conservation and development. In the face of this criticism, the alternative approaches to natural resource governance that share in common is the redistribution of power and responsibility from state officials to local people and other stakeholders (FAO, 2011).

The change process from state control to people oriented approaches is generally defined within the framework of decentralization and devolution. Decentralization and devolution essentially encompasses the issues of redistribution of power and authority together with management responsibility to the lower level of authorities and/or local people. Releasing power in history has not been an easy nor smooth phenomenon. Several factors have conditioned to come to a stage where almost all the countries are towards some kind of decentralization and devolution phase, i.e. decentralization have become an overarching element of governance in most of the countries (Benjamin, 2008). Indeed decentralization offers the opportunities for popular participation in decision-making (Benjamin, 2008) despite there are likely imbalances of power in the process among different groups of stakeholders with an disempowerment or further marginalization effects on the weaker stakeholders (Kothari, 2001, Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2002), although often unintended. Restructuring of the natural resource sector is evolving fast and at least 60 developing countries put in place formulated decentralization over some parts of NRM up to the end of the 20th century (Agrawal, 2001b).

One of the major reasons for the states being ready to cede some of their power to the local people for managing and using the resources is the failure of the states to protecting the resources (Fisher, 2000, FAO, 2011, Poffenberger, 2001). In fact, state departments have not been able to exercise effective control over most parts of the countryside in spite

of stringent legislative back-up (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991: p 190, Feeny et al., 1990) that makes a compelling case for the need of involving local communities, with clear rights and responsibilities (Baland and Platteau, 1996). When the existing centralized form of governance could neither conserve the resources nor fulfil the expectations of people, changing the governance of natural resource management is, in a way, 'a move away from centrally administered, top-down regulatory policies' (Agrawal et al., 2008: p1460). Murphree (2006) considers this as a shift in the locus of decision-making from centre to periphery.

Environmental movements also challenged the existing centralized technocratic approaches, and created a political space for paradigm shift in natural resource governance. Chipko Movement of India (Jain, 1984, Agrawal, 2005, Guha, 1989) is a notable environmental movement of local people who denied the existing timber oriented industrial forestry. Women and men of north-western hills of India came to protect each of the trees from being felled by the timber contractors by hugging the individual trees from being cut. The event followed a series of local demonstrations and lobbying against command-and-control approach of state forest departments (Guha, 1989). In Latin America, coinciding with Rio declaration which challenged the existing modality of heavy reliance on commercial enterprises failing to address several socio-cultural issues, social movements of indigenous communities, specific forest product users such as rubber tappers and small-holder farmers for the rights over natural resources paved way to the emergence of community forestry (Pokorny and Johnson, 2008 reported in reference to Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru). Social movements also triggered in recognising customary and traditional forest rights of local people in many parts of Latin America and Asia (Larson et al., 2010b, Larson et al., 2010a).

The 1980s experienced two parallel developments, funding shortage (Plummer and Fitzgibbon, 2004, Fabricius, 2004) and concept of integrated conservation and development got more attention. The formalization of rights of local communities over natural resources has its root on the recognition of local knowledge and existing indigenous management systems. Local people have more legitimate interest and concern over surrounding natural resources than external agencies (Ostrom, 1990). Agrawal (2001a) recognizes local understanding of resources and highlights that when tendered rights and responsibilities local people can use their indigenous knowledge of resource management which could often be more effective than management imposed from the central government. Similarly, greater acknowledgment and political space has also been advocated for the peoples whose institutions and landscapes were transformed due to colonial invasion and post colonial globalization (Mccay, 2001: p182).

Planning process in Nepal's community forestry

In Nepal, community forestry guidelines (DOF, 2014) provide the process of planning that every CFUG in Nepal should follow. For strategic plans such as preparation and renewal of operational plan (OP) and revision of constitution, a number of steps are advised: self-assessment of the previous OP and constitution, drafting of articles or provisions that required to be revised, taking those revision proposals to tols and interest groups to solicit

their inputs, and finally endorsing the revision proposals from the general assembly. Similarly, the guidelines give a broader mandate that each CFUG required to collect the proposals from each *tol* (i.e. hamlet) and interest groups during annual planning process. The OP preparation and revision process is considered very costly in terms of time and financial resources required to undertake forest inventory and analysis of inventory data for assessing the growing stock and determining annual harvest. However, there are concerns that local communities have to fulfil very cumbersome and complex technical, financial and legal obligations before they could exercise of their rights and roles in preparing periodic and annual plans and implement management plan (Paudel et al., 2009, Larson et al., 2010a, Larson et al., 2008, Colchester et al., 2006). Despite considerable investment of time and resources spent for forest inventory, and a number of hassles around OP preparation, quality and usefulness of inventory-based OPs is found very low (Toft et al., 2015). That is, these OPs are seldom considered during annual forest management and community development planning and implementation.

Questions are also raised about existing credibility and capacity of local communities to manage resources effectively and sustainably (Bradshaw, 2003). In most of the developing countries state officials co-opted local affairs and planning processes often using their advisory power as in Zimbabwe (Mapedza, 2007) or an ultimate signatory in the local management plans as in Nepal (Paudel et al., 2008, Paudel et al., 2009) and India (Balooni and Inoue, 2009).

Despite some success in increasing representation of women in decision-making forums, inclusion and equity in forest governance have remained the key issues since the early stages of community forestry (Ojha et al., 2014). Elite dominated, poorly informed and ad hoc nature of planning and decision-making processes in community forestry are often criticised (Agarwal, 2001, Agarwal, 2009, Paudyal, 2008, McDougall et al., 2013). The attempts were also made to improve planning and decision-making processes in Nepal in experimental basis with an aim to promote inclusive and deliberative approach in community forestry planning such as self-monitoring process (Paudel and Ojha, 2007), adaptive collaborative management (McDougall et al., 2013, Banjade, 2013), scenario-based planning (Bourgeois et al., 2017). These approaches use shared vision of all the legitimate actors as the starting point for planning, which is backed by the information collection and analysis in order to extend informed choices for the planners.

Despite the success of these approaches in enhancing inclusion, improved awareness, contribution to empowerment of marginalised groups, use of information during communicative exchanges during deliberative processes, and thereby improvement in governance and improved implementation of plans, these processes demand highly skilled facilitation, and increase transaction costs (Banjade and Ojha, 2005, Ojha et al., 2013). In the changing demographic dynamics and increased opportunity costs, planning processes need to be adapted to work in these changing contexts while maintaining the basic tenets of inclusion and deliberation. Therefore, we draw from the following participatory planning processes and suggest deliberative planning process to be applied in EnLiFT 2:

- Integrated land use planning
- Scenario-based planning
- Adaptive Collaborative Management
- Planning Studio
- Deliberative planning

Integrated land use planning

Main essence of integrated land use planning is to accommodate production and conservation as essential ingredients. While forwarding production related goals, stakeholders' interests and needs are considered (FAO and UNEP, 1999). Recognition and rights of all the stakeholders for their legitimate political space in defining the agenda and selecting options is key in integrated land use planning. Participatory approach builds on the inclusion of marginalised groups such as women and indigenous people. The integrated planning requires to adopt bottom-up approach and analysis and planning to support decision-making process of the concerned stakeholders to choose the best option or range of options in order to attain their objectives. 'The process of planning which promotes interaction among land users, decision-makers and professional and technical staff, is more important than the documentation of the plan which results from this exercise' (FAO and UNEP, 1999).

In integrated land use planning, the integration of various aspects are critical: bottom-up approach for bringing interests and capacities with external expert knowledge and resources; local knowledge with sophisticated knowledge and tools for bio-physical and socio-economic analysis; local institutional arrangements and practices with external policy and socio-economic contexts. Integrated land use planning also has elements that facilitate the interaction of various governance jurisdictions – community/local, sub-national and national. Key to these integrated approach is systematically analyzing the overlapping historical dynamics that positively and negatively influence the system in question (e.g. a forest, agricultural landscape or watershed system), and provide a nuanced understanding of how different parts (or sub-systems) interact, influence and are influenced by the other parts or sub-systems (Bonnal, 2013). More sophisticated multicriteria decision analysis such as (i) the Emergy-Data Envelopment Analysis (EM-DEA), (ii) environmental Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA), (iii) Value Chain Analysis (VCA), and (iv) Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC) approaches are being used to support integrated land use planning (Mwambo et al., 2020)

Scenario-based planning

Scenario-based methods explore the possible futures by tracking pathways leading to the future state. Participatory Prospective Analysis (PPA) uses the scenario-based planning approach, and combines participatory approach of planning with sharing of information among stakeholders or 'experts' so that information asymmetry can be reduced, and more informed and consensual decisions can be made. PPA takes several principles in consideration: transparency, relevance, efficiency, plausibility, participation, and reproducibility (Bourgeois and Jésus, 2004, Bourgeois et al., 2017).

As we also used approach of scenario-based planning, we used the approach in identifying driving forces, and exploring the possible future scenarios before making a specific plan by the CFUG.

Adaptive Collaborative Management

The essence of an 'adaptive collaborative approach' to CFM is that forest stakeholders use intentional (i.e., deliberate) 'on-going learning' as the fundamental basis for decision-making and planning, and work for effective relations amongst stakeholders, including communication, equitable access to decision-making and benefits, negotiation, conflict management, and collective actions as appropriate. 'Intentional learning' not only includes the building or transfer of knowledge and skills, but also, and especially, 'social learning' processes (McDougall et al., 2003).

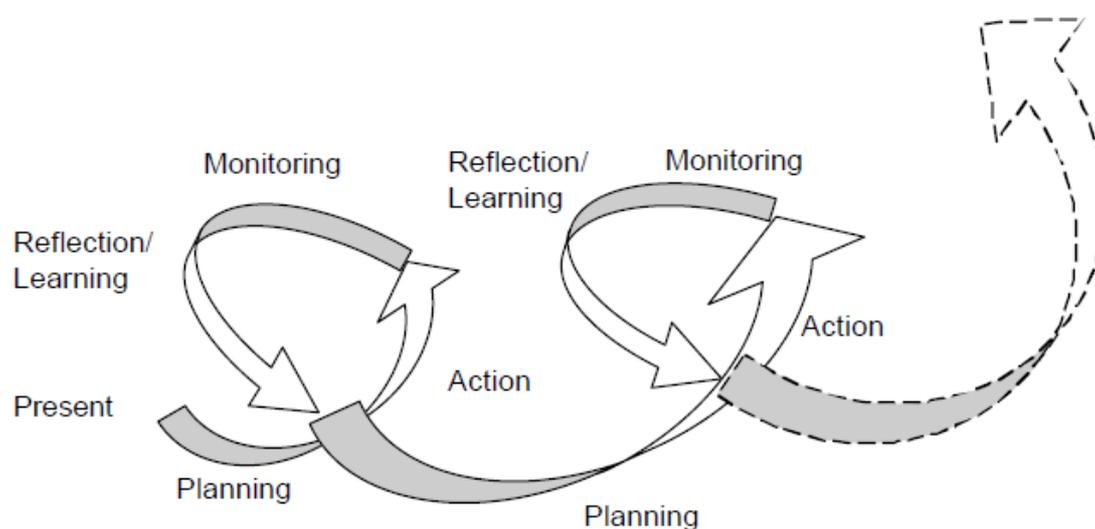


Figure 1: Social learning loop

The ACM approach was successful in promoting collaborative planning and to some extent empowering the marginalised groups in community forest activities (McDougall et al., 2007).

Issues and opportunities in Nepal's community forestry planning and governance

Interplay of social and ecological systems

Governance of natural resource management recognise and involve functional interdependencies of ecological and social systems (Brondizio et al., 2009; Ostrom, 2011). When natural resources produce diverse goods and services, management should accommodate the resource-use systems at different spatial, temporal and organizational levels. Mosterta (2008: pp 293-294) illustrates four different dimensions that encounter in the process of resource governance, which he calls as boundaries, namely i) physical boundaries such as quantity and quality, water and land, different geographical and time scales; ii) interaction between administrative boundaries such as government levels and

policy sectors; iii) social boundaries such as interaction between different social and economic groups, between these groups and government; and iv) cognitive boundaries such as between different disciplines, between technical experts and lay experts, and between different lay experts.

As Feeny et al.(1990: p14) assert, complexity is normally too big to deal by single actor or by a single level that means multiple actors, holding diverse knowledge systems and across disciplines has to work together.

Enforcement capacity of the implementing agencies

The governments lacked required money, knowledge and skills for effective implementation (Sunderlin et al., 2008).

Techno-bureaucratic control and elite domination

In many cases, a large section within the government bureaucracy are apprehensive of entrusting local people or other non-state actors (FAO, 2011), and many fear losing the techno-bureaucratic power once forest management responsibility is shared with local people (Ojha, 2006).

The elected legislators are largely influenced by the argumentation and discourses strategically promoted by the administrators, and policies thus formulated more likely to serve the interest of administrators rather than 'the discursively constructed interests of the people' (Fischer, 2003: p 15). When policy is defined beyond the texts of laws and regulations to include its implementation on the ground, technocratic/bureaucratic roles expand because the coded policies are being reconstructed throughout the decision-making possibilities of the implementers (Birkland, 2005: p 18) and in the negotiation with the people who are affected by them. Gilmour and Fisher (1991: p 183) with reference to Nepalese bureaucracy criticize the culture of decision making within the bureaucracy as illogical and irrational, in the sense that the decisions are influenced by political and personal interests.

Involvement of different stakeholders including communities, government, civil society and market forces in the process can bring diverse, often conflicting, interests, values and perspectives demanding more intense deliberation to arrive at consensus. In a way, this involves interplay of diverse sectors and actors, and purpose and strategies of community based natural resource management are constantly defined and negotiated during the process. In practice, however, dominance of single actor in the policy process, mostly the government techno-bureaucrats are observed in Nepal (Paudel et al., 2008, Bhattarai, 2007, Ojha, 2006), India, China, the Philippines, Botswana, Namibia (Shackleton et al., 2002) and many developing countries. According to Shackleton et al. (2002: p3), less government control is seen where NGOs or donors played strong role in the policy process.

Legitimacy of the process

According to Benjamin (2008) when certain policies and practices are not legitimized at the local level because of their inappropriateness, or the authority of certain locus is not recognized by the communities, they might express their dissatisfaction through active or passive resistance. Where state institutions have ignored this part, such as in many areas of developing world, non-state institutions and processes either ignored the state policies (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991) or manipulated with or without a nexus with state officials (Nightingale, 2005).

Role of local governments

The role of district and sub-district level government staffs are in key position to support local communities in organizing, mediating inter and intra community disputes and providing technical assistance (Pardo, 1995). Therefore, rather than rejecting or excluding them, constructive engagement could often help in developing and sustaining CBNRM initiatives. Nonetheless, actors and service providers other than government are equally, often more, important.

External support

External support does not necessarily be negative provided they enhance local autonomy, i.e. are less deterministic, respect for local knowledge, values and norms, and support in promoting resilience of local communities, information exchanges and market linkages. External epistemic communities such as scholars, practitioners, donors and policy makers can bring new perspectives which could enhance the local capacity and resilience, and role of external actors is justified to this level (Murphree, 2006). These epistemic communities, he argues, could be the important allies for local communities as they could be in privileged position to policy influence.

Multi-level and multi-scale linkages

Forces outside the domain of local communities are significantly influencing local institutions and practices; globalization and processes at higher levels at times could promote coupling and render local institutions vulnerable (Berkes, 2002).

In the context where nature of natural resources as well as the goods and services they produce cross the scale and capacity of single agency or single level, whether that be local or higher level, institutional arrangements for managing the resources should accommodate multiple levels, and multiple actors at each level, to allow cross-scale social interactions (Berkes, 2002: p293). Berkes (2002) refers to these interactions and linkages for both horizontal (across space) and vertical (across levels of organization) levels. This demands simultaneous interventions at various scales. When diverse interests and perspectives are interacting effective coordination, communication, deliberation, learning (social) and conflict resolution are the important issues to consider.

All the above issues share in common is a need of accommodating multiple interests, purpose, perspectives, ideologies and knowledge systems, functional co-existence of diverse actors, conscious attempts of multi-stakeholder 'action and learning', flexibility and transforming possibility of issues, actor positions, meanings and ultimate outcomes of deliberation. When deliberative models are accepted in all the governance processes, the focus is on 'making institutions, elites and governments accountable to the plurality of

voices' (Chambers, 2003: p315), interests and issues so that not only the processes are democratic but also are heading towards securing equity and justice.

Desired shift towards democratic governance and planning

Ideally, receiving intent of the shift has generally several implications including: i) the process of decision making and policy formulation requires that all the legitimate actors should be included in the process of defining goals and management decisions of forest resources - deliberative governance; ii) 'political and social processes that condition access, control and management of the land and resources' (Rasul, 2007: p 153) which also involve issue of power and equity – political ecology; iii) recognition of coupling of social ecological systems meaning that they are complex yet dynamic interactions, uncertainty are expected, and dealing with them need multi-disciplinarily and social learning –adaptive co-management; and iv) institutional arrangements and processes allow initiatives at different levels considering it's spatial, temporal and organizational multi-scalar nature – multi-layered governance.

Community participation in local development planning has long been acknowledged for efficiency, sustainability, relevance, local ownership and intrinsic reasons (Chambers, 1997), various stakeholders might have different notions of participation interpreted to serve their purpose (Cornwall, 2008). As the term 'participation' is used to denote from manipulation and consultation to citizen control (Arnstein, 1969), it is important that one should define what exactly the participation mean, who participates and who benefits (Cornwall, 2008, Cohen and Uphoff, 1980).

Gender inclusion and equity

Institutional arrangements for gender inclusion and inclusion of marginalized groups in planning and decision-making is crucial for inclusive and deliberative governance of community based forest management. Sometimes sensitizing local communities including elites and marginalised members has made considerable contribution in inclusion and equity (Pokharel et al., 2007). Some innovative approaches to inclusive and equitable governance and management have also been successfully tested in some countries (McDougall and Braun, 2003, McDougall et al., 2008, Colfer, 2005). However, elite domination and accruing larger share of benefits by the wealthier members are often the case (Jagger, 2010, Mwangi, 2009, Gautam, 2009, Agarwal, 2001, Ito et al., 2005, Thanh and Sikor, 2006, Acharya, 2005).

Planning Studio: Methodological Approach for CF Planning and Governance

Introducing Planning Studio

Planning Studio is usually known as a room where an artist, photographer, sculptor etc. works, meaning that it involves practical projects with workshop-type activities. In the urban and regional planning discipline, planning studios have long been a mainstay underpinning professional planning education (Dalton 2001), which were the offshoot of design or architectural studios (Frank 2006). Planning Studios in the teaching and learning context

tend to emphasise a series of group work and include live projects carried out in the community where collaboration and learning are the key features (Forsyth et al., 2000). With the increasing prominence of social sciences in planning discipline, particularly from the 1960s, planning studios have placed increasing emphasis on research and scholarship and the role of the planner/ researchers as an agent in decision-making. This is the context that fits well for the suitability to adapt the idea into the action research project in EnLift 2.

Planning studios are now seen as a platform for critical thinking/ analysis, collaborative problem-solving and creative learning (Higgins and Morgan, 2000) as well as an opportunity to re-engage theory and practice (Bailey, 2005; Baum, 1997). Typically, two models of planning studios exist. Firstly, a workshop style learning where learners develop contextualised solutions to a planning problem, often within a classroom environment. This is more of a simulated exercise. The second and the more relevant to EnLift 2 context is for the learners to go to the community and work with the community groups to identify and define problems, as well as develop planning solutions to real world problems (Aitken-Rose, 2001; Higgins, 2005). In both models, learning is problem-based and people-centred (Shepherd and Cosgriff, 1998; Kumar and Kogut, 2006), hence relevant to and consistent with the EnLift 2's action research program.

Planning Studio enables the application of theory and knowledge to practical problems (i.e. knowledge to action) so that the two are not perceived as separate from each other (Baum, 1997). It provides for synthesis through the opportunity to integrate and apply learning from various disciplines (Fisher, 2004). Studio affords an opportunity to identify issues and develop solutions to problems through creative exploration and interactions (Higgins and Morgan, 2000). Fisher (2004) argues for integration of other models of learnings such as case study research (Watson, 2002), and the conventional planning studio has been reformed into various hybrids such as policy or strategy-oriented workshops in response to particular demands for skill sets (Frank, 2006). The underpinning planning studio pedagogy offers a consciously developed, enabling and creative environment where learning can be tested out in a practical context. The 'why studio' question requires exploration of its value as a learning method:

- It provides opportunities for multiple forms of learning that makes it different from other types of learning pedagogy.
- This includes learning by doing, as a Socratic method of open-ended enquiry and active learning that tends to be more immediate and meaningful than more passive teaching.
- The pedagogical shifts towards more people-centred learning as opposed to teacher-focused instruction place renewed significance on the studio as a method where learner and teacher engage in a simulated learning experience to promote learning by doing and reflection.
- It provides an opportunity for reflection on the interplay between group dynamics, outcomes, and learning.
- The practical application of theory and knowledge and skills development are at the heart of learning goals.
- There is a shift in planning as a discipline to the social sciences, with an emphasis in favour of knowledge and technology as opposed to vocational skills development (Frank, 2006, p. 21). An increasing emphasis on research in planning studio

methods, highlighting the need for planning scholars having the experience, confidence or interest to organise and carry out studios (Forsyth et al., 2000).

- While studios are regarded as resource intensive in terms of preparation, organisation and delivery, but they can enable continuous searching for new opportunities, ideas and partners.

While studios are experimental and unpredictable territory of Planning Studio inevitably involves an element of risk, they provide the opportunity for continuous feedback on practical work in the real world setting. Key features of a Planning studio as used in teaching and learning (Higgins et al., 2009, p.12) are:

Learning outcomes	Pedagogical approach	Learning and teaching methods	Assessment methods	Skills commonly developed
Application of theory and knowledge to a practical problem	Experiential learning	Project-based, often in groups	Individual or group or a combination	Urban design
Development of professional skills emulating practice	Problem-based learning	Informal and flexible, not lecture based: may include tutorials, workshops, field work, interaction with practitioners and communities	Formative assessment: feedback informs final outcome	Plan and policy making
	Student centred, active engagement		May include oral presentation	Teamwork
Emphasis on both process and product and inter-relationship between the two	Reflective learning		Not exam-based	Negotiation
				Management: time, self, others
				Public engagement
				Oral and graphic presentation, including IT
				Critical analysis
				Creative thinking

In the context of teaching and learning in planning discipline, Higgins et al. (2009) argued for five 'Cs' principles as key ways that studio learning can be considered for the challenges of the future.

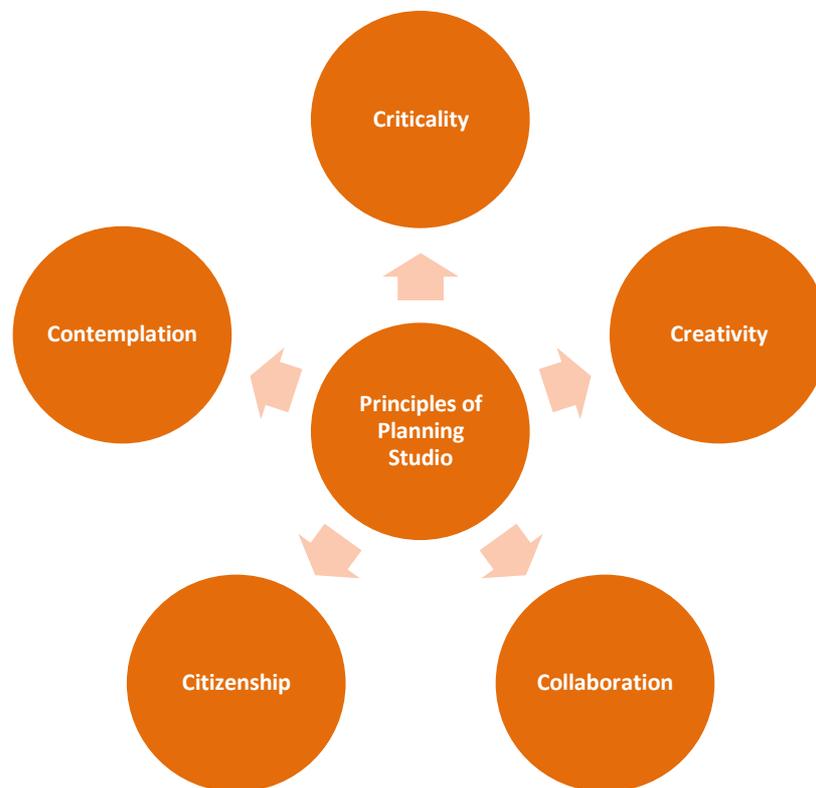


Figure 2: Five 'Cs' principles

Creativity: Creativity includes the exploration of responses to environmental and community issues in planning. It is about searching for the right question as much as the right answer. Questioning of assumptions and overcoming blockages can be promoted by breaking out of confining thinking habits. Creativity is both a skill and a mindset that can help deal positively with change (Higgins and Reeves, 2006). Imagination is central to the mental agility required of effective planning practitioners (Jackson, 2006).

Criticality: Critical thinking and analysis is vital for planning studio to work. Planners are required to analyse and synthesise many diverse issues and evaluate options to solve very complex problems. Finding the right information and promoting active and deep learning give learners increased responsibility to better long-term understanding about complex issues (O'Neill and McMahon, 2005).

Collaboration: Planning studio builds on the need for collaboration of many different stakeholders, including diverse communities. Skills of efficient and effective negotiation and engagement are important. Teamwork, consensus building and conflict resolution are skills that are critical for Planning Studio to operate effectively.

Citizenship: Planning Studios include working with diverse members of the public and other stakeholders, hence can foster a sense of citizenship, meeting wider goals of capacity building and enhancing links between researchers, teachers and broader communities. Learning by doing in the Planning studio stresses citizenship, promotion of the public interest and professional ethics.

Contemplation: Planning Studio involves a reflective approach which is critical. A central feature of experiential learning is purposefully reflecting upon active encounters, integrating the outcomes of the processes into new ways of knowing and acting (Weil and McGill, 1989, p. 248). Three stages of experiential learning are crucial for its success: preparation, outlining the aims, structures and resources; engagement in the activity itself; and processing what was experienced (1989, p. 9). Reflection can actually take place in all three stages, but particularly at the end, it can help evaluate and make sense of what was learned in relation to a wider context.

Application of Planning Studio Methodology in EnLift 2

We have adapted the idea of Planning Studio, which has long been used in planning research and learning for many decades but is new to NRM research and learning, to organise our action research at the CFUG level. Drawing on a range of literature on planning scholarship, we have developed a framework for Planning Studio to enable us in critical thinking/ analysis, collaborative problem-solving and creative learning (Higgins and Morgan, 2000) as well as an opportunity to re-engage theory and practice (Bailey, 2005; Baum, 1997).

EnLift 2 has four research questions that are directly relevant for Planning Studio and they are illustrated below:

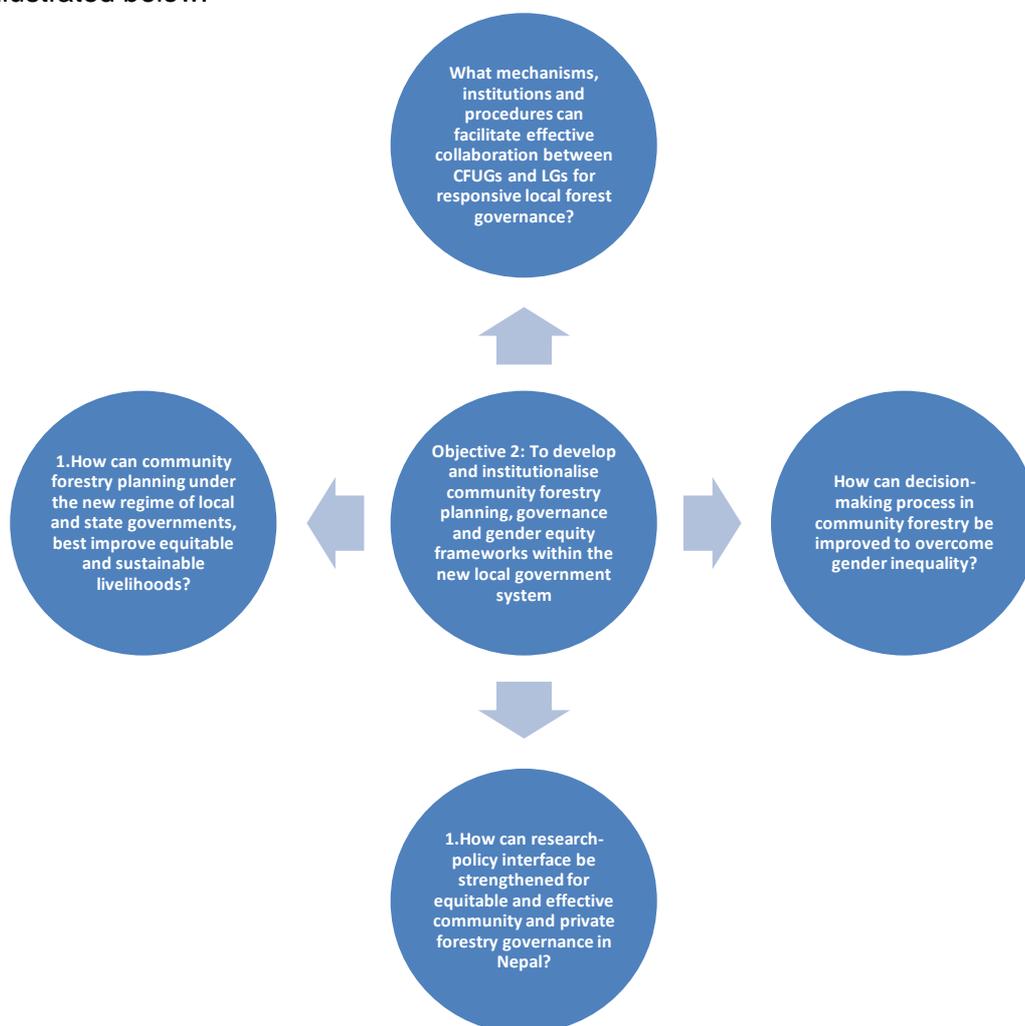


Figure 3: EnLiFT2 research questions relevant for planning studio

Corresponding to the above research questions, EnLift 2 has six activities that are relevant for Planning Studio and Policy Lab as shown in the Figure below:



Figure 4: EnLiFT2 activities relevant for planning studio

The above activities and questions are to be answered by the following research methodologies. These methodologies

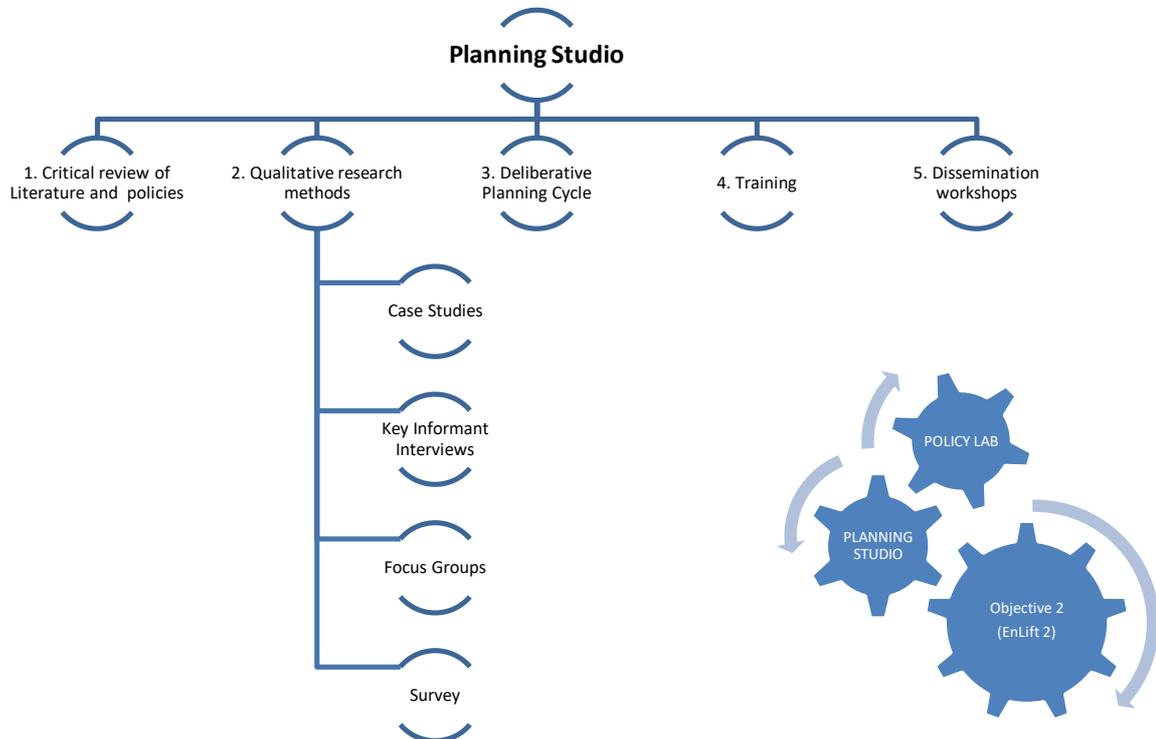


Figure 5: Research methodologies for planning studio
Framework for Planning Studio at the CFUG level

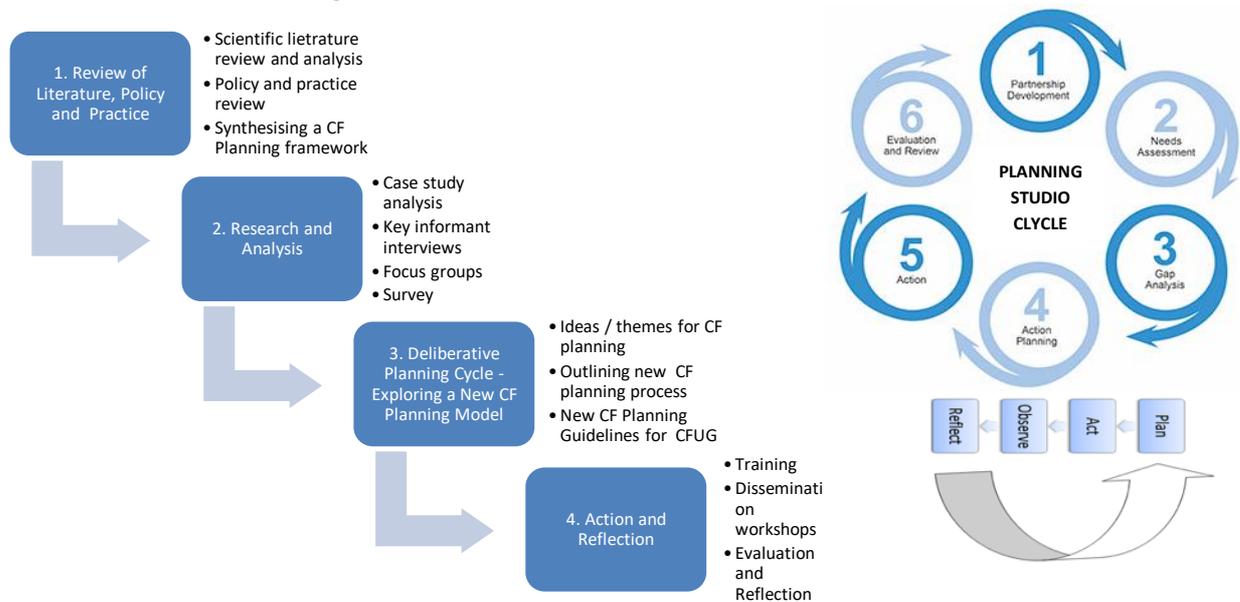


Figure 6: Framework for planning studio

- Literature review on CF planning practice:* Literature review of CF planning practice includes key insights of the evolving CF planning and includes a wide range of literature covering historical evolution of decentralised forest governance globally, community forestry evolution in Nepal, CF planning practice in Nepal, and issues of equity, gender, social inclusion, forest governance, and forests under federalism in Nepal are well under way. The review also identifies and assesses key debates on CF planning, governance and gender. The reviews, which is an evolving process and will continue.

- *Case Studies on CF Planning Practice:* Another component of Planning Studio is to collect data through various instruments. Case studies are one of the instruments. As the work commenced in all the six CFUGs of Kabhrepalanchowk and Sindhupalchowk districts, our data collection for case studies on planning practice also started in all the CFUGs. These research activities form the part of our deliberative planning cycle on the ground.
- *Focus Groups:* For the CFUG planning purpose, Tole (hamlet) meetings, executive committee meetings, visioning workshops and general assemblies have been facilitated in all the six CFUGs. These visioning workshops are focused on developing the vision statements and long-term strategies from the CFUG perspectives.
- *Planning components within Socio-Ecological Survey:* Survey questions related to CF planning are included in the Socio-Ecological Survey, of which data analysis and reporting is underway. The results from the survey will also substantiate the case studies.
- *Training on CF planning and dissemination:* Training to the members of the project team, DFO staff, CFUG leaders and ward chairs are included within this stream of work on inclusive and deliberative planning process.

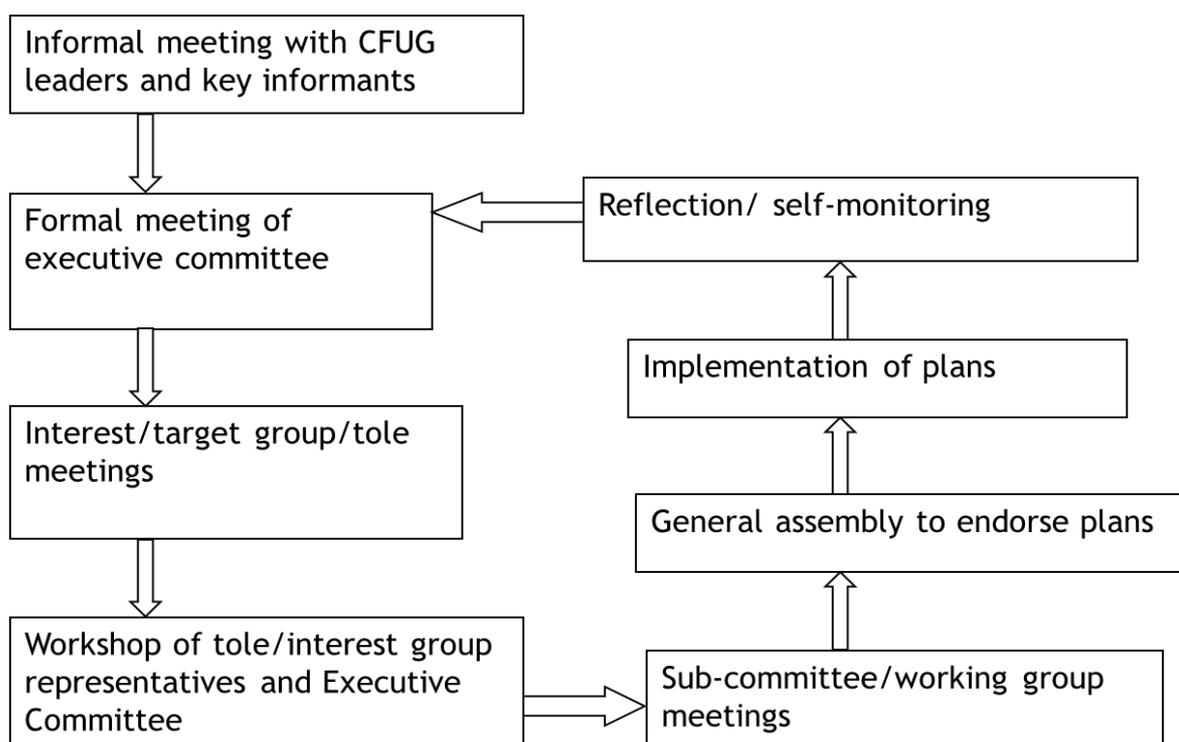
Deliberative Planning Cycle

As part of Planning Studio, a deliberative planning cycle is being implemented on the ground to explore problems and solutions with local communities and stakeholders. The core of deliberative planning is, as explained in the above section, drawn from Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative rationality (Habermas, 1996a, Habermas, 1987b), which justifies for planning and decision making having built in systems for deeply deliberative processes of public interaction and debate. The planners' role is then to facilitate skilful deliberative processes during the planning processes (Forester, 1999). Scholars and practitioners working on deliberative planning believe that knowledge of planners or the experts is impartial, they are not neutral experts, and consider knowledge is "socially constructed" (Innes and Booher, 2015). Therefore, for the proponents of deliberative planning, the very legitimacy of what knowledge is produced and what plans are created is dependent on the very process followed, i.e. who was involved in the process (Forester, 1999). Deliberation is defined as 'mutual communication that involves weighing and reflecting on preferences, values and interests regarding matters of common concern' (Bächtiger et al., 2018: p2). The nature of communicative interface, use of information and analysis using during exchanges and understanding and other's perspectives, values and interest are key aspects of a deliberative process. We used deliberative approach for planning in community forestry, which included creation or promotion of more accessible forums and means of communication, analysis of the pre-existing conditions and developing plans based on an ideal vision of the future.

When diverse groups of stakeholders in terms of their economic, social and political power as well as their capacity to forward their views are in imbalance, either we need to develop an even playing field (Edmunds and Wollenberg, 2002, Leeuwis, 2000), or expanded deliberative space for the relevant actors outside the decision-making authority with a mechanism so that 'empowered space' would make decisions based on the signals of 'public space' (Dryzek, 2009), though transmission of signals through the discourse at the critical level to influence the formal decision-making forums are generally less likely in short run (Habermas, 1996b: p373). Whatever the deliberative space may be, the main concern is: to what extent the relevant actors engaged in the interaction free from domination, deception, self-deception, and strategizing which is called communicative rationality (Habermas, 1987a, Dryzek, 2002: p33). Inadequate attention to the existing power relations has posed challenges to the genuine deliberation (Kanra, 2009, Hendriks, 2009) in the decision-making (or largely policy) processes. This implies that careful crafting of institutions (Ostrom, 1992) and facilitation of governance processes including the change processes are important to reduce domination of powerful actors over marginalized ones.

Previous research works also maintain that forest sector governance in Nepal have considerable deliberative deficit, hence reproducing techno-bureaucratisation (Ojha, 2006), and elite domination (Iversen et al., 2006, Thoms, 2008). In order to alter the situation introducing and promoting deliberative processes in various levels of governance is considered key for the 'functioning of a well-devolved forest governance' (Pokharel et al., 2020, Ojha, 2014). Facilitating deliberative processes in community forest user groups is desirable and possible in order to attain goals of community forestry at local levels, viz. forest conservation and equitable distribution of forest benefits (Banjade and Ojha, 2005, Ojha et al., 2014).

Though deliberation offers opportunities for inclusion, equal participation, increased legitimacy of the decision, ownership on the process and increased support for policy implementation, the existing power relationships and facilitation are key aspects to be considered. Planners facilitate deliberative processes that seek to produce a system of shared meanings between planners and the public. Deliberative planning is fundamentally linked to clarification of interests, and emphasis is given to transparency, inclusiveness, and truth-seeking.



Informal meeting with the CFUG leaders and key stakeholders

Initially, the facilitators organize an informal meeting with selected committee officials as well as key dignitaries from the CFUG. The main aim of the informal meeting is to understand each other and building trust to work in the CFUG. The meeting thus is intended to explore how the CFUG is working, what governance challenges exist and what type of support that the CFUG leaders expect from external researchers and facilitators. The research team also requires to briefly explain what deliberative planning is and how that could help in addressing the governance challenges that the CFUG is facing. The research team may need to hold several informal meetings before the CFUG welcomes to the team. Research team should have prior knowledge about the CFUG by reviewing any published or unpublished materials about the CFUG and by talking with FECOFUN leaders and DFO officials. When we select the CFUG in consultation with district and sub-district level stakeholders (e.g. DFO and FECOFUN), it will be easier to establish the relationship with the CFUGs. Local government officials could be the key resources for making connection with CFUGs and building workable relationships.

Formal meeting with CFUG committees

The main purpose of this step is to formalise deliberative governance and planning process in the CFUG. Before making actual decision for adopting the planning process, it is important to discuss with the executive committee about the key resources available, processes followed by the CFUG for planning and decision-making, how the committee was elected, how they were seeking inputs from CFUG general members, to what extent women, the poor and other marginalised communities participate in the governance processes, their history of forest management and governance, etc. Understanding power relationships along with other issues in the way the committee members perceived and

played their role in forest management as well as take consent to work closely with the group is important at this stage (Banjade et al., 2007). Providing a structured format for discussion and use of white board or flip charts can enhance the visibility and reflection. Discussion could be divided into various sessions: representation, decision-making processes, planning processes, key achievements, participation of marginalised communities, benefit distribution mechanisms, community development initiatives, forest management activities, status of inclusion and equity, etc.

We found that ECs are normally confronted, or often frustrated, with the poor participation of general users in CFUG activities. The researchers can then provide information on how discussing at toles, focus groups, and interest groups could help energize local people to participate in the CFUG activities.

Some leaders might fallaciously claim that they promote inclusion, deliberation and equity. In this situation tools such as heterogeneity analysis might help visualise the existing status on these issues. We found that categorising each member of the executive committee and sub-committees based on economic class, caste/ethnicity and gender provided a simple yet powerful opportunity of reflection among the leaders. In most of the cases, representation of marginalised groups is very minimal and leaders then start reflecting on the reasons of the poor representation. Similar analysis on the benefit distribution can also expose the status of inequity within the CFUG. This type of analysis might be a triggering point for the CFUG leaders to agree on adopting an inclusive and deliberative process.

In most of the cases, the chairpersons and secretaries of the committees seemed to be active in the management process and they paid little attention to the opinions of other users (as other members were also passive) in decision-making process. Most of the committee members were also not much aware about the activities such as financial transactions. Committee members and the users appeared to have little knowledge about their rights and responsibilities too.

The meeting with the EC should plan to organize tole level meetings and endorse the entire deliberative planning process. The EC meeting then will divide the entire CFUG into multiple toles of 15-25 households. Depending on how dense is the settlement, the household size in each tole could be altered.

Tole and interest/focus group meetings

Tole meetings are expected to be conducted to include all households of the CFUG. For researchers, tole meetings are the key spaces for collecting necessary information, understanding their knowledge of the CFUG governance and forest management initiatives, and their perception of how the CFUG is functioning and how they would like to see the community forestry in next decade or so.

During the meetings each participant should be given opportunities to put forward his or her ideas related to the governance, communication, forest management and so on. In our previous works, tole meetings provided deliberative space for each household and created room for their active contribution in the CFUG processes (Banjade et al., 2007).

The participants of the tole meetings should be allowed to speak up against any wrong doings of the EC or other members, perceived prejudices and injustices, and other grievances they hold. Therefore, EC members should not be interfering the tole meetings. It is important that researchers/facilitators should talk to EC leaders beforehand and convince them not to be offended by the issues raised at the tole and interest/focus group meetings. In cases, where EC leaders and the general users had severe conflicts, the facilitators organized tole meetings without the presence of the EC members.

At the end of each tole meeting, 2-3 tole representatives should be selected for planning workshops.

Workshop with tole representatives and executive committee

The workshop of tole representatives and the members of EC is most critical in preparing a plan, and hence the role of facilitators is very critical for the success of the workshop. Before the workshop, the researchers/facilitators should help tole representatives to organize information shared/raised during the tole meetings shared the issues and problems raised during the tole meetings. Some tole representatives are not confident in sharing their views in larger groups. Therefore, it is important that the workshop environment is created in such a way that they feel comfortable in sharing with other colleagues. Detailed written presentations, facilitators asking specific questions, or asking them to share collectively could be useful.

In our ACM facilitation workshops, the tole representatives appeared reluctant to speak against the EC members and other elites of the villages because of their domination and strong hold in the existing socioeconomic structures. Before the session, EC should be asked to respect the views and perception of people coming from the toles and not be offended. If the situation for sharing by tole representatives is not conducive, the facilitators can provide the analysis.

After sharing by each tole, it is important that the facilitators provide a general analysis of the information and issues collected from the toles. Key steps in the workshop:

- Introduction
- Sharing of information from toles
- SWOT analysis
- Deriving forces of change and key themes from SWOT analysis
- Developing at least three scenarios: trend, desirable and worst case
- Building general action plan based on the desirable scenario but considering worst possible scenario
- Electing sub-committees to elaborative activity plans (election of thematic committees which could develop activity plans)
- Invite local government (respective ward) representatives

Thematic committees or working group meetings

These meetings should work on detail in line with the discussions held at the joint workshop of tole representatives and EC. These working groups should also make use of available evidences while working on specific activity plans. Facilitators/research should also provide support in accessing the evidences relevant for the activities. These group meetings also work on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation plans.

General Assembly

The working groups would come up with the draft plans that are discussed at the tols and interest groups. The plan is eventually presented at the CFUG general assembly (GA) and endorse there. The GA then can create implementation sub-committees or give thematic committees to oversee the implementation process.

Other considerations for community forestry planning include various streams of work such as integrating with local government plans, the use of ICT in planning process and systematic documentation of each steps.

Conclusions

This report has reviewed a range of literature on planning theory and practice with regards to natural resource management (NRM) including forestry and Nepal's CF. The review shows that planning theories and practice have evolved from so-called the blueprint planning in which professional experts controlled the ways problems were identified, defined and solutions proposed, to the communicative turn in planning practice in which divergent voices have been deliberated for identifying negotiated problems and solutions. While planning theories and practice have evolved further in the age of globalisation and digitisation, communicative planning remains, despite various criticisms, one of the most widely used ideals for developing plans of the government, communities and business enterprises around the world today.

The report highlights the historical development of natural resource planning and management in the global south, moving from centralised approach to localised approach, with significant decentralisation and devolution of power and responsibilities to the local community level. Nepal's experience of CF demonstrates that the planning and management of forest resources by CFUGs has embraced integrated land use planning, scenario-based planning and adaptive collaborative management, leading to improve forest conditions and increased potential of benefit flows. However, there are a range of issues and opportunities that remain untapped, such as legitimacy of the process, equitable benefit sharing, capacity of forest agencies, role of local government, external support, gender inclusion and so on. In order to address challenges and exploit opportunities, it is argued that the planning and governance of CF needs improvement, if not transformation.

Planning Studio has been proposed as a methodological approach to investigate issues and opportunities of CF planning and governance at the local level. Deliberative planning cycle has been identified as a potential process to experiment and explore problems and solutions in the changing context of community forestry in Nepal.

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