

Field visit and participatory meetings with stakeholders at Sindhupalchowk (Chautara) and Kavrepalanchowk

(27 February – 2 March 2023)



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Acronyms

ACIAR	:	Australian Center for International Agricultural Research
AEFM	:	Active and Equitable Forest Management
CF	:	Community Forestry
CFUG	:	Community Forestry User Group
EnLiFT - 1	:	Enhancing Livelihoods and Food security from agroforestry and community forestry in Nepal
EnLiFT - 2	:	Enhancing Livelihoods from Improved Forest Management in Nepal
FAN	:	Forest Action Nepal
FECOFUN	:	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FenFIT-Nepal	:	Federation of Forest Based Industry and Trade, Nepal
FGD	:	Focused Group Discussion
GESI	:	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
NTFP	:	Non Timber Forest Products
UUL	:	Under Utilized Land

1. Background

It has been almost four decades since the commencement of Community Forestry (CF) in Nepal. In 2023, more than 22,000 Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) are functioning across the country. In the course of these decades, Nepal has often been cited as a success-story with exemplary Community Forestry (CF) practices. Despite these well-cited examples, however, the recent trends of stagnation and decline in CF-practices have rung a deep wake-up call for many users and stakeholders. Hence, various concerned groups from action-research institutions, CFUGs, scholars, members of the bureaucratic-ladders and policy-makers are trying to understand and revitalize the receding trends in CF-practices.

What is becoming apparent is that there are many dots that connect CF with the stakeholder-beneficiaries, albeit in differential ways. It is paradoxical to note that the CFUGs which are at the closest proximity from the forests (and forest-based-livelihoods) seem to be at the largest distance in terms of decision-making roles; on the other hand, the political-bureaucratic institutions of Nepal, which are comparatively at a father distance from their interaction to the forest on a day-to-day basis, are controlling the decisions. This paradox suggests that the decisions (or their lack thereof) made at the top bureaucratic institutions have major impacts in the livelihood functionalities of the local community; whereas, the decisions made by the local communities have little impact vice versa. Therefore, the productivity and efficiency of CF, to a considerable degree, is working under the assumption that all levels of the bureaucratic-hierarchy will naturally work to maximize the benefits for the CFUGs. In reality, however, this is not entirely accurate. Hence, an important indicator becomes, whether the complexity of the bureaucratic mechanism in Nepal, at least in part, could explain the receding trends in CF-practices compared to its robust and exemplary past.

2. Context of the field-visit

EnLiFT 2 is supported by the Australian Government and implemented by Forest Action Nepal (FAN). This project builds on the major lessons derived from phase one of the EnLiFT project, and runs in Nepal from July 2018 - June 2024. With three partner universities in Australia and four partner institutions in Nepal, the project has developed and experimented with some ideas such as AEFM and "cluster mechanism," among others in order to enhance livelihoods through forestry.

As part of the field visit for the ongoing EnLiFT-2 project, Naya Sharma, Hari Acharya and myself visited Chautara (Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality of Sindhupalchowk district), which is located at about three-four hours' drive towards the North-East from the capital of Kathmandu. Sindhupalchowk has 527 Community Forests, which is one of the largest number of CF in a district. We were at the field-site for four days. We conducted meetings with various stakeholders such as CFUG leaders, members of the community, DFO staffs and local government officials, FECOFUN, FenFIT and some key-informants from the field. The major resounding themes from these multi-variegated meetings were about bringing together silviculture, enterprise and governance into a synergistic space.

**Some major
highlights**

3. Forest-walkthrough at Ward number 13

As we went for a walk-through a patch of Community Forest (in Ward number 13 of Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality), we noticed ample regeneration of pine species (see Figure 1.1). In strictly environmental terms, Hari explained that the presence of good quality mother pine trees when combined with strategic crown-clearing results in good, new pine seedlings. This sustainability aspect of this silviculture practice is enhanced by combining it with making strips (to prevent and manage forest fire). During our walkthrough, we saw many young and healthy pine saplings growing at the field-site. Hari noted, however, that the stripping mechanism was in need of some immediate attention, especially since wild growth of some grass species had begun to smudge together the stripped and unstripped regions.

As we walked about, we also saw many mature "Sallo (Pine)" and "Chilaune" trees in the same forest patch; Hari explained that these species have a good symbiotic relationship in ecological terms (see Figure 1.2). Also, in terms of socio-economic utility, the broad leaf Chilaune when combined with Pine addresses both the community needs for fodder as well as hard-wood. However, the bureaucratic complexities often assert themselves when it comes to timber and NTFPs so that multiple actors (with their various agencies and motivations) come into an inter-play with the local community and the local products. As the forest resource base becomes a common niche of interest for many groups, both the pros. and cons. of the neoliberal/ socio-economic/ socio-political/ political-economic/ legal/ bureaucratic drivers and mechanisms compound and ensue. With regards to addressing these complex issues, certain meetings at multiple levels of governance such as local, municipal and provincial were held with actor-stakeholders during our field visit to Kavrepalanchowk-and-Sindhupalchowk.



Figure 1.1: Naya and Hari observing the regeneration of pine saplings as an effect of crown-clearing near Ward number 13 at Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality, Sindhupalchowk district (picture taken in 28 February 2023)



Figure 1.2: The pine and broad-leaved species can be seen together here (they are known to have a symbiotic relationship). (28 February 2023).

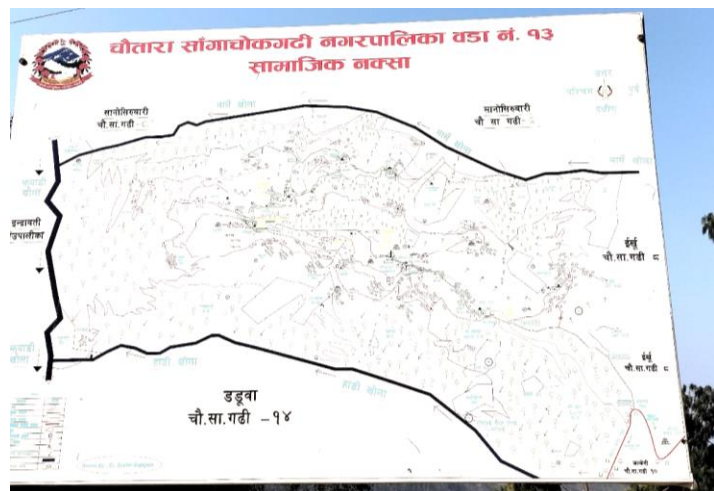
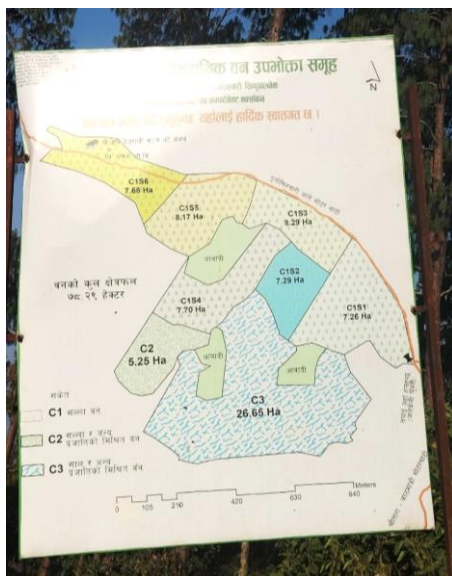


Figure 1.3: Ward number 13, Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality map in Sindhupalchowk district

4. Hopeful grounds for “collective action”

When trying to bridge together silviculture with enterprise, we are reminded of the need to address what the wider literature has identified as "the tragedy of the commons" that is especially relevant to developing countries like Nepal. On the bright-side, however, the working modality of action-research takes into account what Elinor Ostrom calls "collective action," which is seen as a good tried-and-tested solution, if implemented well, for overcoming the widely cited problem of the so-called tragedy of the commons. According to this theory, the members of the local community should have a substantial say in the decision-making roles, especially since they are at the core of both the issues and the resources, (not only in terms of where the forest resources are physically located), but also in terms of their livelihood dependency upon those resources.

Ethnographic narratives from the community members

general tone: animated expressions

general mood: hopeful, pro-active and keenly insightful

number of participants at the meeting: 17 (+ or - 2 people with partial attendance at the meeting). The participants' names and contact numbers have been noted.

format of the presentation: narratives from the field are either quoted or paraphrased so as to clarify the context. The exact narratives have been placed inside parenthesis. Some sentences are kept in the first-person narrative, while some are included as a generic discourse.

Concerning fuel-wood

Since the LPG gas began to be widely used for cooking purposes, nowadays, the wood from the forest has gone to waste ("LPG gas ayepachi kaath jharera gayera dhamira lagiraheka chan"). I had thought to use fuel-wood in my household, but my children ask me with an emotional undertone as to why we don't have gas in our household, or if we are cannot financially afford to buy gas ("Maile daura use garne soche thiyen; bachha bachhi le sodhchan, hami kahan gas kina chaina? hami nasakne bhayera ho?"). When we cut wood into pieces (for fuelwood) for 2 days, this amount of effort gets us a supply of wood that doesn't even last for 15 days; whereas, if we buy 1 cylinder of gas, the supply of fuel easily lasts for 1 - 2 months ("Daura chirai 2 din bata 15 din lai pugdaina; gas le 1 - 2 month lai pugcha"). These narratives point to the difficulty of the traditional practice of utilizing wood for domestic fuel (as an alternative to gas) in the household. However, from our informal observation in the community, we saw some households who had mixed-practices, utilizing both wood and gas for domestic purposes.



Figure 1.4: Community meeting in Shreechap CFUG Meeting Hall (28 February 2023).

Concerning wild animals

The number of “gooru” (ox) that was used for plowing the agricultural lands has declined because of the onset of tractors, which are mechanical vehicles used for agricultural practices.

In a collective tone, the villagers expressed their concern about monkey, wild-boar, deer, wild-chicken (“kaalij”) and porcupine entering their agricultural fields and destroying the vegetables such as potatoes, onions and garlic; the community members further remarked that it wouldn't bother them if these animals were content simply with eating some vegetables from their plantation; however, what genuinely concerns them is that these animals are keen on destroying/ up-rooting the plantation (“ukhalne”), especially those plants that have grown big (“monkey, bandel, mirga, kaalij, dumsi; aalu, pyaj, lasun ukhalcha; jun thulo chha, tyehi ukhalcha; khane matra bhayeni hunthiyo, bigarne, naas garne garcha”). The community also mentioned a trainer-facilitator who had come to their community and talked about using sirens to ring an alarm bell, whenever these wild animals entered their lands; however, an informant remarked that they are usually busy with various domestic chores such as looking after their domesticated cows, buffaloes, goats and chickens and if the siren should ring at that time, it would not make sense for them to leave their important task at hand and run towards the plantation fields to chase away the wild animals). The community also mentioned that, a huge blackish-textured animal that is as big as a “gooru” (ox) comes to the plantation field; on such an occasion, 5 - 7 of us tried to scare it away by making noise and walking towards it, but it didn't care and didn't get scared (“Euta kaalo aucha gooru jatrai huncha, 5 - 7 jana karaundai gayaun; anhan, matlab chaina, uu afno sur chaddaina”). On this note, Naya sir mentioned that

in earlier times when settlements were not so dense, the animals used to get scared from fire-torches, but now the animals have gotten used-to human settlements.

(A note on general tone and ambience of the meeting: when talking about which animals are entering the plantations at the fields, the female group members, who were seated together, discussed the matter among themselves and presented as a collective voice to the whole group; whenever Naya sir addressed the meeting, the whole group listened carefully; a tone of good-humor issued when the female groups said they sincerely read the Hindu religious text called "Ramayana" to which some male members casually commented that the monkey-gods must have heard to their calling and come to the plantation fields in a tone of good-natured humor).

We should adopt the practice of cutting the old trees and having new ones come in their place ("Purana kaath katera naya aune garna paryo").

Concerning private forests

An agricultural expert came to our community to give training about some potential agricultural production. The expert gave the advice that chilly can grow well in this region. I got curious about chilly-plantation (especially the species called, "akabare" chili). On slopes where we can't supply a lot of water, I planted chilly. I sold more than 200 kilograms of chilly (at 200 rupees per kilogram), which equates to about 43 - 45 thousand rupees. This success-story highlights the importance of being proactive, actively participating in expert training programs and actually implementing that into the agricultural practices. The informant further remarked that a few of them went to places such as Banepa, Kalimati (in Kathmandu) and Bhaktapur to inquire about the market rates, across different places, for the chilly. While this is not generalizable to all members of the community, the informant told that some people have collectively formed a plan to plant chili in about 8 - 10 ropani land. They have already talked with the local government (ward office). They say that the ward office has supported their endeavor and has decided to provide some plastics (for implementing some agricultural techniques). However, they said that the ward office may only bring them the necessary plastic supply (for agriculture) around the month of Baisakh, which will be long after the utility/need for the plastics is over. Hence, they proactively said that they can actually buy the plastics on time, if need be, thus demonstrating their preparedness to potential disruption that they anticipate (delay in the arrival of plastic).

As a response to this story, the female members of the meeting collectively said that, nowadays there is optimism about planting vegetables (females: "chaso ahile tarkari ma pani chha").

The informant who told the success-story about the chilly, went on to contextualize this specific case of agro-practice with the general trajectory of the meeting by saying that expert trainers could also come from sectors like forestry (just like agriculture), and train us about tree-plantation specifics, such as South-facing species, North-facing species and which tree-species will grow well in which region. As such, it would be fruitful to make a group-network of the community ("sanjal" or "sangathit hune").

During the conversation, the team from Forest Action Nepal (F.A.N.) mentioned that official paperwork needs to be registered with the DFO office. In response to this issue, some members of the community said that they were not sure why this kind of a process was necessary. In the subsequent conversation that ensued, the benefits of officially registering these paperwork were brought to the attention of everyone at the meeting.

- There is a system to register private forests; doing so helps in regulating mechanisms such as tree-count and the transport of timber goods ("nijiban darta garnu parne prakriya rakhiya chha, tree-count, osar pasar mechanism lai support huncha").
- If you can be a "forest-farmer", you get support from the DFO and the Municipality because they prioritize and allocate budget for such a category in both their working-mechanism and their operational plan. ("ban-kishan hunda DFO bata, nagarpalika bata, palika bata pani support, paisa aune bhayo because testa kura lai DFO le priority deene bhayo working-mechanism ani karyanwayan ma").
- The exact proof is needed for how much wood was sold ("kati bechyio bhanera thyakkai pramad chahiyo").
- Government revenue ("sarkari rajaswa ko kura bhayo").
- Did you sell your own product? Because that product could have been CF's or someone else's. You should be able to prove that what you sold was from your own land
- Taxation, revenue and legal application forms to be submitted ("teero, rajaswo, darta ka kura").
- This mechanism will also provide support in leadership and capacity-building ("netritwa, chyamata bridhhi pani huna maddhat puryaucha").

In response, people took on an overall optimistic and hopeful tone about the formation of a community group-network and started openly talking about how they previously felt cheated for having had to sell wood at very low market rates.

The complexity of timber and NTFPs

In fact, they often cited and referred to an example where 98 huge pieces of tree-logs were calculated by the buyers as equaling 98 cubic feet in total (which is falsely saying that 1 huge piece of tree-log is only 1 cubic feet). However, the community members took on a pro-active outlook and saw the advantages of forming a group-network, so that they can fix the intricacies of the enterprise, including the rates for the tree-logs, which will enable them to not get cheated by the buyers.

Instead of saying, "how will you help me?" we can say, "This is what we have, how can you support this?" This connects well with the idea of being proactive.

If we can strategically figure out efficient tree-clearing mechanisms, our whole village will be rich. In particular, we could cut "kutmero" tree species in half to sell the wood, while also keeping the rest of the half for new growth.

Forming a group

A formal name with paperwork was done and a members'-group was formed! A 7-member group was formed on the very occasion, where the participants present at the meeting decided whom to elect to which post (such as adyakchya, upadakchya, sachib, koshadyakchya, sadashya haru) keeping gender-balance in mind.

The group that was formed decided that they can fix the rates of the tree-wood (such as Saal, Chilaune). Interested buyers will have to meet those rates as fixed by the community. This shows that the community was aware of uplifting their "agency," especially vis-a-vis the timber and NTFP buyers.

The group also talked about details such as membership-fee, renewal of membership fee, how often to hold the community members' meetings, taxation across the places (such as differentiated by ward, various interested offices and municipalities). They decided that the rules and mechanisms will be built by the community members. This group-network formation has resonance with the idea of "collective action" as pointed out by Ostrom in her theory.

When some nuanced confusion about details of membership criteria came up (such as how much ropani of land must a person must own, or how much tree-count should be in their land) to gain membership into this group-network, Naya immediately clarified the confusion by accentuating that the whole idea behind making this group is to include many people from the community (being inclusive) and make things easier for everyone. Hence, he suggested that they not complicate things. Naya gave the concluding remarks as, "let us all work together and progress/grow together"

5. Meeting of the “cluster mechanism” at Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality

(8 male and 1 female at the meeting; +1 female member joined towards the end of the meeting)



Figure 1.5: Meeting on “cluster-mechanism” at the meeting hall of Ward number 8 (Irkhu) of Chautara Sangachowkgadi Municipality on 1 March 2023.

Major highlights of the meeting:

- A meeting between 18 CFUGs should be organized
- The idea of the “portable sawmill” sparked a lot of interest
- What will be the geographical coverage of the portable sawmill? How will the management of this mechanism be carried out? Is there a sufficient amount of wood? What are the demands of various actor-stakeholder groups? Insurance mechanisms for the portable sawmill should be made. Will the rate of the timer be based on cubic feet of wood or will it be based on the labor-utilized? A good monitoring system will be necessary as to whether or not relevant “billings” are done for the timber. If we are able to conduct this in an organized manner, the people will benefit.

- Since the “cluster mechanism” is in a trial phase, more wards could be integrated if the mechanism turns out to be a success; or, if the mechanism fails, this experimental tool will not have worked
- There were issues of people not attending the meetings despite being called multiple times (bureaucratic issues)
- How to regard individuals or groups that may bring wood from private forestry at the CF’s portable sawmill? Can this issue be addressed by keeping a different (increased) rate for the timber cutting services using the CF’s portable sawmill? Some narratives include: “ban sanga jodieko chha bhane amin rakhera lyaunu paryo”; “bholi, ban sanga jodieko chha bhane rukh katda ward le swikriti diyo bhanla, tyeso huda ward office lai samasya aucha”
- The DFO of Sindhupalchowk is in a transition-phase; as such, an interim working-modality would be fruitful

(An interesting observation at the meeting was that, while the “adyakchya” or chairperson talked, people would simply talk over him without hesitation and not listen well to the things being expressed)

6. Meeting with Binod Sapkota (Bagmati Province)

Naya and Binod talked about organizing a meeting with a clear design of FECOFUN’s program details. They also talked about/ identified various “neeta” (political personnel) who should be integrated into the meeting, including the logistical and organizational matters.

Some issues that were discussed during this meeting include:

- CF timber will roughly be estimated (there is technology for this)
- about the rate of timber products
- the size of the timber between the middle-actors (so that, if there happens to be more than + or – 10% variation between the actors, that will incur extra charges)
- decided to conduct a “test” with the DFO (in Kavre) because too many problems (“lafada”) were identified.
- Naya proposed a solution: forming a “sahakari” (co-operative/ group-network) rather than individual actors so that a collective “value chain” can be formed with the market mechanism. The rationale for this is that this will make things easier than for individual actors or individual CFUG to act in the market mechanism. This, yet again, resonates with the idea of “collective action” (Ostrom).

7. Meeting with the DFO of Kavrepalanchowk

(7 males at the meeting)

A conversation/discussion issued on the mechanisms relating to the cutting of standing-trees. The complexities about the quality of the wood, and what is to be regarded as “kaath” and what as “daura” issued. Someone said that if the size is less than 18 inches, that is considered kaath; whereas, if it is more than 24 inches that is considered as daura; however, someone also pointed out that some middle-actors regard less than 14 inches as daura. These inconsistencies cause different market rates. On this, the DFO suggested that the standard law be followed: he literally asked someone to open up the legal text and find the precise “bundha” for these issues.

(someone remarked, “time bachat garna gariblai pani gas chahieko po rahecha” which Naya sir thought was a good point)

When Naya sir talked about the “siwir” practice system for the Community Forestry sawmill, the DFO added that this mechanism can prevent potential illegal leakage because the rate is fixed.

Subsequent meeting

Madhav Mani Humagain (General Secretary, FenFIT) insisted that an inter-institutional meeting is very much needed to address the issues of hierarchy-actors situated in bureaucratic complexity. In fact, upon his insistence, a meeting among some available actors was organized on the same day.

(Madhav also suggested that a meeting be organized with about 30 – 40 people, including those from the Ministry, 2 DFOs from Sindhuli, 2 from Makwanpur, 1 from Chitwan, representatives from EnLiFT, FECOFUN and FenFIT-Nepal; while organizing this, he talked about utilizing efficient logistics so that EnLiFT’s budget can be saved, which will have a good utility value later. The main idea behind this meeting is to simplify the bureaucratic complexity and make the project more efficient.)

8. Conversation with a key-informant about the cluster mechanism

A key-informant (name kept anonymous) involved in the cluster mechanism mentioned that in the initial days he had tried to organize meeting between stakeholders and CFUGs by calling some people as many as five times a day. However, he said that these people simply ignored his calls. Now, he says that he is not interested to call them anymore because he observed that despite his efforts, their attitude reflected their lack of concern. He mentioned how some relevant people remain busy in the city with their political motives. He also expressed his worries about his lack of access to financial resources, which he believes should be utilized for

the benefit of CFUGs, such as organizing trainings on forest fire management. Although he studied forestry, he is looking to go abroad because he is facing with lack of financial resources and is frustrated with how inefficient things seem to be.

He mentioned an instance of a success-story, with some glimmer of hope in some distant corner of his mind as he introduced the topic of "eco-tourism". He also said that people are getting interested in the production of lemon, timmur ("pepper"), grass ("ghaas"), alaichi ("cardamom") as alternatives to pines; however, this opinion was not found to be generalizable, from talking with other members of the same community.

While he agreed that group-works and "collective action" are good drivers for success, he suggested that CF needs well-built financial mechanisms to be more efficient.

9. Various issues raised

- In contrast to the issue on fuel-wood raised by some community members, there were also those who were of the opinion that the wood from the forest may have been protected because LPG gas came into the community. **(during the village walkthrough)**
- Even before conducting any task, people go about with the attitude that they will take the profits, should there be any. How can group-work function under such conditions? Until the public can be sustainable by themselves, how will they work in a group? ("pahilei dekhi phaida bhayo bhane jaas maile linchu bhanera hidya hunchan. tyeso bhaye pachi group kasari work garcha?; public afai sustainable huna na sake samma how will they work in a group?") **(as expressed by Dinesh Tulal from the Media)**
- People tend to look for immediate profit nowadays; things are not like yesterday when the people were interested in small-woods for domestic purposes (in this context, "daura," also called small-wood, is seen as being different from "kaath," also called large-wood; "hijo jasto daura tira dhyan gayena"). The DFO from Sindhupalchowk says, "there are only old men and women in the village-community nowadays; the number of people has reduced ("gaun ma budha budhi matrai chan, manche ghate: **as expressed by the DFO in Chautara**").
- Naya raised some concerns while in conversation with the DFO in Chautara, such as: We are supposed to connect Enterprises, CF and Women empowerment, but, have we become too business-focused in the process? Have the project-workers who come to the village-communities only gotten interested in showing off flashy and fancy achievements? ("field tira manche jhilimili dekhauna po concerned bhaye?"). The context of this articulation hints that Naya is **trying to assess what some of the potential community concerns could be**.
- During the talks between Naya, Hari and myself in our apartment (in Chautara), some major points from the meetings were re-iterated and contextualized, such as: the DFO

is going to change and people are wondering which political coloring the new DFO will have; from FAN, we should also be mindful of this transition because most of the EnLiFT-project work was done during the working-term of the present DFO, who is familiar with our work, whereas the new DFO will need to be familiarized with our work; we identified some recurrent themes from various meetings as being a concern about “internal politics,” which has made it rather difficult to organizing meetings between different groups; we briefly touched on the idea that it would be productive if we can identify heterogeneous FGD groups from within the Forestry groups. **(during the conversation between FAN field-team at the apartment in Chautara).**

- With regards to the bureaucratic hierarchy structure, it was mentioned that legal knowledge should be made transparent across all levels. CF-practices will be more efficient if people are made aware of their incentives. **(during the conversation at the DFO office in Chautara)**
- The incidents of forest fire have increased; there are issues about which tree-species soak up how much water. **(community members)**
- Nowadays, because of Climate Change, there are incidents of heavy rainfall that only last a while. This kind of rainfall can only wet the surface soil; whereas, the deep soil remains dry because the rainwater does not get a chance to seep deep into the soil. **(during the conversation with the community members).**



Figure 1.6: Meeting with the DFO at Chautara (Sindhupalchowk district) on 27 February 2023



Figure 1.7: Portable sawmill at the DFO Office in Chautara (Sindhupalchowk district). (27 February 2023).

10. Travel-conversation between myself and Naya (informal)

It is pleasantly surprising how the external environment you're situated in can subtly steer the themes of your conversations. As Naya Sharma and myself journeyed to Chautara on a warm and pleasant morning from Kathmandu, the winding climbs of hillside roads, painted by greens on either sides, set the right kind of ambience for conversing about nature. What started as casual remarks on how pleasant it felt to gulp fresh air when moving farther from the city, soon metamorphosed into the theories of "collective action" by Ostrom, with an occasional undertone on subject-matters such as the human-psyche as represented in critically-acclaimed movies like, "The Lord of the Flies". Our conversation on our way back from the field-visit was not too far removed from these themes.

At one point of our journey, Naya remarked on an important question: "What constitutes our perception of happiness and well-being?" He went on to say that as the so-called "development" initiatives entered into various community spaces of rural Nepal, the hitherto happy and content members of the community began comparing themselves to the benchmarks

as set by the Western worlds, so foreign from their native walks-and-ways. People of the community found themselves readily asking, “how many modern amenities do I own?”, or “What kind of a smart-phone do I use?”: these seemingly harmless and naïve utilitarian questions began to seep into the community’s ontological-cosmological worldview. As development initiatives accelerated and became normalized, the crossover between utilitarian and ontological grounds occurred, that too at such a subtle pace that you weren’t quite sure if it is was gradual or drastic. People were suddenly more aware of the things they lacked than the things they actually had. And since the world of consumerism is almost inexhaustible, it became paradoxical where you lost track of your pre-owned happiness in the race of buying it.

That, of course, is not to say that “amenities,” by themselves, are these super-intelligent evil entities/hyper-objects which cleverly conspire and re-design the human psyche to chase after them. However, these hyper-objects only made sense when they were neatly situated into their respective space. After all, it does not take too many crop-cycles for a farmer to realize the long-term benefits of using native/indigenous seeds instead of the market-lucrative alternative, which is the artificially modified and chemical-induced variety. However, the salient question is: “by the time the farmer has become aware of this, how many actual native seeds remain to “re-revise” their farming practices?” In other words, how does one “re-develop development” paradigms, like multiplying two negative numbers to get back the positive number, and get in touch with one’s native roots and practices?

Our conversational tones alternated between academic and philosophical.