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PARTICIPATORY INPUTS IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY
A CASE STUDY OF CHHANG VILLAGE PANCHAYAT
OF TANAHU DISTRICT

Kishore K.C.

HMG-USAID-GTZ-IDRC-FORD-WINROCK PROJECT
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN THE
FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN NEPAL

FOREWORD

This Forestry Research Paper Series is funded through the project, "Strengthening Institutional Capacity in the Food and Agricultural Sector in Nepal," a cooperative effort by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development. This project has been made possible by substantial financial support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and the Ford Foundation.

One of the most important activities of this project is funding for problem oriented research by young professional staff of agricultural agencies of the MOA and related institutions, as well as for concerned individuals in the private sector. In particular, funding is provided by the Ford Foundation to support research activities related to the human aspects of natural resource management. This research is carried out with the active professional assistance of the Winrock staff.

The purpose of this Forestry Research Paper Series is to make the results of the research activities related to forestry available to a larger audience, and to acquaint younger staff and students with advanced methods of research and statistical analysis. It is also hoped that publication of the Series will stimulate discussion among policymakers and thereby assist in the formulation of policies which are suitable to the management of the natural resource systems upon which the development of Nepal's agriculture depends.

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Michael B. Wallace
Gerard J. Gill
Series Editors

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nepalese hill ecosystem is facing the problem of rapid depletion of forest resources. The loss of forest land in Nepal has significantly increased in recent years as a result of encroachment for cultivation and increased extraction of timber, fuelwood and fodder. The environmental degradation resulting from these factors is becoming visible in terms of decline in soil fertility due to loss of topsoil and landslides.

According to the National Planning Commission, the forest area cover was 34.2% in 1974 and this decreased to 31.3% in 1979. It was estimated that by 1984 this figure would have reduced to 16%. Such a trend implies that there will be no forests in Nepal by the year 2000 AD. A growing concern for the conservation of resources and maintenance of a sound ecological balance in the hill ecosystem of Nepal has led to various policy measures aimed at the systematic management, conservation and utilization of forest resources.

In the traditional system of forest management local communities took an active part in the protection and management of village forest as well as in the utilization of its products. This traditional system virtually disappeared after the nationalization of forests in 1956 and the enactment of the Forest Act of 1961. The traditional system of village authority for forest management was abolished and this power transferred to the district level Forest Office. This gradually led to the alienation of the local community from the protection and management of local forests, which accelerated the depletion of forest resources instead of conserving them. This overlooked link in forest management i.e., local community involvement, is now recognized as a crucial factor for the success of any programme designed to conserve the forest resource. The Government thus implemented the National Forestry Plan in 1976 which has become the major policy guideline for forestry in Nepal. The National Forestry Plan has given much emphasis to community involvement to preserve, promote and develop forest and forest products. The legal enactments for the establishment of community forest, called Panchayat Forest (PF) and Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF), in 1978 paved the way for the implementation of the policies continued in the National Forestry Plan. The village panchayat is required to manage PF and PPF on the basis of management plans to be prepared by the Forest Department in consultation with villagers. Almost 45% of the existing national forest land can be handed over to the village level panchayats. The main features of the PF and PPF are the following.

a. Panchayat Forest (PF) Any forest land two thirds of which need planting, can be defined as Panchayat Forest. Each village panchayat is eligible for 125 hectares of forest land for the creation of Panchayat Forest. All the income from the sale of forest products from PF will go to the panchayat treasury.

b. Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF) - Any forest land which needs protection and/or enrichment planting can be handed over as panchayat protected forest. Each panchayat is entitled to up to 500 hectares of forest land for the creation of PPF. Seventy-five percent of the income from the sale of forest products from PPF will go to the panchayat treasury and 25 percent to the government treasury.

The establishment of PF and PPF have initiated a new phase in the management of community resources. By establishing community forests the local panchayats take responsibility for plantation and forest protection as well as for meeting the local people's demand for timber, fuelwood and fodder in a planned way. The participation of the local people is a crucial factor for the establishment and management of community forests. The village community as a whole takes responsibility for the protection of the newly-planted trees in the community forests. The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, in accordance with the policy measures and legal enactment earlier mentioned, has implemented the Community Forestry Development Program (CFDP) in 28 hill districts of Nepal for a five year period starting from 1980. This programme was funded jointly by HMG and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. In most of the other hill districts not covered by CFDP, the ongoing Integrated Rural Development Programs and the Resource Conservation and Utilization Project include forestry components that emphasize community level forestry programs.

1.1 Relevance of the Study

The present study documents and analyses the nature and extent of people's participation in the Community Forestry Program as a model for the conservation of forest resources in the hill areas of Nepal. This study has policy implications regarding people's participation in the CFDP. To what extent has the CFDP been successful in enlisting the desired degree of people's participation? Has the Community Forestry Program increased the awareness of the people about the need for conservation of forest resources?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study had the following specific objectives:

- to examine the nature and extent of peoples' participation in CFDP.
- to study the attitudes and perceptions of local people towards the community forestry programme.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL PROFILE OF THE VILLAGE

3.1 Geography and Climate of Chhang Village Panchayat

Chhang is one of the panchayats of Tanahu District in the Central Development Region. The area of the village panchayat is approximately 20 square km, it has an average elevation of 1000 meters, and its climate is sub-tropical. The average rainfall is 2000 mm. The monsoon is the major source of rainfall, little rainfall being received in the winter. Perennial vegetation consists of deciduous and evergreen trees. Common tree species are Sal (*Shorea Robusta*), Khote Sallo (*Pinus Roxburgii*), Uttis (*Alnus Nepalensis*), Paiyun (*Prunus Cerasoides*), Chilaune (*Schima Wallachii*), Koiralo (*Bauhinia Spp.*), Bakaino (*Melia Azedarah*), Kavro (*Picus Lacor*), Rhododendron, Khair (*Acacia Catechu*), Simal (*Salmaha Malabasica*), and Phadke (*Albizia Locidia*).

Most of the land is on sloping hillsides but there is also some flat low land along the river banks. The soil is sandy and alluvial on the flat land and sticky brown mud mixed with stone and pebbles on the hills. In some of the areas the earth is red in color, hard and said to be less fertile. Most of the low lands are irrigated, while the hills have little or no irrigation.

2.2 Basic Data of the Village

The total population of Chhang Village Panchayat is 5719 persons, 2755 males and 2964 females. Population is approximately 250 persons per square kilometer. Gurung, Magar and Newar are the majority caste groups. Kami, Damai and Chhetri are in the minority.

Table 1. Total Households and Population of Chhang by Ward.

Ward	Household	Female	Male	Total	Major Ethnic Groups
1	70	341	329	670	Brahmin, Chhetri, Kami
2	70	225	227	452	Magar, Sarki, Kami, Damai
3	77	249	282	562	Newar, Sarki, Kami, Damai
4	81	343	323	666	Newar, Sarki, Kami, Damai
5	144	430	432	862	Newar, Sarki, Kami, Damai
6	94	314	331	645	Newar, Sarki, Kami, Damar
7	56	159	165	325	Gurung, Kami, Newar
8	80	387	380	767	Gurung, Sarki, Damai
9	127	312	425	807	Gurung, Sarki, Kami
Total	799	2964	2755	5719	

Source: Chhang Village Panchayat Office.

2.3 Language

Generally, the people of Chhang Village Panchayat use Nepali for communication, though different ethnic groups have their own dialects.

2.4 Religion

Hinduism is the major religion in Chhang Village Panchayat. Buddhism occupies the second position.

2.5 Economy

Rice and maize are the major crops grown in Chhang Village. Other crops include millet, wheat, barley, and soyabean.

Although the total number of livestock could not be quantified almost all the people keep domestic animals such as buffaloes, cattle, goats, pigs, chicken, and ducks. The main source of fodder is the nearby forest and the homestead. Energy is supplied by the local forest, although kerosene is used for lighting.

2.6 Literacy of Sample Household

Of the sample households of 100, 67 were literate. (Literacy is defined in the Methodology chapter.)

Table 2. Literacy of Chhang Village Panchayat by Caste
(100 households)

Caste	Total No. of Households	No. of Literate Households	Percent of Literates
Magar	43	31	72
Kami	21	3	14
Newar	18	18	100
Chhetri	18	15	83
Total	100	67	67

Source: Field Survey.

2.7 Land Holding Status of Sampled Households

The average landholding is 20.93 ropanis consisting of 'khet' and 'pakho' land. The following Table shows that Newars have the highest average landholding size, i.e. 23.25 ropanis.

Table 3. Landholding by Caste

Caste	Total Landholding	In Ropani
		Average Landholding
Magar	885.8	20.60
Newar	488.25	23.25
Kami	311.04	17.28
Chhetri	406.80	22.60

Source: Field Survey,.

2.8 Community Forestry Development Program in Chhang

Most of the wards lack Panchayat Protected Forest (PPF). Four wards have PPF which means that they have good sources of fuelwood, fodder and timber, while other wards have only Panchayat Forest. Plantation in the PF was done 4-5 years before the survey and the rate of survival is discouraging. It cannot be called successful plantation. Most of the trees planted were Sal and Chilanne.

There is much controversy regarding the boundary between PPF and PF. Those in wards without PPF regarded the assignment of such forest to other wards as depriving them of the source of their wood, for those wards having PPF do not allow people from other wards to utilize it. This is because wards with PPF believe that the forest belongs to their ward because they are responsible for its protection and they argue that the government has allotted the forest to them. Hence the use of the Panchayat Protected Forest is limited to wards 7, 8, and 9 only.

For the administration and management of the forest a Committee was formed in every ward, the Ward Chief being the chairman. This Committee is expected to organize the CFDP. The members of the Committee tend to be members of local elite groups and panchas who were supposed to be active workers with knowledge and power. They were nominated by the Panchayat Committee, supposedly incorporating the general opinion of the population. This Committee is given full authority to manage the forests and also to enlist the people's help for the functioning of the CFDP programs.

The extent of people's participation in implementation of CFDP depends upon the leadership of the Committee on the one hand and the local people's enthusiasm on the other.

Table 4. Basic Data Relating to PF and PPF

Wards	Types of Forests	Area (ha.)	Year of Demarcation Protection and Plantation	No. of Saplings Planted
1	Panchayat Forest	5.0	1977	1000
2.	Panchayat Forest	3.0	1983	100
3.	Panchayat Forest	1.5	1982	-
4.	Panchayat Forest	2.0	1982*	-
5.	Panchayat Forest	2.0	1982	-
6.	Panchayat Forest	2.0	1982	-
7.	Panchayat Protected Forest	6.0	1980	-
8.	Panchayat Protected Forest	5.0	1980	-
9.	Panchayat Protected Foest	5.0	1980	-

Source: Chhang Village Panchayat Office.

* Protected only; not yet planted.

Table 4 shows the types of forest in the different wards and the areas allotted to them. Normally most of the Panchayat Protected Forest in the Village has not been planted. This is also true of the Panchayat Forest.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Definition of the Variables

People's participation is an essential aspect of the community forestry program. This is often narrowly defined as the voluntary contribution of labor and/or cash by local people to the construction of certain projects. However, conceptually people's participation includes their participation in decision-making, implementation, benefit sharing and evaluation (Cohen and Uphoff, 1976/7). Within this conceptual framework, people's participation in community forestry could encompass the following variables.

Participation in Decision-making

The identification and/or selection of PF and PPF is done by the local panchayat through discussion and consensus at the village assembly before applying to the Forest Division. Likewise, local people are expected to provide participatory inputs regarding site selection for the village nursery and the choice of species of fodder, fuelwood and timber trees.

Decision making in the present context was defined as the actual involvement of the local people in group discussion regarding the project in the village assembly. The choice of the program (CFDP) was made by top level authorities. The decision of the villagers was limited to site selection or identification of the areas for PFs and PPFs and the demarcation of community forests. Hence, the attendance by the respondents at village panchayat meetings and the sort of advice provided at the decision making level of CFDP are the only available indicators of people's participation at the decision making level. Respondents who attended meetings more than twice a year are considered as having participated in decision-making.

Participation in Implementation

Local people may participate in the implementation of the community forestry programme in a variety of ways. The two main indicators of participation in implementation are the contribution of voluntary labor and/or cash to the plantation of trees and the protection and management of planted trees.

People's participation in implementation has been looked at from two angles. First, people contributed either cash or labor for the program. Their resource contribution has been taken into consideration. Second, the nature of people's participation in CFDP management and administration has been studied. In the present context people contributed only "voluntary labor". It has been observed that the village panchayat assembly passed the proposal that every household ought to provide voluntary labor for the CFDP. In this sense voluntary labour was imposed rather than self-motivated. Some of the people have contributed relatively more and hence their participation is high. The present study attempts to analyse people's participation according to different characteristics: literacy, ethnic group, economic status, etc.

For the administration and management of the forest a committee has been formed in every ward, the Ward Chief being the chairman. This committee was expected to perform the work of the CFDP. The members of the committee were members of local elite groups and panchas who were supposed to be active workers with knowledge and power. They were nominated by the panchayat committee, supposedly incorporating the general opinion of the commoners. This committee was given full authority to manage the forests and also to enlist the people's help for the functioning of the CFDP programs.

The extent of people's participation in the implementation of CFDP depends upon the leadership of the committee on the one hand and the local people's enthusiasm on the other.

Analysis of panchas and other social elites has been conducted in the last part of the study together with an analysis of the extent to which households contributed labor and other inputs to the administration and management of CFDP.

Participation in Benefits

Local people may get some direct benefits from the Community Forestry Program in the form of fuelwood, fodder and cut grass from the community forests. However, it may be difficult fully to evaluate people's receipt of benefits because most of the community forests having only recently been established. The benefits derived by the villagers from the program were the forest resources utilized by individuals. Forest resource utilization in terms of fuelwood and fodder has been the basis of analysis in the present context.

Respondents are classified into three types. Total holding is the sum total of 'khet', 'pakho' and 'bari' land. The classification is "small farmers" (0-15 ropani), medium farmers (16-30 ropani) and big farmers (31 ropani and over). (One ropani equals 0.05 hectares.)

Participation in Evaluation

The participation of local people in evaluation includes their perception of the implementation and management of community forests expressed either in a formal gathering or in private.

The above mentioned indicators of people's participation are examined and analysed in the present study. For a fuller understanding of the nature and extent of this, the study includes variables representing the socio-economic characteristics of the local population. The program provided ample opportunity for panchas, local people and officials of the Forest Division to participate in the evaluation. The comments, whether negative or positive, regarding the work performance of the personnel have been the basis of analysis.

Caste/Ethnic Group

The local population is classified according to caste/ethnic groups and the participation of the local people is analysed in terms of caste/ethnic composition to see whether there are significant differences in participation across these groups. In the Nepalese context, leadership is predominately a function of the upper castes. The success or failure of any developmental program depends greatly upon the interests of these castes. Hence, participation in community forestry across caste groups is relevant to the discussion.

Educational Level

It is believed that education is an important leadership characteristic. The level of education is related to higher social and economic status, as is access to education itself. A positive attitude towards any community development program by the educated people of the village can make it successful. Hence, the nature and extent of CFDP participation by literates vis-a-vis illiterates is important. For our purposes we have defined literates as those who can read newspapers and write letters.

Social Status

The local population is classified according to social status in order to study the relationship between this variable and participation. The two social groups are classified simply as "elites" and "commoner". Actually, the elite group is the summation of educated, economically sound and upper caste people. They include the local panchayat and class organization leaders, religious leaders, village money lenders, government employees, traditional village leaders, landlords, etc. The rest were classified as commoners.

Economic Status

In the rural areas of Nepal, the size of land holding generally reflects the economic status of a household. Hence the local population is classified by the size of their land holdings into small, medium and large farmers.

Generally, rich people are the influential persons in a community. They usually belong to landed and wealthy families. They preside over community matters, supervise various activities of the village and are the link between the central government and the villagers, acting as spokesmen for the community. Their participation is important for the success of any program. In this context, the relationship between people's participation and their economic status has been analysed.

4.2 Data Collection

The major source of data for the present study is a household survey based on individual interviews, for which pre-structured questionnaires were used. Information about the CFDP was also collected from different personnel, such as officials working in the Forest Development Department, and knowledgeable persons of the village and local panchas. A meeting was called in Chhang Village Panchayat in order to solicit relevant information about the CFDP. Four separate pre-structured questionnaires were prepared for the panchas and social elites. The latter are the major catalysing agents, on whose leadership depends the future of the program. They are the change agents of the village.

4.3 Sample size

Out of a total 799 households, 100 households heads were interviewed, representing approximately eleven households per ward. For sample selection single random sampling was used. Fourteen panchas and members of the "elite" group were separately interviewed. Therefore, including these, a total of 114 households were interviewed. The information derived from the 14 "elite" households is not presented in tabular form, but is included in the discussion.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1 Participation in Decision Making

As mentioned earlier, participation in decision making is indicated by the respondents' attendance at the village panchayat meeting and by whether or not they provided any sort of advice to the CFDP at the decision-making level. Out of 100 respondents, 67 said that they attended the meeting and provided some advice regarding the decisions in CFDP. Their advice differed in three ways. Out of 58 persons who provided suggestions, 55 percent did so through the village panchayat meeting, 30 percent personally and 10 percent gave advice indirectly through informal channels. These informal channels included informal gatherings at certain places like tea shops. When asked about the subjects discussed in formal and informal meetings, 65 percent of the above 67 respondents said that the subject was site selection for PF, 20 percent be said it was for PPF and the remaining 15 percent for afforestation programs. Though they participated through indirect and direct means, 67 households were motivated to participate in the meetings by village level panchas, 4 percent participated in the meeting when they themselves were panchas and nine percent were self-motivated. This highlights the important role of panchas in motivating local people regarding participation in decision-making.

Participation by Caste

Magars are the most numerous caste in Chhang Village Panchayat. Newars settle in clusters in the "market area" of the village. Kamis are mainly settled in Wards 5 and 6. Chhetris do not have specific areas of settlement and are found scattered in almost all the wards.

Table 5. Participation in Decision Making by Attending Meetings and Advice Provided for CFDP by Caste

Caste Group	Total No.	Advice Provided by Attending Meeting				
		Yes	%	No	%	Total %
Magar	43	28	64.3	15	36.	100
Newar	18	9	50.0	9	50.	100
Chhetri	18	15	83.3	3	17.	100
Kami	21	15	71.4	6	29.	100

Source: Field Survey.

Table 5 shows that, except for Newars, all ethnic groups have fairly high participation rates. One explanation for this apparent variation may be the fact that Newars, being mostly engaged in business, have regular employment in their shops and cannot afford to take time off for panchayat meetings.

Participation by Literacy Status

As mentioned earlier, Newars are the most literate ethnic group of the four in Chhang panchayat. All 18 Newars are literate. Fifteen percent of the 18 Chhetris and 31 percent of the 43 Magars are literate. The least literate among the ethnic groups are Kamis; only 3 of a total of 21 Makis are literate.

The overall trend of participation by literacy shows that out of 67 literate people 46 (71.9%) participated in decision-making while among illiterates the participating number is 21 (58.3%). Hence participation is higher among literates. Literate persons generally take an active role in decision-making. The reason may be that it is the literate people of the village who are most knowledgeable. Generally familiar with what is going to happen in the village, they do not hesitate to take part in such matters.

Participation by Economic Status

The highest participation rate was found among large farmers. Small farmers participated the least out of the three groups (Table 6). The explanation for this is that rich people generally do not work in their fields. They employ other people for farm work and can therefore spare more time for outside activity.

Table 6. Meeting Attendance by Land Holding Class

Types Farmers	Meeting Attended		Meeting Attended		Total	%
	Yes	%	No	%		
Small	24	(51.)	23	(49.)	47	100
Medium	17	(63.)	10	(37.)	27	100
Large	20	(77.)	6	(23.)	26	100
Total	61		39		100	

Source: Field Survey

Participation by Social Status

The analysis of the "elites" regarding their inputs in CFDP through meetings indicates that 100 percent of them attended the meetings and provided inputs in decision-making. The total number of "elites" was 10. Out of 90 "commoners" 57 participated in the decision-making.

People who go to the village with new programs consult members of the "elite" group. Hence, on the one hand outsiders encourage them to participate in the programs and on the other elites themselves take part in decision-making out of their own self-interest.

In conclusion, household heads who were literate participated relatively more than illiterates, while large farmers participated most. Among caste groups, Chhetris participated most. Finally, between the two social classifications the participation by "elite" groups was higher than that of "commoners".

Generally, literate people are rich people as they have access to education and form the social elite of the Gaon. There were few Chhetris in the sample, but they were found to be rich in terms of land holding and they were educated too. In villages decision making is usually done by these knowledgeable persons. Economically backward and low caste people rarely come to public gatherings or participate in discussions.

5.2 Participation in Implementation

Participation in the implementation of CFDP basically means providing voluntary labor on the one hand and providing help in management and administration for CFDP implementation. In the present context we will concentrate on these two variables.

Out of the total respondents (100 households), 48 contributed voluntary labor to CFDP. This varied from one to three man-days. Indicators of equity of benefit in relation to contribution of voluntary labor is analysed in a later chapter. Fifty two sample households did not contribute any resource.

Contribution by Caste

Among the ethnic groups, the percentage of labor contributed by Newars is the same as by Chhetris (83.3%), but the extent of contribution differed in terms of days (see Table 7). Newars are the highest participant group in terms of days provided voluntarily to CFDP. This may be due to the fact that Newars are among the elite of the village and they are the economically best-off caste group.

Table 7. Labor Provided and No. of Days Contributed by Caste

Caste	No.	Households Contributing Voluntary Labor		Contributed Labor Days		
		No.	%	1 day	2 days	3 days
Magar	43	15	35.7	12	3	-
Kami	21	3	14.2	-	3	-
Newar	18	15	83.3	6	6	3
Chhetri	18	15	83.3	-	6	9

Source: Field Survey.

Analysis of participation by caste in the management of the CFDP shows that Newars have the highest rate of participation (see Table 8). Kamis are at the other extreme. This may be due to the fact that Kamis get less opportunity to participate in the decision making and management process of CFDP. They are socially "backward" and the least educated group. The Newar community has more influence in the village because they are educated, rich and active.

Table 8. Participation in Management and Administration of CFDP by Caste

Caste	Help in the Protection of Forest		Persons not Helping
	Stop Cattle Grazing	Stop Cutting Grass	
Magar	22 (51%)	12 (28%)	9 (21%)
Newar	15 (83%)	-	3 (16%)
Ghhetri	15 (83%)	-	3 (16%)
Kami	9 (43%)	3 (14%)	9 (43%)

Source: Field Survey

Contribution by Literacy Group

The overall picture of literates and illiterates shows that the percentage providing forest protection is very much higher for literates than for illiterates while in terms of labour contribution the positions are reversed (Tables 9 and 10). The respective percentages providing protection of forest resources are 82 and 64. Here, literate people participated more than the others in respect to management. The conclusion is that literate people preferred to participate by providing ideas rather than by physical work, while the others provided more labor.

Table 9. Literacy Status and Labor Contribution

Status	Households Contributing Labor %	Contributed (days)			Households not contributing %	Total %
		1 %	2 %	3 %		
Literate	29 (43.3)	11 (37.4)	9(31.0)	9(31.0)	38(56.7)	100
Illiterate	19 (57.6)	6 (31.6)	7(36.8)	6(31.6)	14(42.4)	100

Source: Field Survey.

Table 10. Literacy Status and Participation in CFDP Management and Administration

Status	Total No.	Help in the Protection	Help not Given No..
Literate	67	55 (82%)	12 (18%)
Illiterate	33	21 (64%)	12 (36%)

Source: Field Survey

Economic Status and Labor Contribution

The purpose here is to analyse the relationship between voluntary labor contribution to the CFDP and the economic status of the people. The basic purpose is to discover which section of villagers (rich or poor) participated more in the implementation of CFDP. Table 11 shows that labour contribution is inversely related to farm size.

Table 11. Labor Contribution by Land Holding

Types of Farmers	Total Households	No. of Households giving Labor	Total No. of Days given
Small	45	18 (40.0%)	36
Medium	24	12 (50.0%)	24
Large	31	18 (58.0%)	36

Source: Field Survey

Economic Status and Participation in Management and Administration of the CFDP

Small farmers are the highest participating group of among the three. All 45 small farmers provided inputs to CFDP management and administration by stopping cattle grazing and the cutting of grass in CFDP areas. Large farmers participated least (Table 12).

Table 12. Economic Status and Participation in Management and Administration of CFDP

Types of Farmers	Total No.	Stop Cattle Graze	Stop Cut Grass	Total Households Participating
Small	45	35 (77.8%)	10 (22.2%)	45 (100.0%)
Middle	24	12 (80.0%)	3 (20.0%)	15 (62.5%)
Large	31	14 (87.5%)	2 (12.0%)	16 (51.6%)
Total	100	61	15	76

Source: Field Survey

The explanation for this may be that small and medium farmers actually work in their own fields and look after livestock. Participation in management and administration has a narrow definition in this context dealing only with prevention of cattle grazing and the cutting of grass within the community forestry area. This sort of work is being done by people who are out of their houses and at work on the land. Rich farmers generally remain at home and use hired labor for farm work. This means that large farmers are often not in a position to monitor cattle grazing which is in breach of the rules set out for the protection of community forests.

Participation in Administration and Management by Social Status

Out of the 48 households providing voluntary labor, four were socially elite and 44 were "commoners". Thus 40 percent of the total number of "elites" in the sample had participated in implementation by providing voluntary labor. These households provided two man-days each. Similarly, out of 76 households which helped in the management and administration of CFDP, six were "elite" and 70 "commoners". The percentage of participation by the former is 62.5 percent.

5.3 Participation in Benefit Sharing

CFDP is a recent program initiated only five years ago. The gestation period for forest resources is longer than this, so that it is difficult to calculate the benefit derived from the program. However, assessment of some of the benefits, such as the collection of fuelwood and fodder from PPF, has been attempted.

Caste-wise Participation

The majority of the sample population (52%) collect fuelwood and fodder from nearby forests. Only 21 percent have access to community forest and 27 percent get their fuelwood and fodder from their own land.

Table 13. Source of Fuelwood by Caste

Caste	Total No.	From Own Land	From Nearby Forests	From CFDP	Total
Magar	43	9 (21.)	22 (50.0)	12 (28.6)	43 (100)
Newar	18	3 (16.6)	12 (66.7)	3 (16.7)	18 (100)
Chhetri	18	3 (16.6)	12 (66.7)	3 (16.7)	18 (100)
Kami	21	12 (57.9)	6 (28.6)	3 (14.3)	21 (100)

Source: Field Survey

Note: Figures in parenthesis represent respective percentages.

Magars utilize community forests to the maximum. Twelve (28.6 percent) out of 43 Magar households consume fuelwood from community forests. For the other three ethnic groups, the percentage of households having CFDP as their fuel source is more or less the same: 16.7 percent, 16.7 percent and 14.3 percent for Newar, Chhetri and Kami respectively.

The overall analysis of caste-wise benefit sharing indicates that the benefits derived from the CFDP (in terms of utilization of resources from community forestry) is lower than the help provided in one way or another.

Table 14. Contribution and Benefit Derived from CFDP by Caste.

Caste Group	No. of Households	% of Total Contributing Vol. Labor	No. of Households Contributing to Management	% of Total	No. of Households Benefitted	% of Total
Magar	15	35.7	34	79.9	5	12.0
Kami	3	14.3	15	83.3	1	5.0
Newar	15	83.3	15	83.3	2	11.0
Chhetri	15	83.3	9	43.	1	11.0

Source: Field Survey.

Table 14 shows that those who have not contributed either in terms of labor or protection in CFDP have nevertheless received benefits from the program. For example, Newars have contributed the most to CFDP in terms of labor (83.3%) and management (83.3%) but relative benefit received by them is quite low (11.0%). This is true for all the three castes. Hence it may be seen that the benefit from CFDP is not equitable in terms of the contribution households have made.

This may be due to some restrictive policies having been implemented since the establishment of CFDP which did not take into account the contribution of voluntary labor and participation in meetings of the village panchayat made by households right at the beginning of the program. Being basically true for all castes, this may well be the reason for the inequity between benefits from CFDP and the contribution made by households.

The second reason is that CFDP is a recent program, of only four years duration. It has not yet started production in terms of timber and fuelwood from all the PFs and PPFs. This may also be one of the reasons why villagers' inputs are greater than the benefits they have received from CFDP.

Participation by Economic Condition

Table 15 shows that large farmers are getting relatively more benefits (in terms of the utilization of forest resources such as fuelwood, fodder, timber, etc.) than medium and small farmers. Medium farmers have so far had most beneficiaries in relation to labour days contributed.

Table 15. Size of Landholding, Labor Given and Benefit Received from C.F.

Types of Farmers (Households)	Total No. of Persons Giving Labor	Total No. of Days Given	Total No. (%) of Persons benefiting
Small	18	36	5 (24.)
Medium	12	24	7 (33.)
Large	18	36	9 (43.)
Total	48	98	21 (100)

Source: Field Survey.

Participation in Benefit Sharing by Literacy Group

Out of 67 literate people, 16 received benefit from CFDP, whereas in the case of illiterates, only 5 out of 33 households received benefits. The respective percentages are 23.9 and 15.2.

Participation in Benefit by Social Status

Here the data show that 100 percent of the "elite" group received resources from CFDP, whereas only 17.7 percent of "commoners" received these benefits.

Magars are the predominant caste group in Chhang and received the highest level of benefits. The general hypothesis advanced by sociologists is that the larger the size of the homogeneous group the greater the scope for popular participation in collective efforts. In this context, Magars could not be regarded as good participators. However, Magars topped the list for participation in decision making. Distribution of benefit by farm size (Table 16) shows that this is inversely related to farm size.

Table 16. Landholding and Participation (In Terms of Meeting Attendance) and Benefit Sharing

1	2	3	4
Types of Farmers (Households)	Total No. of Households Attending Meetings	Total Households Benefitted Among (2)	% of Beneficiaries (3) out of (2)
Small	24	4	17%
Medium	17	3	18%
Large	20	5	25%
Total	61	12	20%

5.4 Participation in Evaluation

The opinions regarding the decisions made at various stages of CFDP has been the basis of our analysis here.

The majority (97%) of the sample population were familiar with CFDP and aware of the program being implemented in their village. However, a majority of the sample households were not familiar with the legal and administrative arrangements of the CFDP. Meetings held with the Panchas also revealed that even the so-called elites and educated people were not well acquainted with the concept of CFDP.

Most of the sample households were not satisfied with the demarcation of CFDP, despite the fact that this was done after a meeting. It therefore seems probable that some degree of coercion was exercised regarding the demarcation.

Fifty percent of the households regarded CFDP as a good program. Seventy-five percent of the 50 who opined that the program was not good said that they faced difficulty in getting permission to extract timber. The remaining 25 percent complained that there was partiality in the allocation of forest resources from CFDP.

Basically, the comments people made were on bad performance by Forest Division officials, who rarely came to the village. The basic reasons may be twofold. Firstly, Chhang Village Panchayat is located uphill from the Khaireni Forest Division where the nearest forest office is situated and officials probably disliked walking frequently to the village. Secondly, Chhang is a village full of disputes regarding the demarcation of CFDP. The villagers complained that the boundaries as drawn had resulted in dividing the villagers into two factions, one with enough forest area and the other deprived of it. Since there is no easy solution to this problem, forest officials were probably not eager to visit the village.

People also complained about the working tools available. They lack implements such as spades and scythes and they also lacked a sufficient number of saplings for planting.

Similarly, people voiced their discontent about the maldistribution of benefits. The upper class people (Thulathalu, as they say) enjoyed maximum benefits from these forests, while the people who are economically backward and illiterate were deprived of these facilities.

5.5 Attitudes and Perceptions of Local People Towards CFDP

Almost all the village people of Chhang were well aware of the CFDP implementation in their village. They considered this program as being meant for their benefit. As stated earlier, the local people were not satisfied with the work of Panchas and forest officials and they complained about the unavailability of saplings in the village.

Table 17 presents an evaluation of the work of forest related personnel made by the respondents. The respondents, of course, include panchas, but not Forest Division officials.

Table 17. Work Evaluation of Forest Division, Panchas and Local People

(In Percentage)			
Sector	V.Good	Average	Bad
Forest Division	-	90%	10% = 100
Local People	10%	90%	- = 100
Panchas	5%	95%	- = 100

Source: Field Survey.

The ten percent reporting the Forest Division to be bad explained that officials never showed up in the village to deal with forest problems because they had been involved at the time of demarcation. The best performance was said to be that of the local people. The overall analysis in the present context showed that participation in terms of work performance was not good but was satisfactory on average.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The Community Forestry Development Programme is a national level program. The need for the program was realised by central level policy makers and was not the choice of the villagers of Nepal. The program was implemented in 29 forest divisions in 21 districts. Taking into view the fast depleting forest resources, this program has received high priority during recent years.

CFDP was started in Chhang Village Panchayat in 1980/81. The extent of people's participation was limited to site selection and demarcation of the program boundary. Participation in decision-making was made through meetings in village assemblies, informal gatherings, etc. Meeting attendance averaged 67%. Out of the 100 sample households, participation indicates that Chhetris participate most (83 percent). The percentage participation by Kami, Magar and Newar is 71., 64.3 and 50 respectively. Participation by literacy status is 72 and 58 percent for literate and illiterate people respectively.

The Program provided ample scope for participation in implementation. These personnel participated in the implementation phase of CFDP in different ways. Panchas and local "elites" participated as working members of the 'Forest Action Committee' - a six member committee in each ward. "Ordinary" people provided the voluntary labor that was required during the various phases of implementation of the program. Forty-eight persons (88%) participated by contributing voluntary labor of 75 days in total, 1.56 days on average.

The contribution of voluntary labor is negatively related to literacy: 57.6 percent of illiterate respondents participated in CFDP compared with 43.3 literate persons.

Newars have the highest rate of participation in the management of CFDP (100 percent). Participation by Kamis is lowest (57%). It is interesting to note that the percentage providing protection of Community Forest is much higher in the case of literates than illiterates. The respective percentages are 82 percent and 64.

The general picture of fuel collection is that out of 100 households 36 percent get their fuelwood from community forests, 48 percent from nearby forests and 16 percent gather it from the homestead. No household has a source of fodder in the community forestry areas.

Benefit derived from the program (benefit measured in terms of their utilization of forest resources from CFDP) shows that only 16.7 percent of Newar and Chhetri benefitted from CFDP. The corresponding figures were 28.6 percent and 14.3 percent in the case of Magar and Kami respectively.

Only 18 percent of the 67 literate respondents, and 10 percent of 33 illiterate respondents, benefited from the program. Overall only 15 percent of the total sample households benefitted from CFDP.

Almost all (97%) of the sample population was familiar with CFDP and half of the households regarded CFDP as a good program. Among the other half, 50 percent opined that they were facing difficulty in getting permission to extract timber while another 50 percent said that there was partiality in the allocation of forest resources.

The performance of working Panchas and Forest Division officials was allegedly unsatisfactory. Local people were regarded as the best workers.

6.2 Conclusions

This present study focuses on the nature and extent of people's participation in CFDP, as this program was expected to achieve people's participation to the maximum extent. This study also tried to find out the perceptions of the local people regarding CFDP, because popular participation is dependent on positive perception. This study came to the following conclusions:

1. The people of Chhang Village Panchayat are not familiar with the administrative and legal arrangements of CFDP. They are confused about the basic working policies and the advantages they should receive from PF and PPF.

2. Participation in the decision-making process of CFDP in Chhang was only through formal panchayat meetings and the extent was limited only to site selection and demarcation of the community forestry boundaries.

3. Participation in the implementation of CFDP demanded the contribution of voluntary labor and the protection of community forestry by stopping cattle grazing and grass cutting. Anticipated participation in terms of cash contributions was not forthcoming. People's participation extended only to advice regarding plantation sites or weeding.

4. Economically well off, literate and upper class people of the village participated relatively more than poor, illiterate and "common" people, though the voluntary labor provided was higher in the case of illiterate persons than literate ones.

5. The equity aspect in terms of benefit sharing seems to have been neglected. People utilizing more resources contributed less to CFDP. People consuming less fuelwood and fodder provided relatively more inputs to CFDP.

6. Literate people were found to participate more than illiterates.

7. Panchayat and social elite groups have limited the scope of their participation in CFDP to the formation of forest working committees. They have not been able to gather enough resources, such as cash, working tools, seedlings etc.

8. The performance of work was not satisfactory both on the part of Forest Division officials and local people (including panchas and social elites). The frequency of Forest Department official visits was low. Panchas and local people made a good start but were slow in implementation.

9. No plantation program has been undertaken since 1981. Sufficient vigour and interest is lacking.

6.3 Recommendations

1. Proper knowledge of community forestry is a must for the panchayat people. Good orientation regarding the concept, legal and administrative arrangements of the programs should be communicated to the villagers by means of lectures, video-cassettes, pamphlets, etc.

2. Decisions about CFDP should be made with the involvement of local people. Appropriate decisions taken by a majority of the people can bring about better inputs.

3. The demarcation of Panchayat Protected Forests (PPF) and allotment of land for Panchayat Forest (PF) should be clear and equal. Otherwise this could make for conflicts within the community.

4. Proper guidance, together with tools like spades, scythes, shovels, etc. should be provided by the centre. These are lacking at present.

5. The Forest Division should cooperate with the panchayat regarding the CFDP. CFDP, being new, is causing some confusion and conflict among the local people.

6. More people's participation could be obtained if rational programs like afforestation, agro-forestry, etc., are launched. Organizations should approach the village with programs such as forest enrichment, plantation and evaluation.

7. A system of evaluation among government officials, panchas and local people should be incorporated into CFDP working policy in order to improve performance.

8. A system of rewards for individuals who have contributed a great deal to CFDP in terms of resources and protection of forests, should be established among the CFDP implementation districts. This would increase participatory inputs to CFDP.

9. Adult education programs should be conducted in order to increase literacy and thereby increase the understanding of CFDP.

10. Various integrated programs aimed at raising people's standard of living should be implemented. This could increase participation in the Community Forestry Program.

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