



USER GROUP FORESTRY IN THE FAR-WESTERN REGION OF NEPAL

(Case Studies from Baitadi and Achham)

Ram B. Chhetri

Tulsi R. Pandey



User Group Forestry in the Far-Western Region of Nepal

(Case Studies from Baitadi and Achham)

**Ram B. Chhetri
Tulsi R. Pandey**

**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICIMOD
Kathmandu, Nepal**

Copyright © 1992

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

All rights reserved

Cover photograph: Chiuri: multipurpose tree grown by farmers near their houses.

Published by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
G.P.O. Box 3226,
Kathmandu, Nepal

ISBN 92-9115-080-0

Typesetting at ICIMOD Publications' Unit

The views and interpretations in this paper are those of the authors. They are not attributable to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Foreword

One of the primary concerns of integrated mountain development is improvement in the management of available natural resources, particularly renewable resources such as land, forests, and water. Continued access to these resources is critical for people living in fragile ecosystems where alternative forms of employment and income generation are not readily available. Throughout the mountain areas, the strong impression being conveyed is that available resources are being over-exploited to such an extent that carrying capacities are no longer sustainable. Unless these processes are reversed, the carrying capacity will continue to decline even further. Improved technology could be of immense help but this will be of benefit only if the available resources are managed on a sustainable basis.

The role of forest resources in mountain areas has been immense. Most of the traditional farming systems have been sustained by inputs drawn from the available forest resources. A large part of the decline in agricultural productivity and household incomes can be directly traced to the rapid loss of forests. It is this critical role of forests in mountain ecosystems that has recently spurred interest in improved management of forest resources. One of the most interesting findings has been that, whereas forests in general have been receding, some communities have managed to protect, and even improve, their forest resources. Researchers are now beginning to systematically examine the underlying factors behind the existence and operation of such systems with the hope of identifying broader lessons for improving forestry management. These lessons have resulted in important policy changes from legislation to forestry development programmes.

This study has been organised by ICIMOD with the objective of providing further insights into community-managed forests, focussing on Far-western Nepal, for which there was very little documentation. Not surprisingly, many informal forestry user groups were identified that were actively engaged in the management of their forest resources. In spite of many differences regarding the conditions of the forests and management practices, a number of commonalities were also observed. The most obvious common factor, as the

authors point out, is the strong sense of ownership reflected in their statement "Our Forests". These forest belongs to a group of people in a particular area where there is a readiness to abide by the rules and procedures that have been established. Given their willingness to cooperate and, obviously, also benefit from these forest resources, institutional tools of management have varied from innovative sanctions such as "religious fencing" to regular payments for forest watchmen. Forestry development programmes have a lot to learn from insights gained through case studies such as this.

ICIMOD is publishing this report by Dr. Ram B. Chhetri and Mr. Tulsi R. Pandey as part of its Fellowship Monograph Series. I would like to thank the authors and their research teams for their work in preparing this document. I also hope it will be of some assistance in improving the forest policies and programmes directed towards improving the degraded conditions of critical forest resources in mountain areas of Nepal and beyond. I would also like to thank The Ford Foundation for providing the grant that made this study and its publication possible.

Dr. E.F. Tacke
Director General

Table Of Contents

Acknowledgements

Several institutions and individuals have assisted us in different ways at different stages of this study. Dr. Jefferson Fox of Research Associate, EAPI, East West Centre, Honolulu, Hawaii should receive the credit for introducing us as well as the foresters (Krishna Acharya, Jagannath Joshi, Ganesh Karki, Budhi Rijal, Narayan Sharma, Shiva Sharma, and Surya Kanta Sigdel) to ICIMOD. We would also like to thank him for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

We thank ICIMOD for sponsoring this study. Dr. Mahesh Banskota deserves special thanks for his support to the research team from time to time as well as for his useful comments on an earlier draft of the paper. This paper has also benefitted from the comments of Ms. Jeannette Denholm and Mr. Bal Ram Bhatta.

Our sincere thanks to Dr. Don A. Messerschmidt, Dr. Robert J. Fisher, and Mr. A.G. Bartlett for sharing their wisdom with us in providing valuable comments on an earlier draft.

Finally, we would like to thank the people of Baitadi and Achham for their generous hospitality and for their cooperation during our field work.

Table Of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
The Problem	3
Research Objectives and Questions	4
User Groups: Issues in the Literature	6
Conceptual Arguments	8
Cultural Context	9
Conceptual Model	9
Background of the Study Area	11
The Far-western Development Region	11
<i>Baitadi</i>	12
<i>Achham</i>	14
Methodology	14
Eight Case Studies from Baitadi and Achham	16
Karkiko Ban, Binashaun, Baitadi	16
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	16
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	17
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	19
Seliko Ban, Seli-Salena, Baitadi	23
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	23
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	23
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	24
Koti Gaunko Ban, Koti Gaun, Baitadi	27
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	27
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	30
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	31

Majarkholako Ban, Baitadi	34
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	34
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	35
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	35
Dhamiko Ban, Binayak, Achham	40
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	40
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	42
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	43
Kalapaniko Ban, Kuika, Achham	45
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	45
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	47
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	47
Bhatwadako Ban, Achham	50
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	50
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	51
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	53
Siddhesworiko Ban, Achham	55
<i>Settlement and User Group</i>	55
<i>Nature of the Forest</i>	56
<i>Protection and Management Practices</i>	56
Commonalities and Variations: A Discussion of the Emerging Patterns	61
Model or Typology	61
Nature of the Forests	63
User Group Characteristics	64
<i>Ethnic Factor</i>	65
<i>Proximity Factor</i>	66
<i>Protection Practices</i>	74
<i>Harvesting Practices</i>	75
<i>Alternative Sources</i>	75
A Comparative Perspective and Concluding Remarks	76
A Comparison of Government-sponsored Forestry with User Group Forestry	76
Concluding Remarks	77
<i>Suggestions</i>	77
Implications	80

Plates	81
Annex	88
References	92
Topic Index	97

LIST OF TABLES

1:	Percentage Distribution of Land Use in Baitadi, Achham, and the Far-western Development Region as of 1986	12
2:	Some Characteristic Features of Cases Under Study from Baitadi and Achham, 1991	18
3:	Some Characteristic Features of Cases Studied in Baitadi and Achham, 1991	65
4:	Sources of Forest Products and Use Patterns (in %) by Case	72

LIST OF MAPS

1:	Baitadi District: The Sites Under Study, 1991	13
2:	Achham District: The Sites Under Study, 1991	15
3:	Koti <i>Gaun</i> , Baitadi, 1991	28
4:	Majarkhola, Baitadi, 1991	36
5:	Dhami <i>Gaun</i> , Achaam, 1991	41
6:	Kuika, Achham, 1991	46
7:	Bhatwada, Achham, 1991	52
8:	Siddheswori, Achham, 1991	57

FIGURE

1:	Conceptual Model: Interconnectedness of Population, Resources, and Culture	10
----	--	----