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Community Forestry in India and Nepal

Learning from Each Other

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and
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Preface

Forest areas in the uplands play a critical role in maintaining quality watersheds in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. While the policies for maintaining common property resources may vary across countries, experience indicates that these boundaries collapse when common issues are addressed. This becomes obvious when we study the emergence of participatory forest management in the countries of Nepal and India.

While Nepal is, today, acknowledged as a pioneer in promoting community forestry, India too has made a beginning in this direction by approving an enabling government order to encourage joint forest management in forest areas.

Both the countries are today well on the way to transforming forest management from custodian mechanisms to people oriented approaches; are addressing technical forestry issues which give priority to the needs of forest communities; are evolving collaborative forest management plans in consultation with communities, and are beginning to focus on emerging issues of equity in sharing of usufruct and benefits.

This paper makes a case that there are tremendous learning opportunities between Nepal and India and that stronger interlinkages based on mutuality can contribute to our common goal of ushering in sustainable forest management in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas.

The authors have drawn upon their considerable experience in community forestry and joint forest management in writing this discussion paper.

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