

"Good Governance in Natural Resources Management"

(A Case Study of Patle Community Forest)



A dissertation submitted to the Tribhuvan University, Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus, Department of Sociology/Anthropology for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in Arts in Anthropology

Submitted by

Santosh Nepal

**Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Tri- Chandra Multiple Campus
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
2007**

Tribhuvan University
Tri- Chandra Multiple Campus
Department of Sociology/Anthropology

Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Mr. Santosh Nepal has prepared this dissertation entitled "Good Governance in Natural Resources Management" (A case study of Patle Community Forest) under my guidance and supervision. So far, as I know, this is his original work. So, I recommend this for final evaluation and acceptance.

C. Acharya
Chiranjivi Acharya
Lecturer

Department of Sociology/Anthropology
Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus

Date: 2064-1-7

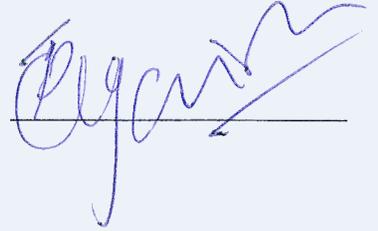
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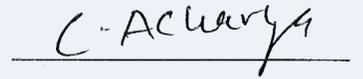
The dissertation entitled "Good Governance in Natural Resources Management" (A case study of Patle Community Forest) prepared and submitted by Mr. Santosh Nepal for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Arts in Anthropology has been evaluated and accepted.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

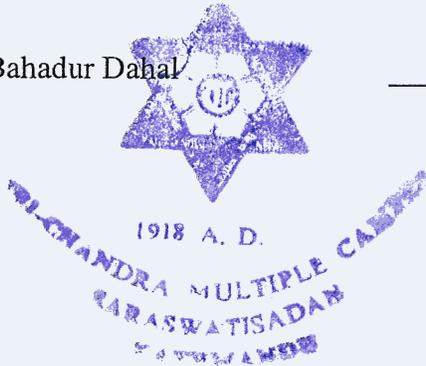
Co-ordinator : Mr. Tilak Prasad Chaulagai



Supervisor : Mr. Chiranjivi Acharya



External Examiner: Mr. Birendra Bahadur Dahal



Date: 2064-1-9

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Table of Content

Letter of Recommendation.....	ii
Approval Letter.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Content.....	v
Appendixes.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	vii
List of Abbreviations.....	viii
Abstract.....	ix
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 Community Forest in Nepal.....	2
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	3
1.3 Objective of the Study.....	4
1.4 Conceptual Framework.....	4
1.4.1 Fundamentals of Good Governance.....	4
1.4.1.1 Participation.....	5
1.4.1.2 Rule of Law.....	5
1.4.1.3 Transparency.....	6
1.4.1.4 Responsiveness.....	6
1.4.1.5 Consensus Oriented.....	6
1.4.1.6 Equity and Inclusiveness.....	6
1.4.1.7 Effectiveness and Efficiency.....	6
1.4.1.8 Accountability.....	7
1.5 Rational of the Study.....	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Theoretical Reviews.....	9
2.1.1 Good Governance in Natural Resource Management.....	9
2.1.2 Peoples Participation in Forest Management.....	9
2.1.3 Community Forestay: A Glimpse in Nepalese Context.....	10
2.1.4 Overview of Community Forest in Nepal.....	11
2.2 Review of Legislation.....	12
2.2.1 Community Forestry Legislation.....	12
2.2.2 Forest Act and Forest Rules.....	14
2.3 Review of the Previous Studies.....	14
2.3.1 Good Governance in CFs.....	14
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	20
3.1 Rational of the Selection of the Study Area.....	20
3.2 Research Design.....	20
3.3 Nature and Sources of Data.....	20
3.4 Universe and Sampling.....	20
3.5 Data Collection and Techniques.....	21
3.6 Data Processing and Analysis.....	22
3.7 Operational Definition and Measurement of Selected Concepts/Variables.....	23
3.8 Reliability and Validity of the Data.....	25
3.9 Limitations of the Study.....	25
3.10 Research Procedure.....	26
4. PROFILE OF STUDY AREA AND SAMPLED POPULATION.....	27
4.1 Study Area Profile.....	27
4.1.1 Lalitpur district.....	27
4.1.2 Lamatar VDC.....	28

4.1.3	Socio-Economic Status	29
4.1.4	Literacy	30
4.2	Patle Community Forest.....	31
4.2.1	Stakeholders and Institutions at Local Level	32
4.2.2	Forest Status	32
4.2.3	External Intervention in Patle CF	32
4.2.4	Objectives of the CF	33
4.2.5	Benefits of the CF	33
5.	RESULT AND DISCUSSION	34
5.1	Forest Management Practices of Patle CF	34
5.1.1	Institutional Arrangement	34
5.1.2	Forest guard (<i>Ban pale</i>)	35
5.1.3	Seasonal Opening	35
5.1.4	Regular Opening	35
5.1.5	Problems in Patle CF	36
5.1.6	Impact of External Intervention in Patle CF	36
5.2	Relationship between Good Governance and Patle CF Management	37
5.2.1	Participation in Forest Resources Management.....	37
5.2.1.1	Participation in General Assembly (GA).....	37
5.2.1.2	Participation in Executive Committee Meetings	38
5.2.1.3	Participation in Decision Making Process.....	39
5.2.1.4	Participation in Forest Resource Utilization.....	40
5.2.1.5	Participation during Formation of Constitution and Operational Plan	41
5.2.1.6	Result of Discussion on 'Participation'	41
5.2.2	Transparency in Forest Management.....	41
5.2.2.1	Forest Management and Utilization	42
5.2.2.2	Decision Making Process	42
5.2.2.3	Access to Information	42
5.2.2.4	Fund Utilization and Mobilization	43
5.2.2.5	Resource Distribution.....	43
5.2.2.6	Results of Discussion on 'Transparency'	44
5.2.3	Accountability in Forest Management.....	44
5.2.3.1	Users to EC	44
5.2.3.2	EC to Users	45
5.2.3.3	Result of Discussion on 'Accountability'	45
5.2.4	Equity in forest management	45
5.2.4.1	Resource Distribution.....	45
5.2.4.2	Opportunities.....	46
5.2.4.3	Representation of Caste to EC.....	46
5.2.5	Results of Discussion on 'Equity'	47
6.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
6.1	Summary	48
6.2	Conclusions.....	49
6.3	Recommendations.....	49
6.3.1	Recommendation for Further Research	50
	REFERECNCES	51

Appendixes

APPENDIX 1: Interview Schedule.....	1
APPENDIX 2: Checklist.....	4
APPENDIX 3: Institutional arrangement of Patel CF	5
APPENDIX 4: Photographs.....	6

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Sample Population	21
Table 3.2 Matrix of Governance and Forest Management	23
Table 4.1 Topographical Distribution of land of Lalitpur District (Area in Ha.)	27
Table 4.2 Type of Main Fuel Wood for Cooking	28
Table 4.3 Population 5 Years of Age and over by Literacy Status and Sex of the Study Area	30
Table 4.4 A Glimpse of Patle CFUG	31
Table 5.1 Users Participation in General Assembly Meetings	38
Table 5.2 Participation of Users in Executive Meeting	39
Table 5.3 Participation of Different Groups	41
Table 5.4 Transparency in Patle CF.....	44
Table 5.5 Accountability in Patle CF Users to EC	45
Table 5.6 Equity in Patle CF.....	46

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Characteristics of Good Governance.....	5
Figure 3.1 Research procedure of the study.....	26
Figure 4.1 Population by 5 years of age group of Lamatar VDC	28
Figure 4.2 Caste/ethnicity Group of the Study Area.....	29
Figure 4.3 Percentage of 6 years of age and over by literacy status and sex of Lamatar VDC	30
Figure 5.1 Structure and Function of Patle CF	34

List of Abbreviations

AGOAP	Australian government's Overseas Aid Program
CF	Community Forest
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
CNRM	Community Natural Resource Management
CPR	Common Pool Resource
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
DDC	District Development Committee
DFO	District Forest Office
DVN	Development Vision Network
EC	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FMIS	Farmer Managed Irrigation System
FUG	Forest User Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GG	Good Governance
GoN	Government of Nepal
Ha.	Hectare
HH	Households
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
MPFS	Master Plan for Forestry Sector
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NRs.	Nepalese Rupees
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OP	Operational Plan
SAGUN	Strengthening Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources
SALGA	Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability
Sq. km.	Square Kilometer
TU	Tribhuvan University
UN	United Nation
US\$	United State Dollar
USAID	United States for International Development Nepal
VDC	Village Development Committee

Abstract

The community forestry program has had a significant role to improve the status of forests in Nepal. The success or failure of community forestry program depends on good governance. The involvement of a wide range of a society in community forest management ensures that the benefits are shared equally. The elements of governance under the scope of this study are: participation, transparency, accountability and equity.

The objective of the study is to assess the elements of good governance in natural resources management through a case study of Patle community forest in Lalitpur district. The data were collected through primary sources such as interview and focus group discussions supported by secondary sources.

The study shows that Patle community forest has improved its status after a decade of management as a community forest. The forest cover has been improved and users are easily getting their forest requirement. The study assessed that the overall governance status is moderate. Women participation in decision making process during meetings is weak because of illiteracy, shyness and socio-cultural practices. The *dalit* male participation in every aspect of community forest is quite low. In contrary, *dalit* women participate in most of the forest management activities. Although women are the prime users of the Patle forest, their representation in Executive Committee(EC) is low. The formation of tole level committee has ensured the voices from grass root level. The transparency of EC in every aspect is high. Similarly, the overall equity in Patle CF is moderate. As compared to the previous years, people are more aware and institutional capacity has improved. The external intervention has strengthened the capacity of the CFUGs since awareness has been improved and this fact is also well acknowledged by the users. The study recommends to include the real user of the CF (women) in the vital position of EC and eventually in decision making process.

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

The term Good Governance is being increasingly used in development literature. Governance means the process of decision-making and its implementation or non-implementation. In Nepal, local communities have been managing natural resources such as land, water and forest for centuries through institutions like Community Forest User Group (CFUG), Irrigation User Group and Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMISs). The sustainability of resources can be achieved if there is an effective resource management institution with participation from all level of a society. Good Governance is a process of systematically managing such resources with participation from all stakeholders in a transparent way so that resources can be harnessed in an equitable basis. Forests are important source to fulfill the basic needs of rural community in Nepal. Majority of people depend on forest for fuel wood and livestock feeding and this is likely to remain for many years to come. Community Forestry is a very successful participatory program through which local people are managing forests in a sustainable manner and thereby getting its output such as fuel wood, fodder and forage, in return. To effectively manage the forests, the institution responsible for forest management should take views and concerns of local people and function accordingly. This will increase ownership feelings of local community towards their forests. In this context this study is undertaken to assess the governance issues mainly; participation, transparency, accountability and equity in Natural Resources Management (NRM), through a case study of Patle community forest.

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is rich in biological diversity. In spite of having a small size which is about 0.1% of the total land mass of the earth, Nepal has abundance natural resources. The richness in natural resources is mainly due to the maximum available altitudinal variation within a short span of distance (less than 200 km). Nepal is agro-based rural country where about 80% of the total population depends on agricultural based commodities. Agriculture sector contributes 42% of the total GDP. The 42% of the people survive below the poverty line.

Natural resource and poverty are closely related because most of the people depend on it. The forest has become an essential building block for the development of the nation because it serves livelihood by providing different types of resources that are essentially used for the development of agriculture. Forest is one of the most important natural resources for sustaining the livelihood of rural people in Nepal, as the subsistence farming systems are mostly embodied within forestry and livestock. Similarly, more than 78% of the total fuel wood demand has been met by forest fuel wood.

There was a saying "*Hariyo Ban Nepal Ko Dhan*" which means "Green Forests are the Wealth of Nepal". The lives of the rural poor community are closely associated with the forest resources, as these groups are the primary managers and users of these resources. Women's roles and day to day contribution are incredibly important in household activities, agricultural production and NRM. In this context, forest is an important means of livelihood for majority of the rural community where women interact with forests almost everyday. Hence, the management of forest is a crucial aspect for development.

In Nepal, where many people rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, forest management practices have both technical and social implications. For a long time, community forestry policies have focused on formation of new Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and transfer of government-managed forests to CFUGs through a Community Forestry Program. So far, over 13,000 users groups have been formed across the country, directly benefiting more than 1.4 million households with the management of over 1 million hectares of forest, which is about 25% of the total national forest area of the country (NPC, 2003).

1.1.1 Community Forest in Nepal

Community forestry in Nepal is considered as an innovative policy that allows mountain communities to have access to natural resources, mainly forests. The evolution of this policy and the expansion of community forestry institutions over the past three decades, are rooted in Nepal's unique political, economic and ecological contexts.

Nepal is pioneer in introducing a people-focused forest policy (Hobley et al., 1996). It was recognized officially for the first time in 1978. During the initial stages, CF was plantation oriented and concentrated on reforesting degraded or barren land (Palit, 1996). Currently, the primary focus of the CF program is to hand over the management responsibilities of government owned natural forests to Forest Users Groups. This concept emerged with realization that natural forests can be rehabilitated at much lower cost, and that the flow of subsistence goods from natural forests is usually much higher (Palit, 1996).

Forests of Nepal have been regarded as an important renewable natural resource for the fulfillment of basic needs of the local people. Importance of the contribution of forest resources in Nepalese economy has been well understood and emphasized from the very beginning. Forests have great significance and wide ranging values to the local people and country's economy. More than 75% of all household and 96% of the rural household use wood for domestic purposes, and almost every rural household raises some domestic animals and feed them fodder and grass mostly obtained from the forests (Hobley, 1996).

Forests have been considered as essential means for people's social, economic and cultural livelihood. Forests not only supported for fuel wood, forage and fodder but also contribute timber and Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for primary living of the people. Hence, forest can not be kept apart from the livelihood of the village people. While conserving and managing the forest resources, we should always keep in mind that the forest is an important means of livelihood of people. Hence, we should promote such strategies which speak the need of the resources for the livelihood and management of resources in a sustainable way without compromising the need of the future generation.

Most Operational Plans are prepared hastily without giving due consideration to the need of a good plan and equity is overlooked. The recently revised "Operational Guideline for CF (2001)" may help to develop good forest management plan and ensure equity within the user group. The Guideline proposes the formation of sub-groups of poor and disadvantaged groups and subsequent delineation of a part of CF for income generating activities. Sub-section 45(4) of the Forest Act 1993 states "The user's group may spend for activities of other public interest from the balance left in the Fund after disbursement for the development of Community forests". The first amendment of the Forest Act obliges the group to use 25% of their income on forest development activities. It has posed problem for utilizing the rest of the funds on the community development activities. There are options that may pacify the outcry

related with commercialization. It also paves way for removing this barrier for expenditure on community development.

Strengthening Actions for Governance in Utilization of Natural Resources (SAGUN) programme shows that “community forest (CF) management can be effectively carried out in local areas severely affected by conflict and violence, provided that such programs directly concern people’s livelihoods, access to information and rights of the communities and there is a high degree of accountability and transparency in financial and other resource management” (USAID, 2006).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Good governance, as an important factor in resources management, has similar implication in the case of CF. It is the process of making decisions and the process by which decisions are implemented. The Good Governance brings different actors in decision-making processes to manage CF in a transparent way. Good resource governance in CF is a backbone for the sustainable forest management.

Community forests, not only provides a well forest environment, but also provides opportunities for local community to fulfill their demands in terms of fuel wood, fodder and timber. The good forest environment leads to improvement in local environment, and sustenance flow of water to the low land community.

Bhandari (2004) conducted a research study on participation of marginalized groups in CFs of Sindhupalchok district of Nepal. According to the study, women's participation especially women managed forest showed remarkable improvement in CF protection and management. However, in mixed (men and women) managed forest, women's participation in decision making was inactive and their participation in seedling plantation, conservation and forest management was satisfactory. Social binding like preventing women to participate in meetings and backbiting was found higher in mixed managed forest than women managed forest. Similarly, in case of *Dalits* participation in some CFs, their participation was hindered by financial and social norms. In case of benefit sharing, the resources distributed was so small amount that does not have any effects in daily life of dalit people.

One study in the far western region of Nepal (Baitadi and Achham District) shows that the women have no role in decision-making. They follow the decision made by the male members. Women are also not involved directly in any kind of decision on protection and management of the forest. Local cultural norms also prevent them from participating in such discussions. It is the main problem regarding women’s participation in decision making, planning and implementation (Chhetri, 1992 cited in Ojha 2005).

From the review of available literature (Chapter 2), there are some problems observed in community forestry program implementation process. In general, more prominent issues are elite domination on decision making process, lack of transparency, vested interests of influential people and inequality in a benefit sharing mechanism. There are many challenges to achieve the goals of sustainable resources management and poverty reduction. To address these issues, the policy makers, planners, decision makers, forest managers, community members and leaders need to be aware of the impact brought by the CF program. Rural communities depend on the forest for fodder, fuel wood, and other NTFPs as day to day essentials. The CF program in Nepal has a positive implication in enhancing socio-economic status of Nepalese people, especially rural poor through the development of the forest.

However, different literatures suggest (Chapter 2.3) that exclusion of some groups, less women participation, lack of transparency, vested interest of elite groups and corruptions are some of the issues that need to be addressed at the moment for the sustainable CF management. This study will examine the good governance of CFs in Nepal through a case study approach. The study will strive to look into the various aspects of governance in CF in general and through a case study of Patle CF in particular.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the governance in natural resources management through a case study of Patle Community Forest.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the management practices of Patle CF;
- To assess the link of good governance (participation, transparency, accountability and equity) with issues of forest management practices; and
- To recommend actions for the improvement of Patle forest management.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The CFUG is an institution in which all member of the community participate in the forest management activities. A proportionate participation from all level of a society including marginalized groups (Women/ *Dalits*/ Poor) in CF management significantly enhances the status of forest resources and ultimately contributes to sustainable development.

1.4.1 Fundamentals of Good Governance

The governance means the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Governance, in the context of NRM is a recent phenomenon. It could be good or bad governance. Good Governance(GG) emphasizes the management of natural resources in an equitable basis without compromising the need of future generation. (Encyclopedia of Wikipedia, 2006).

Government is one of the actors in governance in a national level. Other actors involved in governance vary depending on the level of governance that is under discussion. In rural areas, for example, other actors may include influential land lords, associations of farmers farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions political parties, the military etc. Additionally, there is a probability of influence from elite groups (rich, politically influenced people) in a society while making decisions mostly in developing countries. The situation in urban areas is much more complex.

Similarly, formal government structures are one means by which decisions are arrived at local level implemented. At the national level, informal decision-making structures, such as "kitchen cabinets" or informal advisors may exist. In urban areas, organized crime syndicates such as the "land Mafia" may influence decision-making. In some rural areas locally powerful leaders may make or influence decision-making. Such, informal decision-making is often the result of corrupt practices or leads to corrupt practices.

With extensive review of literature in GG, the following basic principles have been identified. Good Governance has 8 major characteristics in general. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are duly heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. However, in case of Good Governance in NRM, only some attributes are considered depending upon the cases. Participatory, accountability, transparency and equity are the main entities which are mostly discussed in literature in case of NRM.

The Figure 1.1 shows an ideal stage of Good Governance of an institution where each criterion is best rated. This is a perfect situation, which is rarely attainable. However, an institution tries to reach this ideal condition where all the issues are addressed properly. This figure describes the components of Good Governance of any decision making process. The components of Good Governance are described herein.

(<http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp>)

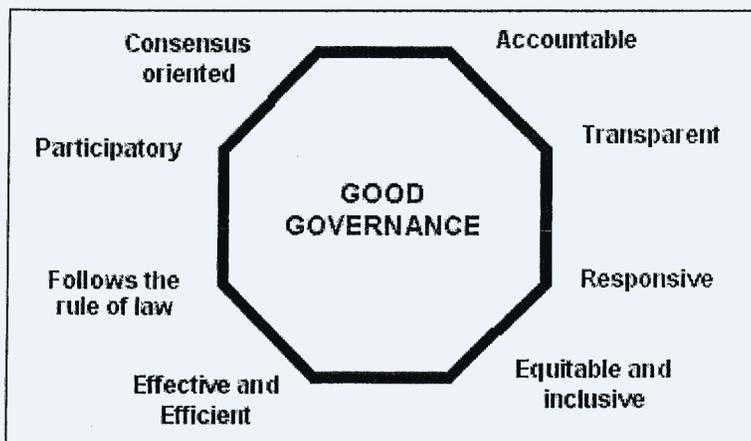


Figure 1.1 Characteristics of Good Governance

1.4.1.1 Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of Good Governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand. Participation is an effective way for mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in a society what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. Hence, participation of men, women and marginalized group of society, *dalit*, elite groups and educated people is quite necessary so that it includes all the interests of societies. Participation in meetings, decision making procedures, resource distribution and management of resources are some of the entities which can be considered in case of forest management.

1.4.1.2 Rule of Law

Good Governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force. Rule of law

indicates that rules and regulations are set by the consensus of the all levels of a society and activities are carried out in accordance with the norms. In some cases, the activities are carried out violating the norms/laws set by the constitution in NRM which shows complete violation of rule of laws. It can be seen most frequently when the rules are formed without the broader consensus of societies. Hence, participation is quite necessary while formulating the laws.

1.4.1.3 Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations and clear to users. It also emphasizes that information is to be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Furthermore, the medium of information should be easy to understand by members of community.

1.4.1.4 Responsiveness

Good Governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe in a responsible way.

1.4.1.5 Consensus Oriented

There are several actors and as many view points in a given society. Good Governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broader consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable resources development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community. To make a sustainable decision in which each member of a community support the decision, consensus is a most. Without consensus, conflict may arise in future due to different interest group and decision might not be sustainable. In allocation and distribution of resources, consensus is an imperative element to reduce conflicts.

1.4.1.6 Equity and Inclusiveness

A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of a society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable ones, should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being. In developing countries like Nepal, where majority of people are from marginalized community and disadvantaged groups, equity plays a crucial role while distributing the resources equally.

1.4.1.7 Effectiveness and Efficiency

Good Governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of Good Governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

1.4.1.8 Accountability

Accountability is a key requirement of GG. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions and for whom the decisions are taken. Accountability can not be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

In broad term, the Good Governance is being categorized in above headings in most of the literatures with few variation. However, for the scope of this study, Good Governance has been summarized into the following points in the case of forest management. The four elements of Good Governance discussed under the study are:

- 1) Participation.
- 2) Transparency,
- 3) Accountability, and
- 4) Equity

The dictionary of ‘Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary’ defines the governance as the activity of governing a country or controlling a company or an institution, the way in which a country is governed or an institution is controlled. (Oxford, 2000).

The widespread and ongoing economic and public sector reforms across Asia have fundamentally altered the ground rules of 'who is involved in resource management decisions', 'what powers these stakeholders possess' and 'how accountable and transparent they are in producing equitable decisions'. There is a clear link between ‘good governance’ and the government sponsored process of decentralization. But this link also has important implications at the local level; the levels of local government, community networks, federations and user groups who are increasingly being called up to ensure equitable economic outcomes, participation of a broader range of stakeholders and sustainable resource utilization (<http://www.recoftc.org>, 2006).

Implications of choices in resource regimes are being fundamentally interrelated with an institution as it regulates the rules for choices. Institutions are “rationality context” that act as “simplifiers” for underlying complexities within the systems.

“Participation is the fact perceived as a kind of injection which can be applied to a rural development and consequently help influence its outcome” (Oakley, 1987).

Participation is an important aspect of governance in NRM. Participation in meetings, executive meetings, decision making process, information sharing are the key issues in Good Governance. There are many concepts and definitions of participation, depending on specific objective or subjective situations. For example, during 1950s and 1960s, it usually meant ‘political participation’ which focused on voting or organizational membership (Cohen and Uphoff 1980 cited in Karim 1994:11). However, during same period, another idea which emerged in the development area was community development. Hence, participation was viewed as ‘community participation’ which simply meant ‘.....the direct involvement of ordinary people in local affairs’. In the broader sense, the term ‘community participation’ implies ‘.....the creation of opportunities to enable all members of a society to actively

contribute to an influence the development process and to share equitably in the fruits of development' (Midgley et al. 1986 cited in Karim, 1994: 11).

Theories of Natural Resources Governances

Common pool resources (CPR) are natural or man made resources characterised with non-trivial exclusion and subtractable yield. Individuals dealing with such resources are presumably trapped into social dilemmas that lead to tragedies (Hardin, 1968). Ever since the proposed ideas on "Commons" and their governance complexities resulting into "tragedies" (Hardin, 1986) were put forth, issue of governing such resources to avoid tragedies has become an arena of international concern. The latter years have witnessed a debating and discussing group of academicians addressing the epistemological dilemma shared along with "tragedies" metaphor and "human mediators" (Bjorklund 1990:75-76).

1.5 Rational of the Study

After the introduction of community forestry program, the forest condition has been changed and people have easy access to their daily fuel wood requirement. From the available literature, it is oblivious that the forest resources are an essential element of rural communities. The CFUG are responsible for forest conservation and management. The CFUG Committee (quite often quoted as Executive Committee (EC) in the thesis) is a selected group of people with specific roles and responsibilities for forest management as per the constitution of a CF. Management practices should be transparent and decisions need to be taken with consent from all level of societies. This ensures that benefits from the CF are taken by all stakeholders.

The Good Governance is an important means to ensure that there is a harmony in between people and forest management. Literatures also manifest that governance needs to be improved so that larger community can get benefits. Issues such as participation where the marginalized and women have less access in decision, transparency of funds and resources mobilisation, access to information and opportunity sharing are the subjects of discussion. Women, being a foremost users and managers of forest, are kept behind in the pretext of socio-cultural norms and less knowledge.

If local people are more aware on decision making, then they can be better involved and share more responsibly in resources management. This indeed leads the management of natural resources towards sustainable development. In this study, an attempt has been made to assess the governance of Patle CF by analysing the key issues such as participation, transparency, accountability and equity. Further, the study looks into how the different actors of the society such as women, men, marginalized communities are involved in different aspects of resource governance. By doing so, we could make conclusions for better management of natural resources from a governance point of view.

CHAPTER II

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literatures on CFs and Good Governance in resource management through a theoretical review of documents and past studies. The aim of this section is to come up with an idea on facts revealed from past studies and experiences on different concerned issues established in this context. This section will provide back up information for the study.

2.1 Theoretical Reviews

2.1.1 Good Governance in Natural Resource Management

Good Governance in Natural Resource Management (NRM) is fundamental to sustainable development. Good Governance ensures participation of local people in resource management through a transparent way. The concept of Good Governance has emerged in last decade to conserve and manage the resources effectively in a sustainable manner. It further ensures equity and inclusiveness on consensus basis. Initially, the resource management was top down approach. Policy and decision makers formulated policies and plans excluding the interest and knowledge of local communities. Natural resources such as forests, water and land could be managed sustainably with considering the issues of Good Governance. Good Governance in natural resources can be ensured through the involvement of those stakeholders who are affected by decisions. Examples of unprecedented forest loss, land slides and mismanagement of resources are mainly due to lack of functional aspects of Good Governance.

Local level institutions such as CFUGs, Farmer Managed Irrigation System (FMISs) and Irrigation User Groups manage resources such as forest, land and irrigation for many years. In case of Irrigation User Group, local communities have traditional user committee. For example, Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems have managed their resources with rules and regulations that were built hundred years ago. These rules and regulations are still equally application in today and have function sustainably for centuries (Nepal, 2003). Rules and regulations of those committees have the elements of Good Governance such as participation, accountability, transparency, equity etc. Previous studies showed that FMISs have worked well than Agency managed irrigation systems which are operated by the Government.

However, there are still practices of bad governance in many resources management where some elite members of a community hold key positions and exercise their powers. The initial years of CFs have gone through such trauma. Still, it seems that the normal practice in community forestry is that the elite members of the society tend to take all key positions in the EC and make decisions on CF management such as harvest of the forest products and their distribution. The ordinary users of the CFUGs are least involved in the overall process. Thus, the decision making process may ignore the traditional dependence of the poor, women and occupational castes on forest for their livelihoods (Kanel, 2060).

2.1.2 Peoples Participation in Forest Management

Forest is the major natural resources of the world. Environmental consequences such as soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, global warming, acid rain, are emerging with the depletion of forest resources. Naturally, environmental consequences are cross- country issues, which influence at local, regional and world as a whole. A good forest management

checks the soil erosion and landslides, consumes carbon dioxide and releases oxygen, and keeps the scenic beauty of topography leading to less pollution and clean environment. Realizing its seriousness, international community has been engaged in forest resource management. The agenda of forest conservation was also well addressed in the United Nation Earth Summit+5, also known as “Rio declaration” 1992. The assembled leaders signed the ‘Forest Principles’ along with other agendas. The summit declared ‘Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests’ (<http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/>)

Involvement of communities in forest management is now a significant feature of national forest policies and practices throughout the world. Government of various countries are increasingly decentralizing and turning to local communities to assist them in protecting managing state-owned forests. Governments of various countries have supposed greater reliance on resources at community level is potential solution to a growing resource problem (FAO, 2001 cited in Bhandari 2004).

However, the community based management system is still very much in a stage of evolution. In fact, community-based approach is a major challenge in many places due to little experience in collaborative management particularly in mobilization of people in decision-making, benefit sharing and implementation at local level. If we could promote the governance at local level in forest management, that ultimately leads to a sustainable environment.

2.1.3 Community Forestry: A Glimpse in Nepalese Context

Prior to the 1970, the forest was nationalized and ownership of the forest was with government. People had to resort to an act equivalent to theft to fulfil their daily fuel wood requirement. Since majority of the rural people had to go to forest to collect fuel wood, there was not a sustainable mechanism where they could get their requirement in a normal way. Hence, the pace of deforestation was at high rate. Realising the fact, the government started to manage forests in a participatory way with the principle of a community forestry program. Community forests are part of National forests that are handed over to the community to be managed through CFUGs.

The principles of community forestry are:

- All accessible forests are handed over to users to the extent they are able and willing to manage;
- Forest users group shall protect, manage and utilize these forests;
- Forest user groups shall get all products and income from the forests;
- Priority is given to management of existing natural forests rather than to establishment of new plantation

Normally, a forest user group prepares an operational forest management plan and submits it for approval. The concerned District Forest Officer (DFO) is required to approve the operational forest management plan before handing over the forest to the CFUG. The constitution, under which the CFUG functions, would have the duties, rights and roles of users defined and gotten approval from the General Assembly of the CFUG. The operational forest management plan would have the constitution of the CFUG as one of its components. CFUG may amend some activities of the operational plan in the course of its implementation

but would require approval of the DFO. As of 2001, 939195 hectares of forests have been handed over to communities throughout the country (Nepal, 2002). In the initial phase of the 9th five year plan, there were only 5,316 community forests and the number has increased to about 12,000 by the end of the plan year (NPC, 2003).

2.1.4 Overview of Community Forest in Nepal

During Rana Regime, Nepal's forest sector was administered under the feudal system. Government encouraged the creation of new agricultural land from forests. The main reason for this policy was to increase land tax collection and agricultural production. Although, the Rana Regime recognized indigenous system of forest management generally administration worked against sustainable management (Shrestha, 2001). The first forestry related legislation "Private Forest Nationalization Act, 1957" was abolished the private ownership of forests and transferred it into the government. As the government was unable to provide adequate supervision and control, the transfer of ownership made to access of forest easier to the public. Additional legislation in 1961, 1968, 1971 and 1977 intended to improve forest management by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation. These acts, which were projected to restore the government bureaucratic control of national forest by tracing offences and meeting out punishment, clearly gave the impression that forests belonged to the government that could decide on how these resources should be used. The considerable focus on community forestry in 1970 was reforestation of degraded lands, but recently the emphasis is on participatory management and rural development. However, the implementation of these acts seems to have been somewhat progressive (Fisher, 1999).

Exclusion of local people from forest resources management brought about conflicts between the local people and the government. At last, it became clear that forest protection will be ineffective unless the local people are involved in the decision for its management. After 1960, the process of deforestation was accelerated because local participation was virtually nil.

In 1978, the government recognizing the rapid depletion and deterioration of the country's forest resources due to the limited resources of the Department of Forest to handle problems alone. The department introduced community forestry policy to seek local community' co-operation in the sustainable management and use of the forest resource. The policy puts control of forests in the hands of users of the resource, with the role of the department' staff shifting from that of manager and controller of forests to that of advisor and facilitators for forest user groups.

In line with CF, the Nepalese Government since 1993 has been running another community based forestry program, called 'leasehold forestry'. This is identified as complementary to CF, but now is operating only in a few districts where CF has already been established. It differs slightly from CF in that it focuses on small, ethnically homogenous groups of households below the poverty line. Only degraded or barren forest land is handed over and, unlike CF, leasehold forestry includes credit provisions for its members (Johnson, 1998).

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS) of Nepal, 1988 has defined clear-cut guidelines to put all community forests management under the control of Forest User Groups (FUGs). So far more than twelve thousands of FUGs with unique socio-economic characteristics have been formed and the availability of resources in each CF is also varied (Timsina, 2001).

2.2 Review of Legislation

2.2.1 Community Forestry Legislation

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, CF policy with the concept of Forest Users Groups (FUGs) formally emerged in 1991. The ownership of such forests land retains with government and can suspend the rights of the user groups, if and when the groups fail to perform according to the approved operational plan and guidelines issued by the government (Joshi, 1998).

CF policy was normally introduced in Nepal with the following basic principles (Joshi, 1998).

- Realizing sustainable management of local forest.
- Mobilizing and translating people participation into practice.
- Planning and implementing at grass-root level or bottom-up planning.
- Meeting basic needs of the local people.
- Marking community level institution capable for managing their forests.
- Making efficient and sustainable use of the local forests
- Achieving self sustaining in the management of forests.
- Using local resource and knowledge
- Generating collective and collaborative efforts from government and local people.

Community forestry in Nepal has been a unique example to show how the FUGs can collectively organize and takeover the management of local forests. The policy of CF has been widely recognized as one of the best forest policy giving examples of developing forest resources and use rights of local people through their active participation. The following are the some of the legal instruments related to forest and forest management.

Master Plan for Forestry Sector, MPFS (1989) planned for 21 years

Master plan for the forestry sector Nepal provides broad guideline for the refinement of CF in Nepal. The objective of MPFS was restoration of nature-balance, economic mobilization, scientific management and promotion of public co-operation. It designated CF program the priority program of forestry sector in Nepal. Getting a thrust from the plan, CF becomes 'people centered forestry' in Nepal. It was geared to rural institutional building, greater self-reliance, management flexibility and empowerment of deprived and poor section of the society. The plan provides 25 years policy and planning framework for the forestry sector of Nepal. The plan envisaged hand over of forest to the traditional users for fulfilling forest related basic needs in the hilly areas of Nepal.

Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)

Ninth Five Year Plan also followed MPFS thrust of peoples' participation. The main objective is poverty alleviation through providing economic opportunities to the marginalized' participation in development activities. The plan commits to launch sectoral poverty alleviation programs in a coordinated, unified, and effective manner. To this, the Plan has adopted, inter alia, a strategy to effect a high, sustained, and poverty alleviation-oriented economic growth through the integrated development and leadership of agriculture and

forestry. The Ninth Five Year Plan has adopted the Master Plan for the planned development of the forestry sector (NPC, 1998).

Performance in the eighth plan period has been encouraging with respect to CF. For example, it targeted the formation of 5,004 user groups for the period. But 5,316 forest user groups were formed: an accomplishment that is rare in Nepal. As a comparison, the plantation target for the eighth plan period was 61,000 ha., but the accomplishment was 39%. Similarly forests were to be leased to 25 thousand families, but the performance was less than 10% during the same plan period (NPC, 1998).

The Ninth Five Year Plan has adopted a policy of perpetuating supplies of forest products to the ordinary public through communal management of forests. As a sub-sectoral program of the plan, community and private forestry aims to promote employment and income generation opportunities to marginal families. It further promotes accommodating non-timber forest products under CF management. The plan has devised programs to implement existing CF work plans, provide pre-FUG-formation supports and to deliver post formation supports.

Tenth Five-Year National Plan (2002-2006)

The Tenth Five Year Plan was prepared in the context of Millennium Development Goals, and is also considered as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The plan has as its target the reduction of poverty in Nepal's from 38% to 30% by the year 2007. CF contributes to poverty reduction by not only meeting basic needs of forest products, but also by generating income and employment and meeting the demand of forest based industries. This also means that certain percent of proceeds from the sale of surplus forest products should be channeled towards poverty reduction and improving livelihood of the local people. One big step towards implementing I-PRSP would be the explicit role of CF in reducing poverty.

The specific objectives of the proposed plan in specific to the forest management are:

- To increase the income and employment opportunities of the poor women and disadvantaged group of the society through the implementation of forestry programme and thereby help reduce the poverty.
- To introduce integrated forest management system in government managed community and leasehold forests.
- To carry out study and survey on Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and thereby widening the scope of their production and utilization.
- To expand CF in buffer zone and to protect and expand biodiversity resources based on landscape planning and management concepts.
- To expand soil conservation and watershed management activities in order to conserve ground water resource and increase land productivity and maintain soil fertility with due consideration of protection of Churia Region.
- To continue to upgrade and improve management policy and organization of the forest and the status of legal policy of forest management.

2.2.2 Forest Act and Forest Rules

The major recommendations of the Master Plan have been incorporated in the Forest Act (1993) and Forest Rules (1995). The act and the rules have given substantial rights to local people in managing their CFs. The codification of these rights in the national legislation is one of the unique features of community forestry in Nepal. Further elaboration of these rules is made in the community forestry directives and guidelines. The focus of this legislation is on institutionalizing CFUG as an independent and self-governing entity, nationwide expansion of community forestry, providing utilization and management rights to the local community, and creating an accountability forum for community development. It has also limited the role of the district forest office to that of supporter, facilitator, monitor and regulator of community forestry. The main features of community forestry according to the forest act and forest rules are as follows:

- Any part of government forests can be handed over by the District Forest Office (DFO) to the communities who are traditional users of the resource. The right of forest management and use is transferred from the Department of Forest to the users, not the ownership of land itself.
- A part of the national forest can be handed over to the Forest User Groups irrespective of the size of the forest and number of households in the CFUG;
- Handing over national forests to communities has priority over leasehold forests;
- CFUGs have to manage the CF as per their Constitution and Operational Plan (OP) which are subject to approval of DFO;
- CFUGs are recognized as independent and self-governing entities with perpetual succession;
- CFUGs are allowed to plant short-term cash crops including non-timber forest products such as medicinal herbs;
- CFUGs can fix prices for forestry products under their jurisdiction, and sell the forest products;
- CFUGs can transport forest products under their jurisdiction anywhere in the country;
- CFUGs can accumulate their fund from grants received by Government of Nepal and other local institutions, from the sale of CF products and money received from other sources such as fines. CFUGs can spend funds in any kind of community development work;
- CFUGs can amend Operational Plans. The District Forest Officer (DFO) has to review the plan within 30 days of the revision and DFO can suggest CFUG to revise the purposed amendment within that period.
- If forest operations deviate from the operational plan resulting in damage to the forests, then the DFO can withdraw the community forests from the users. However, the DFO must give the forest back to CFUG, once the committee is reconstituted.

2.3 Review of the Previous Studies

2.3.1 Good Governance in CFs

The CF management in Nepal is taken as a successful example of participatory forest management; however, the issues such as equity, participation and access of marginalized and disadvantaged groups are a subject of discussion. It is often reported that these groups are not

able to take the benefits as much as they supposed to do. Besides, other issues of Good Governance are also need to be tested in the case of community forestry in Nepal. Ownership of the forest in the form of CF has given a new lease of life to the forest and its dependants. This section has collected a literature of previous studies on Good Governance mainly focusing on participation, transparency, accountability and equity.

Decentralization has been a recurrent theme in the process of development in general, and forest management in relation to poverty reduction and Good Governance in particular. Community forestry in Nepal is cited to be one of the best models in the world in terms of decentralization for forest resources conservation and potential for poverty reductions. Nepal is advancing towards creating conducive policy environment as well as promoting and up-scaling best practices in the process of community forestry including Non-timber Forest Products (NTFPs) management. Till date, considerable progress has been realized in this area with the involvement of a variety of stakeholders including government, non government and private sectors.

Substantial amount of fund has been generated from community forest. For example, in the year 2002/03, the CFUGs from Banke, Bardia, Kailali, and Dhading districts generated a total amount of NRs. 30,900,000 (US \$ 412,000) from forest products sale, membership fees and penalties (SAGUN, 2003). However, information on how these funds were mobilized was poorly disseminated due to lack of transparency and accountability of the executive members (Maharjan, 2003). Majority of the users were not aware about the utilization and balance of the funds (DVN, 2002). Further, the poor members are not empowered to raise their voice within the group to influence the decision-making process. This clearly illustrates a need for improved governance through promoting broader participation of users and accountability of the duty bearers in community forest.

According to (Luitel and Timisina, 2003), the representation of the poor and marginalized section of the society is very low or almost nil in the Federations of Community Forestry Users (FECOFON¹) and irrigation water users at various levels. Further, they have shown some second generation issues from the study project and by synthesizing the learning from the first phase of the Strengthening Advocacy and Local Government Accountability (SALGA) project, which need to be addressed in the next phase of the project. SALGA project has been implemented in the four Terai districts (Siraha, Saptari, Dhanusha and Sarlahi) of eastern part of Nepal, with the aim to create Good Governance by strengthening the people's advocacy actions and sensitizing the duty-holders about their accountability to generate better livelihood opportunities particularly for the poor and marginalized in the project area. These second generation issues are as follows:

Social justice in community level: The equity in cost and benefit sharing does not exist in the community level in the project area. In most of the cases, communities perform the activities in equality basis, which may not be socially just always. Positive discrimination is needed to distribute the benefits (more for poor than rich) and cost (more for rich than poor) of any common property resources. The first priority of the access on the common property resources should be of poor, marginalized and weaker section of the society. In many occasions, the poorest of the poor are in minority in the community and their interests are often overlooked (such as the decision of ban to enter in the forest seems to be good for the

¹ FECOFUN is the largest federation with a membership that currently stands at about five million people including rural-based farmers and traditional users of forest resources from almost all of Nepal's 75 districts. FECOFUN is also Nepal's largest civil society organization (CSO).

health of the forest and many users (having various income sources) may agree on this decision.

Governance reform in user group level: The governance in the user group level is found to be very poor in the project area. However, due to the conventional power relationship between executive members of the user group and general users and also the low level of trust to the outside facilitating agencies including local level government officials, poor, marginalized and weaker section of the society are being exploited in many forms. The transparency regarding decision-making, resource mobilization, financial transaction, opportunity grabbing/sharing etc. in local level is very limited. There is a very low level of participation of poor, marginalized and weaker section of the society. Participation of the local people in the resource management needs to be viewed as their rights. People who are affected directly by the certain decision need to be participated themselves in the decision-making process. However, in practice, elite, powerful and the members of the executive committee dominate the decision-making process. Similarly, the decision maker and implementer need to be accountable for their decisions and actions, which is found very low in the user group level. Again, all the members need to be bounded in a certain rules. However, practices showed that the rules are made only for the weaker section of the society but the rich and elite break and dis-obey the rules.

Governance reform in different levels of federations: 50% women representation in the committee in all levels is mandatory in case of FECOFUN. Local level elite domination in federations is common including women. While interacting with the general users, it was realized an inadequate sense of accountability of the federations to their member constituencies. Rather they seemed to be obliged towards the center level (upward). The financial transactions and other decision-making process were found to be non-transparent. Even the participation of the members for any sorts of decision-making was found to be only for legal formality. There seemed to be adopted a non-participatory and top-down approach of decision making approach. There is a lack of clearly defined and divided roles for the members. Thus, the governance reform is necessary in the federations at various levels (national, district and range-post/village).

Induced participation: This induced level of participation is a current participatory forest policy of government. Based on this policy, government has emphasized the community forestry with user group participatory approach. It includes sustainable approach for the protection, development and management of local forests through the formation of FUGs at local level. The FUGs is the only appropriate institution responsible for the overall management of local community forests. With this policy, the local participation concept in the past, which was almost ceased after the enactment of Nationalization Forest Act, 1957, was again induced with different mode. This community based participatory approach of forest policy was recommended by MPFS, 1989 and was fully endorsed by government and legitimized by current Forest Act 1993.

The participatory policy of the community forestry is based on three elements: Empowerment, Institutionalization and Contribution of the FUGs to maintain and restore forest ecosystem and to increase the basic forest products for meeting the subsistence needs of the local people. Based on the participatory policy, some FUGs are empowered by exercising the delegated rights and authorities in decision making, planning, and management of their community forests.

According to Ojha and Wagle (2002), following issues have raised based on the study, which are:

- The status of participatory community forests in Nepal should be viewed in terms of FUGs institutional, social, technical and financial capacities.
- Problems and conflicts within and among the participatory groups are still there because of heterogeneous socio-economic strata, diversified needs and problems of local people with respect to accessing forest products. Forest boundary conflicts between villages and user groups, inadequacy of forest products and disparity in benefit sharing among participatory groups are also prevailing in many community forests.
- Based on the experience and interactions with many of the FUGs, it leads us to believe that the management and leadership skills in terms of institutional, social, technical and financial capacities of user groups are still not gaining momentum meeting the sustainable policy goals of CF management in Nepal.

Ojha (2003) has raised some important current issues of community forestry in Nepal in his paper. The donors contribution in promoting community forestry in Nepal is significant through field projects. The project structure of creating a huge technical team under direct donor control has been consistently a mechanism of donor support in Nepal, and this has left limited opportunity for local government and non-governmental organizations to develop their institutional capacity. As a close observer of donor forestry projects in Nepal, he argued that they have in fact patronized Nepali civil force in the name of employment – most young youth aspire to get 'project job' these days, rather than striving for self-entrepreneurship or civic political action.

Since enhancing equity is a political process, involving redistribution of power and benefits- any effort to promote it should be informed by a broad understanding of social and political processes, including who contributes positively and who contributes negatively, and why. The forestry administration still seems to make policy decisions without adequate analysis and consultation (such as the recent decision of 40% tax on surplus forest products from community forest), and advocates of community forestry regard resources by forest bureaucrats, rather than facilitating access of the poor, moving beyond the current situation of elite domination. Much of the civil society efforts too, including federation building of forest users, has not been able to go beyond the state-community elite divide to address the forest access issue of the poor and marginalized (Timsina and Sharma, 2002 cited in Ojha, 2003).

Kellert (2000) conducted a comparative study based on Community Natural Resource Management (CNRM) in Nepal, the U.S. and Kenya. According to authors, despite sincere attempts and some success, serious deficiencies are widely evident. Especially in Nepal and Kenya, CNRM rarely resulted in more equitable distribution of traditional of power and economic benefits, reduced conflict, increased consideration of traditional or modern environmental knowledge, protection of biological diversity, or sustainable resource use. CNRM occasionally resulted in more equitable distribution of benefits and decision-making responsibility among local, often subsistence, and indigenous peoples. The shift from state to more community based management of natural resources sometimes assisted marginalized and neglected groups in obtaining a greater role and stake in the allocation and proprietary control of local natural resources. Despite this occasional success, authors observed a highly uneven distribution of benefits. Certain individuals, communities, and interests materially and politically benefited to a far greater Makalu Barun Conservation Area (MBCA) in Nepal

received substantially less development benefits than their counterparts residing in closer proximity to the CNRM headquarters.

Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) has carried out a case study at sub-national level with a hypothesis that an active involvement of civil society and its knowledge base is vital for establishing Good Governance. FECOFUN has been a key player in the forestry sector policy development in Nepal. It has consistently been pushing for participatory forest management where knowledge of all stakeholders is recognized. Along with NGO alliances, it has brought new perspectives into the policy making process that used to be dominated by the government. The most important policy issue in which FECOFUN has made significant contributions in the past few years is regarding the perpetuation of users' rights over forest resources in the hills as well as in the Terai (lowlands). The case study has demonstrated that the initiatives of civil groups to challenge technocratic approaches to natural resources management and promote deliberative policymaking and governance practices. The advocacy and networking function of FECOFUN has contributed to raise awareness and to share ideas among the CFUGs, although the complex nature of federation has sometimes yielded internal conflicts as regards leadership, role divisions, sharing of power between central and local bodies. Despite this, it has meant enhancement of the political and social capital of CFUGs in the form of knowledge so that they are no more bound by the traditional patron-client relationship with the Department of Forest (Chhetri, et.al, 2005).

Lama (1999) in his dissertation indicates the serious implication of community forestry in rural development and women's participation. Many strategies are suggested to promote and enhance women's full participation in community forestry in Nepal. Such strategies include: sensitization of foresters and villagers about women's positive roles in forest management; making equal representation of women in forest committees mandatory; and providing appropriate education and training related to forest management to women. While these strategies may be helpful, however, in the long term it is the policy to be changed and political commitment that can go furthest in achieving full participation of women in community forestry in Nepal.

Despite remarkable progress on handing-over and protection of community forests, enough attention has not been paid to its governance. Most of the CF practices are protection-oriented and are often blamed for lack of active participation of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised people including women. A baseline survey conducted in Dhading, Bardia and Banke districts has shown that the percentage of the poor and marginalised users representation in the CFUG committees was 8.7 percent while the women's representation was 38 percent (DVN, 2002). The report shows that there is less representation of poor, women and marginalized groups in the executive committees as compared to the total population of the CFUGs.

Why Good governance in CF?

Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic, environment and social resources for development. Good Governance practices include: increasing public participation with the focus on the well-being of the poor, marginalized and women, transparency, accountability, predictability, capacity building of constituents, leadership development, coalition-building in civil society and private sector, conflict mitigation through negotiation and mediation, and advocacy. Good Governance in community forestry contributes to various field of rural development as indicated in the following headings:

People's livelihood: More than 78% of the Nepalese people depend on forest resources to support their livelihood like fuel wood requirement. Good Governance is, therefore, crucial for providing equitable access to and benefits from forest resources to all people including the poor and the marginalized group. If resources distributed in an equitable manner, the probability of misutilization of forest resources get decreased.

Sustainable forest management: With participation from various sections of society, there will be better CF management and reduced conflicts. Well functioning of CFUGs will eventually lead to sustainability of community forestry.

Ensure broader participation and ownership feeling: Participation from different segments of society, particularly women, poor and Dalits ensures the reflection of their concerns and raise ownership feeling in the community forestry management process.

Equitable benefit sharing: Practices of Good Governance in community forestry contribute to equitable benefit sharing among the users in a transparent way.

Access and control to decision-making process: Activities such as public hearing and public auditing provide an opportunity for the users to play critical roles in influencing the decision making process in CF management.

Hence, the process of Good Governance provides opportunities for users to manage their resources in an equitable way so that every users participate in the decision making process. It also raises awareness among the users and provides an opportunity to involve in a process of governance and thereby resources can be managed in a sustainable manner.

CHAPTER III

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Rational of the Selection of the Study Area

Patle CF is located in Lamatar VDC of Lalitpur district. As the objective of the study is to assess the Good Governance issues of the CF, the site was chosen purposively without any biasness, to look in detail and come up with its extent being practiced.

3.2 Research Design

This research is conglomerate of both descriptive and explanatory approach. It uses a descriptive approach to identify existing governance aspects such as participation, accountability, transparency and equity. It also uses explanatory approaches to understand the driving motive of some groups for their activity in participation, decision making and forest management practices. It also attempts to observe the trend of different aspects of Good Governance such as participation in meetings. Both questionnaire survey and group discussions were conducted to collect the required information. A reconnaissance survey was done prior to the actual surveys to obtain an overview of the study area.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for the study. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The study is mainly based on primary data supported by secondary one.

3.4 Universe and Sampling

The sample population included the members of EC and other general member of Patle CFUG. Out of 158 households, 24 were selected for household survey, which represent 15 percent of the total household. The total population of 158 HHs is 783. The total sample population of 24 Households is 123 (66 male and 57 female) which is equivalent to about 16% of total population. Besides, many other households were also involved while carrying out the focus group discussions and interviews. While selecting the sample, random purposive sampling method was applied to represent the different groups like women, disadvantaged group, poor, rich and other variations in the society. In this procedure, due attention was given in a way so that the sample represent all cross section of society including, rich and poor, high caste and *dalit*, female and male members etc. Out of 24 sample household, 6 household (37 population) was from *dalit* community.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of Sample Population

Sample characteristics	Total number
Total household of CFUGs	158
Sample household for the research study	24
Sample population of sample household	123
Male population	66
Female population	57
Sample <i>Dalit</i> Household	6
<i>Dalit</i> sample population	37

3.5 Data Collection and Techniques

3.3.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected through reconnaissance survey, questionnaire survey, focused group discussions, self-observation analysis and key informants interview. The data were quite important to know the forest management practices and issues of governance.

Reconnaissance Survey

One day reconnaissance survey was carried out by the researcher prior to the detail discussion with users to get general knowledge about the current biophysical condition of land, forest resources, management practices, land use practices and livestock pattern. The reconnaissance survey showed that the settlements in the Lamatar village are in the form of small clusters, each ranging from 3-10 households. This provided an overview of the general living conditions and forest resources management in Patle CF area.

Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaires were used to obtain basic data and to generate other general information related to the CF management from the sample population. Outcome of the review of various literatures and field knowledge were applied to develop the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was arranged sequentially so that factual information can be obtained from the interview. Questionnaire was used to collect and accumulate the socio-economic information and to know the individual perception of respondents on various aspects of Good Governance of the study area.

Focused Group Discussion

Three focused group discussions with *dalit* female, high class female and male were organized to collect information related to participation, decision making, transparency, accountability and equity in forest management practices. Discussion was focused on the identification of constraints and opportunities while operating forest management practices. The focus group discussion was quite fruitful because the candid opinions are received due to presence of a particular group only, for example women were more opened to discuss without any hesitation.

Self Observation and Analyses

Systematic self observation and analysis were made throughout the field visit. Further, a walk over survey was also done in accessible portion of forest area to observe the forest condition. Additionally, the researcher also attended few meetings of Executive Committee and process of settlement of disputes.

Key Informants Interview

Key informants were interviewed about the status of the forest management. Those include chairperson, secretary, members of the forest user committee and elder person of society. The Photo 1 (In APPENDIX 4) shows discussion with chairperson and secretary of Patle CF. The information from elder person was useful to compare the status of Patle forest before the status of CF. Similarly, the persons involved in the research project conducted by ForestAction Nepal were also interviewed.

3.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from District Forest Office (DFO), Community Forest Division, Babarmahal, range post, and VDC offices. Additionally, relevant information was collected from other available published sources and different libraries including Tribhuvan University Central Library. The past studies on CF and governance were also reviewed as a part of a literature review.

Reviewing Documents

It includes a review of available existing literatures on Good Governance. Relevant information was collected from the available published and unpublished materials. Secondary data of general socio-economic situation and other relevant areas of concerns were collected from official reports, maps, previous study reports etc.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Microsoft-Excel software. For the quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics like charts, tables, graphs, percentages and mean were used to interpret the results. For the qualitative data, different types of indices, cross-tabulations etc. were used. Quantitative data were analyzed to quantify participation of different groups in various activities whereas qualitative data were used for descriptive analysis of the different issues of governance.

For the analysis of the data, forest management practices and associated indicators were developed. The indicators were mainly objectively and subjectively verifiable. Thus the analysis was made on the basis of logical interpretation with support of empirical data. Further, the different criteria of good governance and forest management were attempted to further categorized into high, moderate and low magnitude based on the logical interpretation and argument of the indicators developed. The indicators are discussed on the Table 3.2.

3.7 Operational Definition and Measurement of Selected Concepts/Variables

Marginalized (dalit) community: The marginalized community is used to refer the economically disadvantaged and traditionally ostracized people due to the caste system that is prevalent in rural Nepal. The term marginalized and *dalit* is used as the same meaning in the study .

Community forest: Community forests are a part of national forests that are handed over to community for management.

Governance: Governance is simply defined as a process of making decision and the way decisions are implemented in the community.

Participation: Participation refers to the presence of a group in certain activities of the CF like meetings, decision making, and forest utilization.

Forest management practice: It is mainly the activities carried out by the users for Patle forest management. It includes meetings, decision making, forest resources utilization such as thinning and pruning, fund raising and mobilization.

Table 3.2 Matrix of Governance and Forest Management

Governance	Forest management activities	Indicators	Means of verification
Participation	Executive committee Meetings	No of presence of different users groups in different meetings, Time constraints to attain GA meetings, women involvement in different household works	Meeting minutes, direct observation
	General assembly Meetings	No of presence of different users groups in different meetings, No. of respondents who can speak something about GA meetings, Time constraints to attain GA meetings	Meeting minutes, direct observation
	Decision making	Means of conflict resolution, Level of awareness of users on decision making, Attitude of male users towards women and <i>dalit</i> users, Response of EC users to others, involvement of women different works, any socio-cultural practices that hindering participation of different users, any cases and events of discrimination	Direct observation and discussion with users, focus group discussions
	Forest resource utilization	Access to forest resources is perceived to be locally fair, Rules and norms of resources used are monitored and enforced Forest condition, Receipts provided by EC, duration of seasonal openings, total number of bundles made during seasonal openings, Users feedback	Meeting minutes,

	Formation of constitution and operational plan	The level of awareness of respondents on issues of constitutions, involvement of users in formation processes,	Questionnaire survey and focus group discussions, key informants interview
Transparency	Forest utilization and management	The number of users during seasonal opening, the information of opening of forest to users, The monitoring practices during openings, the status of forest after openings, the total number of bundles taken	Discussion with users and EC members
	Decision making process	The number of users in meetings, Level of awareness of users on decision making process, response of EC on decision making process, openness of women during respondent survey and focus groups discussion	Focus group discussion,
	Access to information	Means of informing users about the forest related activities, Posting forest related information	Direct observation, questionnaire survey
	Fund utilization and mobilization	The auditing practices, disclose practices of auditing result such as pasting	Documentation, release of documents to users
	Resource distribution	Mechanism to sharing benefit, Access to resources by different groups of users, Users satisfaction on access to resources, Resource distribution criteria and means like receipts, Local people feel secure about access to resources	Questionnaire survey discussion
	Accountability	EC to Users	The access of information to users about forest management activities, Transparency in fund utilization and resources sharing, sharing of training opportunities
	Users to EC	No. of cases of theft practices, illegal activities in forest areas, no of cases of illegal cuttings,	Questionnaire survey and focus group discussion
Equity	Resource distribution	Satisfaction of users on access to resources, conflict and dispute cases while distributing resources, Reservation of any community or groups while getting resources	Questionnaire survey and focus group discussion
	Opportunities	Opportunity in trainings and programs,	Meeting minutes, Users response to EC
	Representation (caste) to EC	List of EC members	Meeting minutes and documents

3.8 Reliability and Validity of the Data

Efforts were made to minimize the errors during the data collection phases of the study. The researcher reviewed the similar types of studies conducted by other researchers. The variables used in the present study have been selected very carefully and appropriate instruments were developed and pre-tested prior to proceeding for field study. Combinations of methods were used to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected from different sources. However, people were found to be suspicious while giving their private information like income and opinions about the CFUGs. The researcher tried to minimize such behaviors by creating an open environment with the local people.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

As the study is conducted in a mid hill district of Nepal, this might not reflect the true governance of CFs for Nepal as a whole. Further, being located close to the capital city, the people are more educated and aware than most of the other CFs located in the hilly areas of Nepal. More than that, an action research has been conducted by ForestAction Nepal regarding the management of the forest. Hence people were found to be aware on issues of governance. While interacting with the personnel involved in the action research, they agreed on the fact that people are more aware in terms of governance like participation, decision making process and equity than the previous years.

During field survey, most of the respondents were seemed suspicious with the researcher and his friend due to the transitional phase of Nepal. However, the peace and security condition was improved during the subsequent visits in the study area.

3.10 Research Procedure

The research procedure adopted for the study is presented in the Figure 3.1.

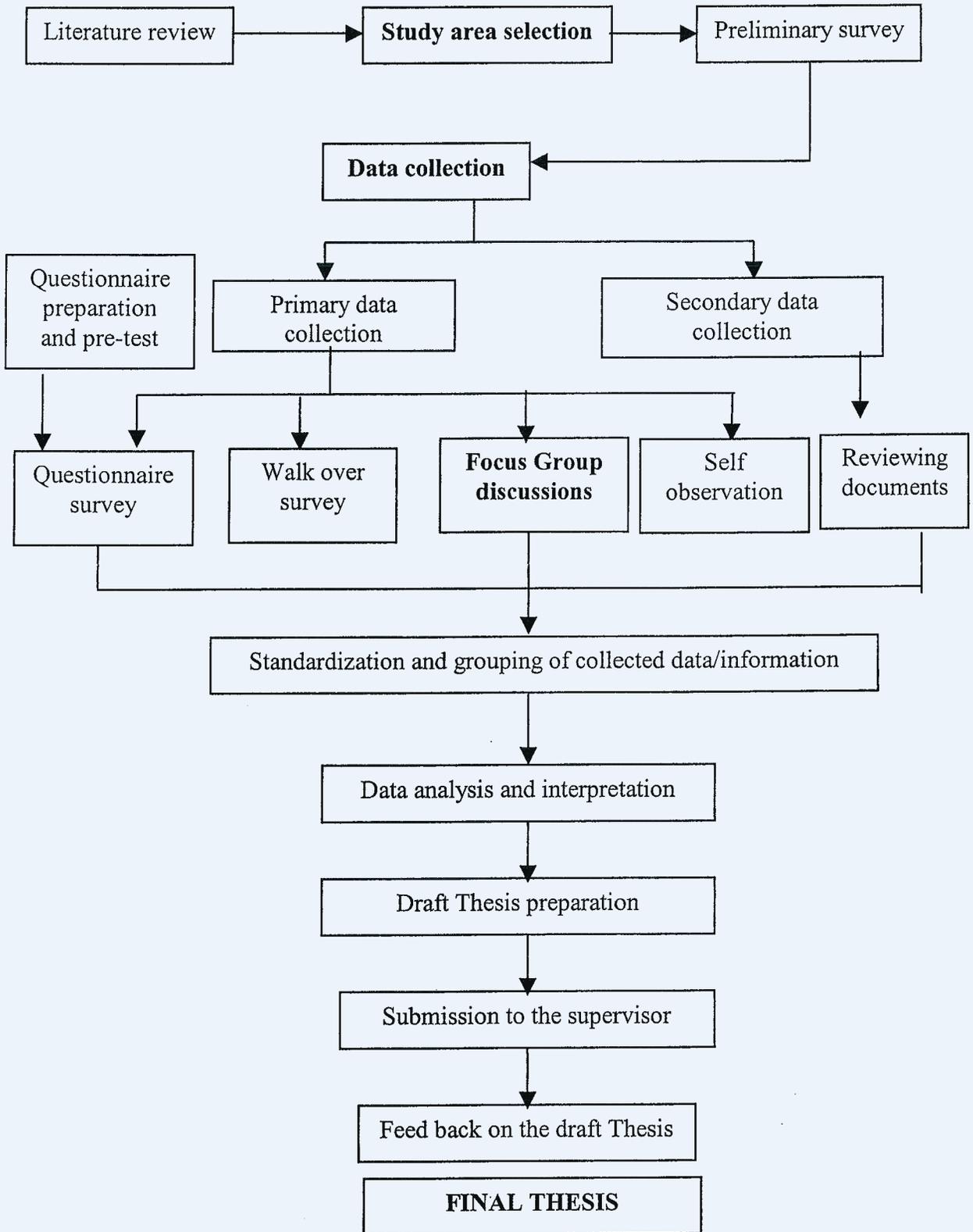


Figure 3.1 Research procedure of the study

CHAPTER IV

4. PROFILE OF STUDY AREA AND SAMPLED POPULATION

4.1 Study Area Profile

4.1.1 Lalitpur district

Lalitpur district is one of the mid hill districts of Bagmati Zone which lies in the Central Development Region of Nepal. The climate of the district varies from sub-tropical, temperate and cool temperate. Being located as a neighbor district of Capital of Nepal, the Lalitpur district witnesses many development works. The district encompasses a wide range of facilities of infrastructures and other services like hospital, road, electricity etc. Some central offices are also located in the district. The political boundary of Lalitpur is bordered by four districts namely Kavrepalanchok, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Makawanpur from East, West, North and South respectively. The total area of the district is 385 sq. km.

The district has some rivers such as Bagmati, Godawari, Nakkhu, Khani, Kodkhu, Tungun, Manohara etc. Similarly, lakes and ponds are also very common in the area like Guwaldaha, Katuwaldaha, Godawari Kunda, Nagdaha, Bojho Pokhari and Saraswati.

Topographical distribution of land

The topographical distribution of land is categorized into two different categories as Mid mountain and Siwalik. About 99% of the total land of Lalitpur is located in Mid Mountain. Out of total land, 45% land is under agriculture land, which has further classified into cultivated and non-cultivated. Similarly, 52% of the land is covered by forest area. The Table 4.1 provides information of topographical distribution of land.

Table 4.1 Topographical Distribution of land of Lalitpur District (Area in Ha.)

Physical condition	Agriculture		Grazing	Forest	Others	Total
	Cultivated	Non-cultivated				
Mid Mountain	12585	4779	87	20722	793	38966
Siwalik	208	88	0	5	0	301
Total	12793	4867	87	20727	793	39267

(Source: ISRSC, 2006)

Fuel wood requirement of households

33% of total household of Lalitpur district depends on wood for cooking purposes. Virtually all the wood requirements are met from the nearby forest areas. The central part of the city within the ring road and urban periphery of the capital city are using fuel such as LP gas and kerosene. Similarly, in rural areas of the district depend on forest fuel wood.

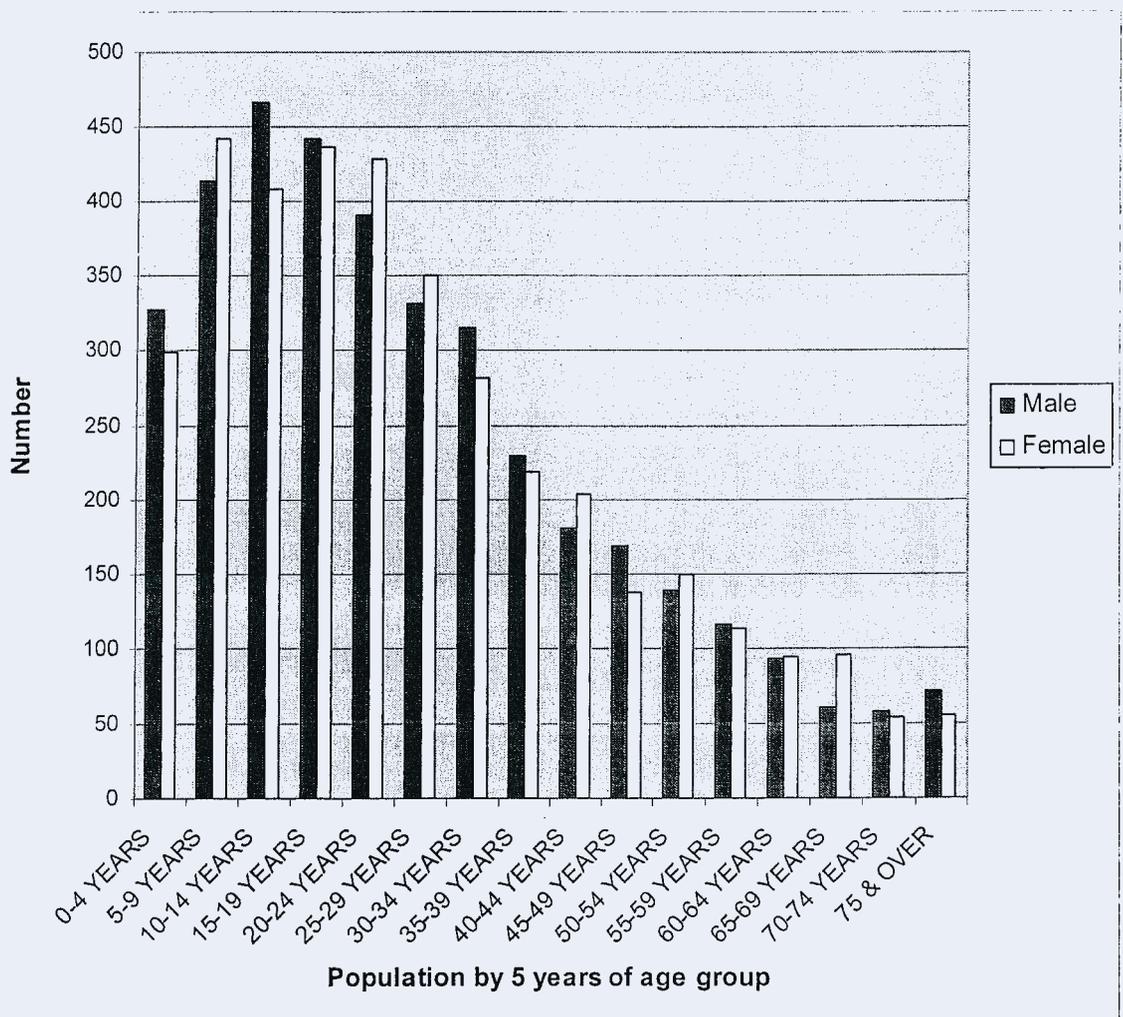
Table 4.2 Type of Main Fuel Wood for Cooking

Total household	Wood	Kerosene	LP gas	Bio gas	Santhi/ Guitha (Cow dung)	Others	Not stated
68922	23423	26687	16625	95	95	1554	443

(Source: ISRSC, 2006)

4.1.2 Lamatar VDC

Lamatar Village Development Committee (VDC) is located in the southeast from the district headquarter. The VDC is located about 9 kilometers far from the *ring road*². The total population of the VDC is 6780 where male occupies higher number than female. The population distribution of different age groups is given in the Figure 4.1. The figure shows that the age group between 15-19 is highest in number.



(Source: ISRSE, 2002)

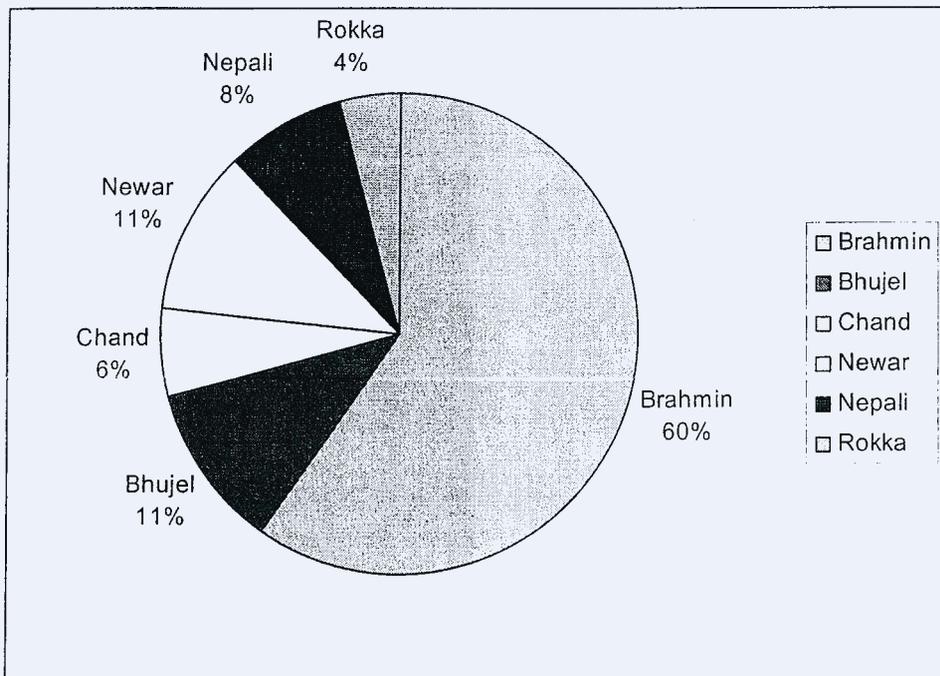
Figure 4.1 Population by 5 years of age group of Lamatar VDC

² The ring road is a circular road, which comprises some parts from Kathmandu and Lalitpur. The central city area inside the ring road is the most developed parts of Nepal, where most of the infrastructure, government services including the biggest administrative unit, Singmha Durbar, are located.

4.1.3 Socio-Economic Status

Patle CFUGs cover about 158 households. The community is mostly dominated by caste group like Bhraman, Chettri, Newar and Sarkis. There are about 32 households of marginalized community like Nepali, Rokka and Newar. The marginalised groups in this study refer to those groups who are low caste in society and have very less income. They are mostly low caste group like Sarki. Sarkis depend on business related to the processing of leathers and making shoes. They produce shoes by using the skin of buffaloes and other animals. They are regarded as untouchable caste, in most of the Hindu societies.

The Figure 4.2 shows the caste and ethnic composition of the 158 households. The data highlights that the community is dominated by Brahman followed by Cheetri and *dalit*.



(Source: Field household survey, 2006)

Figure 4.2 Caste/ethnicity Group of the Study Area

The major occupation of the people in Lamatar VDC is agriculture-based activities like farming, processing and livestock. Based on sample respondents, it was found that all the users (158 Households) depend on agriculture based activities partially. Only 25% of the population can feed themselves from agriculture for 12 months because of the high land holdings. Majority of such population is from high caste group. Only few *dalit* families have agriculture land. However, the other population can survive 6-8 months from agriculture. Almost 75% of the total populations have access to other alternative sources of income. Most of the people meet their income requirement by business, manual labor, services (government and private) mainly in Lamatar VDC and urban areas of Kathmandu and Lalitpur district. Some of the people have shops and business in the study area. Many people residing nearby the roadside have opened shops like grocery and small restaurants. Most of the *dalit* male members go to city area for work. About 26% (41 Households) is found to have someone in abroad to earn money. In conclusion, the economic status of the people in Patle is good in average because of their alternative sources of income like business, agriculture and services and abroad migration. The *dalit* community has also managed to have income sufficient throughout the year by their occupational caste and agriculture.

About 40 % (63 Households) are fully dependent on the CF. They are mostly from *dalit* community. Almost 60 % (95 Households) depend partially on CF for 4 to 8 months. Users are mostly depending on CF for fuel wood, livestock and to generate heat during winter season. The fuel wood requirement is a widespread use of the forest products.

In case of *dalit* community, being located nearby the capital city and a district with good infrastructural facility, they are more aware as compare to other rural area of Nepal. The lifestyle and gesture of these groups are better than the *dalit* community of other rural areas of Nepal; which the researcher has visited.

4.1.4 Literacy

The population of Lamatar VDC is about 6780. The literacy rate of Lamatar VDC is about 73%. Of which, 45% male and 27% female are literate. The, Figure 4.3 is a percentage of literate male and female of Lamatar VDC (ISRSC, 2006).

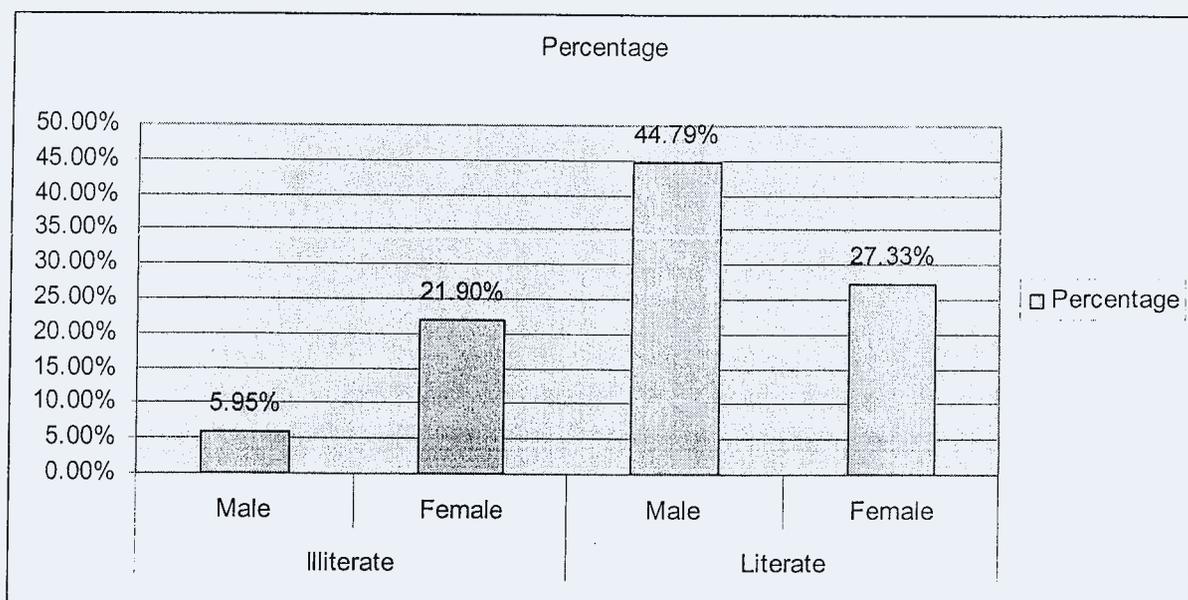


Figure 4.3 Percentage of 6 years of age and over by literacy status and sex of Lamatar VDC

The average literacy rate of the 158 households is about 71%, which exclude the children of age below 5 years, which includes 6 girls and 5 boys. As per the sample survey, out of 61 male, 48 are literate (can read and write) which is about 78%. Similarly, in case of female, out of 51 sample population, only 33 were found to be literate, which is 64%. The Table 4.3 highlights the literacy status of the study area.

Table 4.3 Population 5 Years of Age and over by Literacy Status and Sex of the Study Area

VDC	Illiterate			Literate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Lamatar	31	13	18	81	48	33

(Source: Field survey, 2006)

4.2 Patle Community Forest

Patle CFUG is located at Lamatar VDC, ward number 1 of Lalitpur district. Lalitpur district is one of the three districts of Kathmandu Valley. Patle CFUG lies under Sisneri Range Post, Godavari Illaka Forest Office. The CFUG area can easily be accessed within 10 minutes walk from Sishneri Busk Park, locally called Dhungeni, which is approximately 9 km far from Lagankhel, the district headquarters of Lalitpur. Patle forest area is accessible to the market of Lalitpur and Kathmandu cities. Everyday bus from Dhungeni leaves for Lagankhel in every 15/20 minutes and vice versa from early morning to late evening. The forest is located in a hill area to the north slope. The forest area is divided into 5 blocks. The general characteristic of Patle CFUG is described in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 A Glimpse of Patle CFUG

S.N.	Characteristics	Status
1	District	Lalitpur
2	VDC	Lamatar VDC, ward number 1
3	Forest hand over date	1993/06/03 A.D. (2050/02/21 B.S.)
4	Households	158
5	Total population of Users	783 (male:407, female 383)
6	EC member	11
7	Women member in EC	4 (including 2 from <i>dalit</i> community)
8	Forest area	104.6 ha
9	Blocks	5
10	Forest type	Natural forest-Chilauni, Katus Plantation-pine forest
11	Vegetation species	Chilauni (<i>Schima wallachi</i>), Katus (<i>Castonapsis indica</i>), Salla (<i>Pinus roxburgii</i>)
12	NTFPs	Chiraito (<i>Sweritia Chirtia</i>), Kaphal (<i>Myrica esculanta</i>)
13	Wildlife	Kalij, Dumsi, Kharayo, Deer, Bear, Tiger
14	Livelihood strategy	Agriculture based services, business, wages/job
15	Caste composition	Brahman, Chhetri, Newar, Bhujel, Nepali, Thakur Lama et.

Patle CFUG was formally handed over to the community in 1993/06/03 A.D. (2050/02/21 B.S.). It occupies an area of 104.6 hectare. The forest is dominated by Chilauni-katus (*Schima wallachi*). The forest stand is pole size and some tree stage of Pine (*Pinus roxburghi*), as well. Patle CFUG is surrounded by Upper Patle CF and Kafle CF from east, Pandali CF from west, Sisneri village settlement from north and political boundary of Bisankhu Narayan and Godam Choura VDC from south.

The altitude of the forest area is about 1600 m from above mean sea level. The average annual rainfall is 1232.6 mm.

Patle CFUG is in the foothills of the Kathmandu Valley and accommodates the mixture of urban and rural cultural practices. Since the CF posses a beautiful landscape, the CF has a potential for ecotourism development. The CF is quite popular and considered as an active CFUGs.

The Photo 3 and Photo 4 in APPENDIX 4 show an aerial view of Patle CF (source: Googleearth, 2006).

4.2.1 Stakeholders and Institutions at Local Level

Different stakeholders located within the CFUG area are: Sisneri Range Post, Shree Shringeri Primary School and Shuvatara Private Secondary School. Shree Shringeri Primary School is a community school whereas Shuvatara School is an expensive private boarding School. None of the children from Patle village study in this school. Shuvatara School makes some contribution in cash to about 5 local government schools. Most of the EC meetings of the CFUG are organized at Shree Shringeri Primary School and Sisneri Range Post Office as per their convenient since CFUG does not have its own office building. An army camp is situated at top of the hill beyond the CFUG settlement at the periphery of the Forest.

Shree Shringeri Drinking water Users Committee is an important stakeholder of the VDC and the CF in particular because the water source is located at Patle CF. In recent years, several conflicts regarding the uses of water sources were emerged and Patle CF successfully resolved these issues. The allocation and distribution of the water sources are managed and handled by Patle CF.

Additionally, Shree Shringeri Youth Club, Swabhalamban Women Group, Basuki Women Group, Bhadraka Men Group, Pragastishil Women Group, Sisneri Goat Farming committee and Gahu Bij Bridi Samuha are local level institutions.

4.2.2 Forest Status

According to the information published by Department of Forest and Soil Conservation, CF Division, the condition of the forest under the scope of study is “good” which means that they are reasonably dense forests. During field observation, the forest condition was found good. The users are easily getting their daily requirements of fuel wood. After the hand over of the CF, the forest condition has been improved.

Previously, the forest area was barren land. There were problems of landslide and soil erosion. Most of the wildlife migrated to other places due to lack of secure habitat. The spring sources were dried out. After the handover of the forest to community, the condition of the forest area has been improved markedly. The forest cover has been increased. The frequency of landslide occurrence has also been decreased after a decade of conservation. Users have also noticed the increasing number of wild animal and bird species. The improved in forest status is due to the effective protection of the CFUGs. In addition, they also have planted different species including Salla (*Pinux roxburghi*) and fodder species. Today Patle is a lush jungle that yields different tree species, fodder and forage. Dried springs have restarted yielding water for both drinking and irrigation purposes. More than 200 Households use drinking water which source is in Patle CF. The Photo 1 in APPENDIX 4 is a water tap fed from Patle CF. It also provides water for irrigation to downstream users up to Luvu which is about 3-4 km downwards.

4.2.3 External Intervention in Patle CF

A national NGOs, named ForestAction Nepal has been carrying out a participatory action research project in Patle CF since March 2004 in collaboration with Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The main objective of the projects is to work in Patle CF to

enhance transformative social change and deliberative governance of CFUGs. Besides, it tries national policy-making institutions and levels lying in between the policy-making and community levels (conceptualized as ‘meso’ level). Patle CF has been selected for Lalitpur district where ForestAction has carried out the said research project³.

While interacting with the EC and users about this intervention, they agreed that Patle CF has improved in different aspects such as institutionalization, documentation, participation, and gender sensitivity after the external intervention. The positive aspects will be discussed in later sections.

4.2.4 Objectives of the CF

Patle CF Operational Plan (2050) has set the following objectives for the forest management.

- To provide easy access for fuel wood, fodder and forage to the CFUGs;
- To protect Patle CF from deforestation and encroachment;
- To make local people aware about the importance of CF and its associated benefits;
- To conserve forest, soil, the environment of the local area;
- To encourage participation of the CFUGs to conserve the forest environment;
- To carry out income generating activities in the forest area to improve the economic status of the CF.

4.2.5 Benefits of the CF

After the management as CF, positive changes were seen in and around the forest area. Users are easily getting forest products to fulfil their requirement. During questionnaire survey and focus group discussions, most of the respondents said that they have not faced the problem of fuel wood, fodder and forage. Due to the abundance of trees, the forest became of good habitat for wildlife. The nearby springs have started yielding more quantity of water. The CFUG and some nearby villages are using the water resources for drinking purposes. Similarly, downstream communities use water for irrigation purpose.

The CF has been successful to give a new look to the forest compared to earlier stage during handing over in 1993. The condition has been improved a lot. User opined that the area was not a real forest earlier, it was rather sparsely covered with bushes. Some respondents said that they could easily see the movement of people in the forest area earlier, but now the forest is dense and vegetation cover has been increased a lot.

³ As an output of information provided by Ms. Shusila Kumari Rana and Tara Bhattarai who are involved in the research project from ForestAction Nepal.

CHAPTER V

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Forest Management Practices of Patle CF

The user group carries out various forest management activities in the forest area through a well-established institutional structure. Some of the activities are: plantation, fencing the forest area, clearing of bushes, thinning and pruning and cutting of mature trees. There are two types of management practices. They are seasonal opening and regular opening.

5.1.1 Institutional Arrangement

Patle EC of CF comprises a chairperson, a vice chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and 7 members. These people are the representatives of the user group. The remaining members are declared as a general member. Out of 11 members, there are four women including two from disadvantaged group.

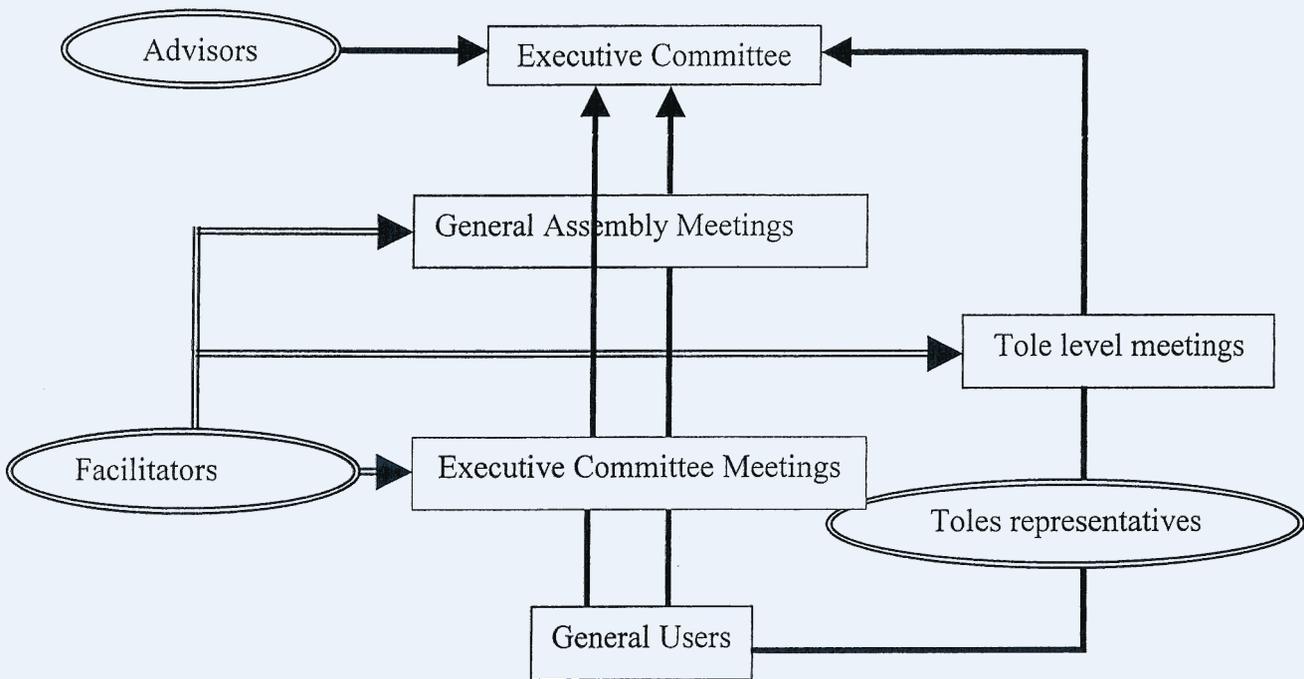


Figure 5.1 Structure and Function of Patle CF

The general user can participate in CF meetings in three ways; EC, general assembly and tole level meetings. The facilitators mostly assist in all meetings. The Figure 5.1 provides information on structure and function of the Patle CF.

The 158 Households has been divided into 7 *toles*⁴. There are two members in each tole to conduct *tole* level meetings. The outputs of the meetings are brought to the EC and discussed accordingly. The meetings are held as and when required. However, before opening of the forest, meetings are held in each *tole* to discuss opening of the forest. The meetings decide the

⁴ Tole is a group of households under a small locality, which are close to each other. The *Toles* are given different names. For example, the *dalit toles* are named as *terha bise tole*.

date of opening of the forest, cost of each bundle and the part of the forest to collect forest resource. The name of these *toles* is: Terabise, Thakuri, Mandab, Tare, Debal, Antighar and Basuki. Each *tole* comprises two *tole* representatives. There are 12 women and two male as *tole* representatives.

With intervention of ForestAction Nepal, four women facilitators have been appointed to facilitate the overall processes of the CF from last year. These facilitators work to facilitate meetings, assure women's participation and help to keep records.

Moreover, there are seven advisors in the CFUG. All advisors are male. They provide guidance and suggestions for improvement of the CF management. The institutional arrangement of Patle CF is enclosed in the Appendix 4.

5.1.2 Forest guard (*Ban pale*)

Forest guard (*Ban pale*) has been considered very important since they check illegal activities in the CF. They make a routine round trip to CF and report to the EC about the condition inside the CF. The forest guards also provide the idea about the activities that EC has to plan immediately to conserve the CF. Patle CFUG has appointed two forest guards from this year. Most of the user (respondents) emphasized the importance of forest guards. Similarly, they also reiterated that the forest guards check the unwanted activities inside the forest area.

Patle CFUG has been facing financial constraints to remunerate forest guards. The present fund raising activities, like fine and penalties are not sufficient to meet the different expenditure of the CF according to the secretary of EC.

5.1.3 Seasonal Opening

The forest has been opened once in a year for 2-3 weeks in winter time. During this period, users carry out activities like clearing of bushes and thinning and pruning. The opening of forest prior to winter season is known as seasonal opening. In first phase of the seasonal opening (1-2 days), bushes are cleared where each user has to send a member from his/her family. If any one is unable to send, the user would be penalized. In such case, a user has to pay about NRs. 50/-. Such fines are collected in the account of the EC. In the next phase while cutting abnormal branches and trees, the participation is not mandatory. The users are allowed to cut abnormal, twisted and matured trees. The members of the EC regularly watch the activities of the users inside the forest area. They warn if any one is found to be worked against the norms set by the EC. The forest products, thus collected, are made bundles. Each user has to take their bundles. The EC later charges certain amount for each bundle and provides receipts for bundles. Last year, NRs. 3 was fixed for each bundle.

The unique feature of this CF is that the outside users other than 158 Households also can participate during opening of the forest. At last, they can take the bundles with them.

During the seasonal opening, participation of women is higher than men. The average estimation of the respondents indicated the presence of women is about three fourth.

5.1.4 Regular Opening

The forest is opened throughout the year for dry wood and forage which is known as regular opening. However, users can not bring weapons with them to cut down trees. The community

which depends fully on forest resources, are seen regularly inside the forest. In Photo 8, (APPENDIX 4) two womenfolk are carrying fodder for livestock from Patle forest.

The difference between seasonal and regular opening is the process of utilizing the forest resources. During seasonal opening, the forest products are utilized to maintain its carrying capacity. In this period, mature trees and abnormal branches are cut down and thereby undergrowth vegetation gets sufficient amount of sunlight. Hence, it is a process of managing the forest areas to increase its performance. In contrary, during the regular opening, users get bushes and forage.

However, the provision of opening of the forest throughout the year is not indicated in the operational plan. The decision was taken to address the practical need of the user.

5.1.5 Problems in Patle CF

Different things need to be improved for better management of the CF so that all the users can get benefits to improve their socio-economic status from the CF.

- The women's participation in decision making is low. Women feel shy and participate less in process of decision making.
- The awareness among users is not satisfactory since it is seldom reported the illegal cuttings of trees.
- The EC is dominated by the male members. Though women are real actor of CF in terms of forest management, they do not possess key positions in EC. A total of 4 women are members of EC.
- There is no women's representation in advisors in the CF since all the positions are occupied by male only.
- The participation of *dalit* male in CF activities like EC, meetings, decisions making and resources utilization is quite low. In contrary, *dalit* women participation is good.
- Women are involved in various household activities such as cooking, cleaning, preparing children for school, washing clothes, agriculture activities and it is very hard to manage time for meetings. Further, the researcher also found some incidents where *dalit* women are not given consent to participate in meetings by their husband.
- The CF lacks the mechanism to grow Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) items inside the forest.

5.1.6 Impact of External Intervention in Patle CF

Certain changes are observed after the intervention from ForestAction Nepal during the period of time based on interaction with respondents.

- The institutional aspects have been improved after the intervention.
- The level of participation of users and EC members has been improved on meetings and decision making. Specially, the women are found to be more aware in meetings and their decision making process as compare to previous years.
- The formation of *tole* level institutions is an output of the intervention. The involvement of users from lower level has ensured the voices of users more reliably.

- The level of awareness on the ownership of the forest among the users has been improved.
- According to secretary of the CFUG, the users believe more easily to the outsiders and take their suggestions seriously than the voices of the insiders. This has happened in the case of Patle CF.
- In recent years, Patle CF is recognized to outsiders. It is mainly due to involvement of ForestAction Nepal.

5.2 Relationship between Good Governance and Patle CF Management

The issues of governance under the scope of the study are: Participation, Transparency, Accountability and Equity. The different forest management activities of Patle CF are further classified into different sub-sets of governances' issues as indicated in the Table 3.2.

In participation, women, men, *dalit* women and high-class women have been taken into account during EC meeting, general assembly, decision making processes and resource utilization. In transparency, forest management and utilization, process of decision making, access to information, fund utilization and mobilization, resource distribution have been considered. Accountability of EC to users and vice versa will be discussed. Similarly, equity in resource distribution, opportunities and representation to EC will be highlighted in the study.

5.2.1 Participation in Forest Resources Management

In Patle CF, the participation of the users has been simplified into high-class women, *dalit* women, *dalit* men and elite groups (rich people of the society). The participation has been further categorised into high, moderate and low. High participation indicates a satisfactory participation where the criteria are best rated. The moderate participation depicts a state in between high and low where the criteria can be improved to step up in high category. Low participation indicates less satisfactory situation, which exist very low level.

The participation of CFUGs is mostly held in two events. One is general assembly where all the users gather and discuss on various forests related matter as well as previous account and the date and duration of openings of the forest. Similarly, the other one; regular meeting of EC is held in every first Saturday of the Nepali month where the EC (11 members) meet and take the decisions on behalf of users. All users, *tole* representatives and advisors can also participate in such meetings. The decisions are later informed to CFUG in different times including General Assembly meetings. Beside, in special cases like dispute settlement, all users are called for an urgent meeting. The extent of participation in different occasions is discussed in the following headings.

5.2.1.1 Participation in General Assembly (GA)

Minutes of the General Assembly meetings show higher male participation. The average physical participation of women in the four meetings as indicated in Table 4.1 is 33%. The number of women in the meeting of 2060 B.S. was low (16%). It is because that meeting was held in emergency situation, many respondents did not get information or could not manage time in short notice. Further, according to EC members, some women members who present in the meeting left the meeting spots earlier without putting attending signature. Now, in the recent meetings, the participation has been improved to 41%.

The participation of users as written in meeting minutes is documented in the Table 5.2. It contains the regular EC meetings, meetings to settle disputes and others as and when required. It covers some meetings of the year 2062 and 2063. It shows that the average women participation in EC meetings is about 27%, which is lower than general assembly meetings. It is mainly due to following facts: firstly, all users (general users, advisors, EC members, facilitators, role representatives) can attend EC meetings. Since the women get busy in

Regarding the participation of women in the EC meetings, it was found good. There are 4 women in the EC including 2 members from *dalit*, which shows 33% of women representation in the EC. Women EC members are found to be well aware to participate in regular meetings. The extent of awareness is found to be more in *dalit* women than the high-class women. It is due to the fact that the dependency of *dalit* women on forest products is more than the high-class women. Most of the time, they attend the meeting. There is no *dalit* man in the EC. It is mainly due to lower interest of these groups and also due to the nature of occupation caste of the group who mostly are busy in making leathery shoes in urban areas.

5.2.1.2 Participation in Executive Committee Meetings

(Source: Meeting minutes of Patle CFUG, 2006)

S.N.	Date	Total participation	Women participation	% of women participation
1	5/20/5/2060 (Emergency)	86	14	16.28
2	3/31/2062 (1th GA)	118	56	47.46
3	5/12/2062 (12th GA)	118	34	28.81
4	4/29/9/2063 (13th GA)	142	58	40.85
General Assembly Meetings				

Table 5.1 Users Participation in General Assembly Meetings

The Table 5.1 shows the women participation in four general assembly meetings.

The participation of male users is high during assembly meetings. The male respondents of the sample population said that they like to participate in such meetings. They also did not show any constraint while attending the meetings unlike female users. In comparing with female, male has more free time to participate such events. The male represents mostly from high-class group. The *dalit* male participation in general assembly meetings is low due to their involvement in other business activities and their lower interest in the CF.

While interacting with women respondents, they pointed out some facts, which are hindering them to participate in general assembly meetings. For example, women are working in household chores such as cooking, cleaning, washing, preparing children for school and other agriculture works. In comparison, male has more free time to participate in such meetings. Sometimes, they have to leave the meetings to meet other duties of priority in their households. These obstacles to attend the meetings are also well expressed during women focus group discussion. Another reason is due to the structure of Nepali society, which is patriarchal in nature. Women have to do household works for centuries. They are oppressed in Nepalese society and given less attention in terms of education and decision. From the early morning to late evening, they have been doing different roles in societies. In Patle area also, women have to perform various roles in their houses and do not have sufficient time for meetings.

household works, the participation of women as users is not mandatory. Therefore, the women do not give priority to EC meetings. The only 4 EC women are supposed to attend every EC meetings. Therefore, the participation did not give any trend of women participation in such meeting.

In contrary, male users are mostly free in Saturday and attend the meetings. They preferred such gathering because it is an opportunity for interaction during this period. However, *dalit* users mostly do not participate in EC meetings because there is no *dalit* male representation in EC. They hardly put their presence in EC meetings.

From last year, there are four women facilitators in the CF and who mostly get participated in the EC meetings. According to facilitators, it is very hard for *dalit* women to arrange time for EC meetings especially during Saturday. In this day, *dalit* male stay at home and force their women to be with them. According to facilitators, some of women said that they get threatening from their husbands if they attain such meetings. This fact was also mentioned in the focus group discussions. However, in case of other high class women, they do not have such problems.

Table 5.2 Participation of Users in Executive Meeting

S.N.	Date	Total participation	Women participation	% of women participation
<i>Regular meetings</i>				
1	2/24/2062	26	8	30.8
2	2/29/2062	109	37	33.9
3	6/1/2062	28	9	32.1
4	6/3/2062	45	10	22.2
5	10/8/2062	25	9	36.0
6	3/24/2063	84	6	7.1
7	8/13/2063	22	7	31.8

(Source: Meeting minutes of Patle CFUG, 2006)

5.2.1.3 Participation in Decision Making Process

The male members of CFUG, i.e. Brahman, Chetri are the main actor of the decision making process. The *dalit* male were not found to be active since most of them are engaged in commercial activities and there is no representation of those groups in EC.

During questionnaire survey and women focus group discussion (Refer Photo 5 in APPENDIX 4), women participants initially told that they freely participate in the process of decision making. However after sometime being opened, they expressed some obstacles during the process of decision making. Due to lack of education, they cannot freely float the ideas and convince people during decision making.

Moreover, due to socio-cultural practices, they cannot openly express their candid opinion in front of other male members. This fact is also accepted by both male and female respondents. Women often hesitate to speak out before mass. The researcher also visited few meetings. The women's involvement in decision making was poor. Most of the time, men speak in the meetings.

There is no data on number of users during resource utilization period (regular and seasonal openings) in record of Patle CF. Hence, respondents were asked to estimate the users participation based on subjective judgement. During the resource utilization period, particularly, during the seasonal opening, women participation is higher than men. According to estimation made by respondents, the presence of women in seasonal opening is about 75%. More specifically, the *dalti* women participation is high because the dependency of those groups on forest resources is high. The women of high caste groups also participate but in less number. The participation of users, whose source of cooking fuel is other than forest product i.e., LP gas and kerosene stove or partially on forest resources, is less. Similarly, from *dalti* community, most of the users were women during seasonal opening. Similarly, during regular opening, majority of the users were women.

Resource utilization refers to the utilization of forest products during seasonal and regular openings. It involves thinning and pruning, cutting abnormal branches and old trees, collection of dry wood and forage that are permitted by the EC.

5.2.1.4 Participation in Forest Resource Utilization

In fact, the women's involvement in decision making process has slightly improved in recent years. Earlier, the situation was quite poor according to respondents. After the intervention of the study projects carried out by ForestAction Nepal, the women awareness on decision has been improved slightly. This fact is well acknowledged by both male and female respondents. (Refer Photo 6 in APPENDIX 4 for an interview with women EC member).

During the field visit, the researcher participated in a meeting which was scheduled to discuss on the matter of illegal cutting of trees by a user. During a recent snow fall at Kathmandu Valley, Lamatar VDC also witnessed heavy snow fall which damaged trees of Patle CF. Some of the trees were fell due to heavy snow. After the snow fall, one member cut down trees and brought about 30 pole sized trees to his home. After the incidents the EC went to the accused's home and found him guilty. He was called to attend a meeting which was scheduled to discuss on this matter. Most of the male members participated in the meeting with very few women. With rigorous interaction amongst the users, the accused was penalized in cash and warned not to carry out the activities again. The man also admitted his mistake in front of other people.

The women participation was quite low in number. Only 6 women participated in the meeting of 40 people. The women participation in decision making was virtually nil. The women hardly put their views on the incidents and most of the time remain quiet. Some of the women were also not paying their attention in meeting and some time they sit far away from the group meeting. The researcher observed that women participation in decision was poor. While asking the facilitator, she said that the participation is comparatively low as compare to other meetings. In this occasional meeting, their participation was only about 14%. However, in other meetings, the researcher felt that the women participation in decision making process was comparatively better than this one.

Women's Participation in Decision Making

Box 5.1 Women's participation in decision making, a case study during dispute settlement

In CF, stakeholders should have access to information to understand the issues of forest management. The study covers transparency in forest management and utilization, decision making process, access to information, forest product flow, fund generation and utilization. The transparency is categorised into high, moderate and low. High category indicates a satisfactory level of transparency where there is no reservation from any side. Similarly,

5.2.2 Transparency in Forest Management

(Source: Overall field observation, 2006)

Who (Groups)	When (Time)	High	Mo	Low
High class women	Meetings (Executive)	✓		
Dalit women	committee)	✓		
Dalit (Men)			✓	
Elite groups (rich people)		✓		
Women	General assembly		✓	
Dalit(Men)	Meetings			✓
Elite groups (rich people)		✓		
Women	Decision making			✓
Dalit(Men)				✓
High class women	Resource utilization	✓		
Dalit women				✓
Dalit(Men)				✓
Elite groups (rich people)			✓	
Men (High class)	Formation of	✓		
Women	constitution and			✓
Dalit male	operational plan			✓

Table 5.3 Participation of Different Groups

With rigorous field observation, interaction, group discussion and other information, the following checklist outputs were observed in participation.

The result derived from the above sub headings under "Participation" reveals that the participation of different groups of users is moderate in general. More specifically, the high-class people (elite group) are dominating in decision making process. However, their role in forest resource utilization is moderate. The women participation during forest openings is quite good, and in contrary their participation in decision making is low which is not satisfactory. The dalit male participation in every aspect of CF is low. Women participation is hindered because they have to involve in various household works. Similarly, due to socio-cultural practices women do not freely express their thoughts in front of mass and convince in decision making.

5.2.1.6 Result of Discussion on 'Participation'

Majority of women among respondents (about 90%) said that they were not aware about the process of formation of constitution and operational plan. They only knew about it when the CF was formed and formally registered. Majority of the members were male during the formation process. Dalit male were also not involved in that activities.

5.2.1.5 Participation during Formation of Constitution and Operational Plan

The time and duration of the opening of the forest are discussed from the *tole* and later passed on to the general assembly meeting. The information or notice regarding the forest management is affixed in the local service centres such as tea shops, schools. The notices are sometimes affixed in local trees so that every user gets information. The audit report of the

5.2.2.3 Access to Information

The transparency in decision making process is found to be high. Mainly decisions are taken in a participatory way. The forest management system is quite open to incorporate the knowledge and thoughts of every aspects of the society. However, as compared to the previous years, the participation from the other levels of society in decision making such as women and *dalit* is increasing. Additionally, the decision making process is somehow still influenced by the elite groups of the society.

From last year, *tole* meetings are held before the general assembly meetings. For this, two representatives have been assigned in each *tole* and they carry out meetings in their respective *toles*. In each *tole*, the dates and duration for seasonal openings of the forest are discussed and later put in general assembly meeting through EC. In this way, issues are discussed at the lowest level and later passed on to EC meetings. Other matters of discussion at general assembly are also discussed at *tole* levels. According to EC, *tole* level meetings suggest when to open the forest. Similarly, it is up to the *tole* to recommend the amount to be paid for each bundle of dry wood during the opening of the forest.

There are two stages where the most of the decisions take place. One is during general assembly where all the users are supposed to participate. The second one is EC meetings where I committee members participate and take decisions on behalf of the user group. The general assembly meetings are supposed to be held annually. The EC meetings decide the date of the general assembly meetings and circulate the information to all users.

5.2.2.2 Decision Making Process

The forest is opened during regular and seasonal openings. The duration of the seasonal opening of the forest is about 2-3 weeks depending on the decision taken by EC. The forest is opened virtually for whole year (regular opening) for dry wood, forage and bushes. However, none is allowed to cut down trees and branches during regular opening. The EC members act as a monitor during seasonal opening to monitor the activities of users. There is a lack of proper monitoring of the activities inside the forest area during the regular opening. Although two forest guards are appointed from this year, monitoring the users during regular opening is difficult. The technical awareness of users to harness forest products in a sustainable way is not satisfactory because sometimes users cut down trees of good condition, as reported by EC members. In forest management and utilization, the transparency is observed to be high because the decisions of opening of forests are taken in a transparent way. Further, the *tole* level meetings also suggest when and where to open forest areas for their respective *toles*. The decisions of the forest management and utilization are taken with consensus from all level of the society. The process of decision making is described in the following section.

5.2.2.1 Forest Management and Utilization

moderate highlights the category in between high and low which depicts a room for improvement to step up in high category. Low indicates that there is no transparency or at very low level.

Resource distribution includes how the forest resources are distributed among the users. During seasonal openings, the old trees, abnormal and twisted branches are cut down and participants make bundles of forest products. Users paid NRs. 3 for each bundle in 2063. The EC also provides receipts to users and keep the same for record. Hence, transparency on forest

5.2.2.5 Resource Distribution

The EC provided receipts of the contribution. Other than above mentioned sources, the EC started collecting fees from researchers who intend to carry out activities in Patle CF from this year. Previously they did not ask financial contribution from the visitors. However from this year, they have made an arrangement of contribution. In this development, the researcher also contributed NRs. 300/- to the EC and got access to required support and information regarding the CF during this research study.

The transparency on fund utilization and mobilization is observed to be high. The status of fund including the income and expenditure are discussed during general assembly meetings and make public to each user.

In recent years, one private water supply company has started extracting water from the nearby springs of CF. There was a big dispute between the company and CF regarding the use of water sources. Later, an agreement was made where the company also shared 20% percentage of benefit to CF for this year. The company has agreed to share 45% of the total income from next year.

While asking individual, about 70% of the respondents said that the EC is responsible for management of the fund. While some of the respondents do not have any information about funds. The EC opens their records of fund during General Assembly meetings. Any one can check and monitor the status of funds at any time. Further, they affix the detail of the account on walls so that everyone can check the status. The auditing is carried out by outsider.

At present, the main sources of funds are levy from each user during the openings of the forest including fines and penalties. If a user is failed to participate during the seasonal opening, s/he has to pay about NRs. 50/- as decided by EC. Similarly, if any one is found to have acted against the norms and regulation and found violating the constitution and operational plan, s/he shall be penalised, which is also a source of fund. Similarly the fund is also mobilized in other activities such as social development like schools.

5.2.2.4 Fund Utilization and Mobilization

The transparency on access to information of general users is categorised as high since the decisions and information are passed to all users.

In case of opportunities like training, the EC discuss the matter on EC meetings and decide accordingly. During respondents survey about the information of opportunities, mixed response was found. Nearly half of the respondents were aware about at least one training opportunities. However, others did not have information in this regard. However, after reviewing meeting minutes, it was found that EC had discussed the matter on meetings.

CF are discussed in the general assembly meeting and also affixed on the walls. While asking the respondents about the prior information of opening of forest, 100% respondents replied in 'Yes'.

The *dalit* women mostly get involved in forest resources utilization during openings of the forest. The two EC women members from *dalit* community participate in EC meetings and decision making process. However, the women participation in process of decision making is not satisfactory. Still, during the process of decision making, the male members dominate over women on the pretext that women have less knowledge. Women also can not express their feeling openly in meetings due to their shyness and socio-cultural practices. Nonetheless, the women participation is increasing as a result of the intervention from ForestAction Nepal as compare to the previous years. Similarly, the high class women also participate in forest

For accountability from User to EC, the different groups of society have been taken into account. In case of high class women and *dalit*, the accountability is moderate. The accountability of high class and *dalit* male is low.

5.2.3.1 Users to EC

The accountability, under the scope of this study, has been classified in two ways; the accountability of the EC to Users and vice versa.

5.2.3 Accountability in Forest Management

(Source: Overall field observation, 2006)

Activities	High	Mo	Low
Forest utilization and management	√		
Decision making process	√		
Access to information	√		
Fund utilization and mobilization	√		
Resource distribution	√		

Table 5.4 Transparency in Patle CF

The result derived from the above sub-chapters under 'Transparency' reveals that the level of transparency is quite satisfactory. Especially, the decision making process is participatory and begins from lowest level. The researcher observed all the transparency issues at high level. With rigorous field observation, interaction, group discussion and other information the following checklist outputs were observed under transparency.

5.2.6 Results of Discussion on 'Transparency'

If any user requires timber to construct house, the CFUG provides one tree without any charge. If the user requires more amount of timber, the EC makes decision and if found necessary, provide timber at nominal rate which is about NRs. 50/- per cubic feet. During field visit, the researcher met some users who got the timber at subsidized cost for the same purposes.

transparency on forest distribution is quite satisfactory.

resources distribution is observed high. Additionally, the outside users, except 158 Households, are also allowed to participate during seasonal opening of the forest and can have equal access to forest products utilization. While asking the users, 100% respondents said that they have got facilities of forest resources in different time. They also agreed that the

The equity in resources distribution is quite high. As discussed earlier, the resources (such as raw wood and dry wood) during the opening of the CF are distributed equally to all users with certain charges. Even the users of other communities can equally participate and take benefit in such events. In this year, the EC waived the charge of wood bundles to *dalit* community during seasonal opening. It shows that the equity in resources distribution is satisfactory and more justified.

5.2.4.1 Resource Distribution

- a) Resource distribution
- b) Opportunities
- c) Representation (caste) to EC

The equity in case of Patle CF has been categorised into the following categories. Equity in:

5.2.4 Equity in forest management

(Source: Overall field observation, 2006)

Who (Groups)	High	Mo	Low
High class women	√		
High class male		√	
<i>Dalit</i> male			√
<i>Dalit</i> women		√	

Table 5.5 Accountability in Patle CF Users to EC

The result derived from the above sub headings under 'Accountability' in Patle CF reveals that the Accountability of Users to EC is moderate and EC to users is high. With rigorous interaction and group discussion, the following checklist was observed.

5.2.3.3 Result of Discussion on 'Accountability'

The accountability of EC to Users is high. The EC informs users about the meetings and forest management activities. They are quite active in charging fine and penalties. Similarly, all users can participate EC meetings. At tole levels discussions are held and later passed to EC, which show the representation from lowest level.

5.2.3.2 EC to Users

In case of high class male, they are found to be dominating in process of decision making. However, during forest resources utilization in different openings of Patle CF, women number is high. The *dalit* male users participation in meetings is quite low since they mostly go to the city areas for work. Similarly, *dalit* male participation during openings of forest is also low rather *dalit* women dominate them. Similarly, male members are involved in different works (business and services), which obstruct them being accountable to the EC most of the time.

resource utilization during seasonal and regular openings. Under this backdrop, women's accountability has been put as moderate.

5.2.4.2 Opportunities

In case of equity in opportunities, the high class male get higher priority due to their influence in decision making process. Similarly, it is moderate in case of high-class women and low in case of *dalit* women and men. Most of the *dalit* respondents complained that sometimes they were treated badly due to existing socio-cultural norms where *dalit* are still regarded as untouchable caste. During the study, an event of discrimination against the *dalit* community in the General Assembly of year 2063 was observed which is being described in the following Box 5.2.

Box 5.2 Discrimination against the Caste System

Discrimination Against Caste System

One of the *dalit* women users shared her experience of discrimination during the general assembly in 2063. She said that the *dalit* community had prepared some refreshing items like poem and songs related to the CF for the assembly meeting. But they were not given an opportunity to perform. She said that the high-class people are still prejudiced with the *dalit* community based on caste system. Further, according to her, they were biased during food preparation when the high-class people kept a separate cook from their caste and did not involve low caste people in cooking. Further, while taking food, *dalit* people are kept separately. She expressed her discontent while discussion with the researcher. The researcher tried to dig out the issues with some responsible EC members. None denied the above-mentioned discrimination that took place in 2063. Most of them said that due to the existing socio-cultural practices where *dalit* people are taken as untouchable caste, the discrimination took place. Mostly, the old generation people are still not open in this matter.

She also recalled another discriminating behaviour while she was in EC. She resigned from EC member in the previous term because she was not heard properly by the other members during meetings. The male EC members did not take *dalit* women's voice seriously.

5.2.4.3 Representation of Caste to EC

Regarding the opportunities for different caste groups to represent in EC, the high class male are conservative and dominate the position. The equity of women from *dalit* and high class is found to be moderate. In case of *dalit* male it is low, as they do not represent in EC.

Table 5.6 Equity in Palle CF

Who (Groups)	High	Moderate	Low
High class Women	a	c	b
High class Men	a b c		
<i>Dalit</i> male	a		b c
<i>Dalit</i> women	a	b c	

(Source: Overall field observation, 2006)

⁵ In Hindu society, the *dalit* castes are not allowed to enter into the premises of high caste society such as Brahman and Chhetri. This practice is still prevalent in most of the rural communities in Nepal. Generally, the high caste people hesitate to sit and eat with *dalit* group. However, with the political revolution, awareness and promulgation of new law, such practices in this regard is in decreasing order. Specially, in case of young generation, they do not hesitate for such kind of activities and are quite open in this regard. However, the old generation are still not able to keep themselves away from such matters.

Note:

- a) Resource distribution
- b) Opportunities
- c) Representation (caste) to EC

5.2.5 Results of Discussion on 'Equity'

The equity on Resource distribution, Opportunities, Representation (caste) to EC; as mentioned in above sub heading indicates that the overall equity is moderate. In some aspect, like resource distribution, the equity is satisfactory because the transparency in distributing resources is good as discussed in earlier chapters. Further, the distribution of forest resources after seasonal opening to *dalit* community without charging any cost is also appreciable approach to equity. However, the representation of women candidate in EC needs to be improved in future.

CHAPTER VI

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Community forestry in Nepal has provided a new lease of life to the forest and its dependents. It provides local people to have access to daily forest resources such as fodder, fuel wood, forage and timber. The involvement of a wide group of society including women and marginalized community in forest management practices ensures equal stake to all. This eventually brings ownership to the resources and leads towards sustainability. Good governance components like participation, transparency, accountability and equity are the issues which need to be looked in detail to find out the real situation of community forest management at fields. The objective of the study is to examine the governance in natural resources management through a case study of Patle CF. The study assesses the link of Good Governance components as indicated earlier with Patle forest management practices.

The information has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include field survey, questionnaire survey, key informants interview and focus group discussion. The information from secondary sources was collected from the past studies, reports and books. Further, forest management indicators were developed and primary survey was carried out based on the basis of indicators to identify the different forest management practices. In the study area, 15% of the total households and 16% of the total population were selected based on purposively random sampling for data acquisition.

The Patle CF is located in Lamatar VDC of Lalitpur district, which is a bordering district of the capital city of Nepal. The community is dominated by Brahman and Chhetri. The major occupation of the local people is agriculture-based commodities with alternative option of business and services. The average literacy rate of the study area is 71%. A participatory action research has been carried out by a national NGO on the Patle CF with an aim to enhance transformative social change and deliberative governance of the CFUGs. Positive changes are observed in the CF and users are easily getting their forest products requirement after the hand over of the forest as a Patle CF.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- Patle CF has provided a basic need of local users such as fodder, fuel wood, and forage and become an essential part of their life. The basic use of the forest products is cooking fuel wood, timber and livestock utilities.
- Women are the prime users of the forest. They mostly involve in forest management activities during openings of the forest. About three fourth of the women participate during seasonal opening of the forest. Similarly, during regular opening, most of the users are women.

- Women physical participation in meetings is good. However, women's role in decision making is not satisfactory. The male members mostly from elite group of society are influencing in decision making.

- After the status of CF, the forest condition has been improved markedly. Users are easily getting forest requirements and their practices have been reduced. Similarly, soil

- Separate tole level meetings of women users only needs to be carried out so that women can better involve in decision making process and would not be influenced by other male members.

The study has recommended the following points to improve the governance of forest management.

6.3 Recommendations

The study concludes that Patle CF has improved its status positively after the decade of conservation as a CF. It is because the management practices try to address the governance issues such as participation of all level of society in different management activities in a transparent way. Women participation in decision making process is low due to the Nepalese socio-cultural practices where women found difficulties to speak openly in front of others. The study further concludes that the tole level institutions and meetings have strengthened the process of involvement of users more effectively and participatory in decision making process. Based on the study, it can be concluded that the good governance improves the CF forest management and strengthens institutional capacity in a sustainable way.

6.2 Conclusions

- The CF recently has worked out an arrangement where it gets 20% of annual benefit from a private water supply company for allowing water extraction from its spring. The benefit will be increased to 45% from next year. In addition to this, the CF has started collecting fund from researchers and there are other regular sources of income. This appeared to be very good attempt of CF towards economic strengthening.
- In spite of many positive changes, the discrimination against the low caste group is still prevalent and occasionally seen during the function of CF.
- The CF recently has worked out an arrangement where it gets 20% of annual benefit from a private water supply company for allowing water extraction from its spring. The benefit will be increased to 45% from next year. In addition to this, the CF has started collecting fund from researchers and there are other regular sources of income. This appeared to be very good attempt of CF towards economic strengthening.
- After the external intervention, the institutional aspects and level of awareness of users and EC members have been enhanced and the fact is well acknowledged by majority of users.
- In equity, the resources distribution practice is quite good. However, the representation of different category of users in EC is not satisfactory.
- The transparency in every aspect of Patle CF is high.
- The accountability of EC to users is higher than the users to EC.
- The involvement of marginalized groups like *dalit* whose source of fuel wood is forest products are well involved in forest resources utilisation. The role of *dalit* women is higher than the *dalit* male members. The *dalit* male's participation in every aspect of Patle CF is low.
- The involvement of marginalized groups like *dalit* whose source of fuel wood is forest products are well involved in forest resources utilisation. The role of *dalit* women is higher than the *dalit* male members. The *dalit* male's participation in every aspect of Patle CF is low.
- Majority of the women are positive towards Patle CF and its associated benefits. The level of awareness of women to the CF is high. Similarly, the physical participation of women in forest management activities is satisfactory. However, the level of participation in the process of decision making is low. The elite members still dominate the decision making process.
- Erosion and landslides have been decreased and the yielding of water resources are improved.

- The number of women in EC needs to be increased because women are the prime users of the CF. It would be better if the number could be maintained at 50:50 ratio in the next general assembly. Additionally, the *dalit* male representation in EC is needed to bring these groups in mainstream of CF.
- At present, there is no representation of women in advisors, which needs to be changed and should allow room to represent all level of the society equally.
- The real users of the CF, for example, women who are mostly dependent on forest products for their daily activities need to be involved in decision making process through capacity building and by providing key position in EC.
- The discrimination against some groups of society needs to be discouraged and CFUG should take the initiatives to change the existing socio-cultural patterns.
- The charge per bundle of dry wood to users and non users are same. This will not only choke the enthusiasm of users to participate in CF, because they are getting same benefit as non users. To reward users and to increase their enthusiasm, the charge per bundle of dry wood to non-users should be increased.
- The role of ForestAction Nepal should be institutionalized to as a supporting institution in the main frame and accordingly the clear task should be assigned to ForestAction Nepal to get maximum benefit out of it.

6.3.1 Recommendation for Further Research

- A participatory strategic planning is needed in Patle CF with involvement from stakeholders. Hence, it is recommended to conduct a further research at Patle CF to formulate a participatory strategic planning.
- It would be better to conduct a study with similar objectives in other CFs to comparatively assess the governance in CF.
- The CF has established very strong source of regular income through annual benefit from a private supply company, collecting support fund from researchers and other regular existing source of income. This noble attempt of CF towards economic sustainability should be further studied to demonstrate a 'model' of best utilizing forest resources.

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यस वन व्यवस्थापनमा महिलाको सहभागिता बढाउन के गर्नु पर्दछ ?

यस वन क्षेत्रका पानीको श्रोतहरूको व्यवस्थापन कसरी हुनेछ ?

तपाईंको विचारमा यि समस्याहरू कसरी समाधान गर्नु सकिन्छ ?

कु सामुदायिक वनमा देखिएका समस्याहरूको समाधान कसरी गर्नु सकिनेछ ?

यस सामुदायिक वनको व्यवस्थापनका समस्याहरू के के रहेका छन् ?

अन्य

कु कार्यमा सहभागिता

कु यस सामुदायिक वनको व्यवस्थापनको विषयमा दलित समाजलाई जानकारी गराउनको लागि के के कार्य गर्नुपर्दछ ?

उत्तरमा सहभागिता

यस सामुदायिक वनको व्यवस्थापनको लागि तालिम र अन्य कार्यहरूको माध्यमबाट

कु यस सामुदायिक वनको व्यवस्थापनका कार्यमा समाजमा रहेको छ ? के महिला र दलितहरूको सहभागिता बढाउनको लागि के के कार्य गर्नुपर्दछ ?

समानता

पाल्पा उपभोक्ता समूहका कर्मचारीहरूको लागि तालिम दिनुपर्दछ ।

पाल्पा उपभोक्ता समूहको लागि तालिम दिनुपर्दछ ।

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हैन भने कर्मचारीहरूको तालिम दिनुपर्दछ ।

के यस सामुदायिक वनमा भएको अन्य कुराहरु, जस्तै झुन्डा, अन्धकार आदी

निर्णयन समितिले छानबिन गरिन्छ।

के यो सामुदायिक वन आफ्नो उपभोक्ता समितिलाई उत्तरदायी रहेको छ। के यसका हरेक

के यस सामुदायिक वनको व्यवस्थापनका कार्यमा समानता रहेको छ ? के महिला र दलितहरूको पनि वन उपभोगमा समान अधिकार रहेको छ ? के कस्तो रहेको छ विवरण विस्तृत रूपमा लिने।

निर्णय प्रक्रियामा महिला र दलित र अन्य वर्गको सहभागिता कस्तो रहेको छ ?

सामुदायिक वनको निर्णय प्रक्रिया कस्तो रहेको छ ?

दलितको सहभागिता :

महिलाको सहभागिता :

कति जना सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समिति :

भएको छ ?

सामुदायिक वन पछि यस क्षेत्रको वनजंगलमा आगोको परिवर्तनहरू के के छन् ? के के फाइदाहरू

जस्तै वन पैदावर, रेशम, काँचो दाउरा, स्याँकेको दाउरा, पानीको श्रोत आदी

यस सामुदायिक वनको उपभोग यस क्षेत्रका जनताले गर्न गर्न सक्ने गरेको छैन ?

पक्षहरू

वनमा पाईने जनावरहरू

वनमा पाईने रेशम विरेवाहरू

जन्मा जनसंख्या :

घरघुरी संख्या :

क्षेत्रफल :

हस्तान्तरण मिति :

कति भन्नामा विभाजन

सामुदायिक वनको बारेमा जानकारी

APPENDIX 3: Institutional arrangement of Patel CF

The institutional members of Patle CF

S.N.	Name	Position
1	Mr. Sambhu P. Paudel	Chairperson
2	Mr. Hira B. Paudel	Vice chairperson
3	Mr. Bishnu K. Chand	Secretary
4	Mr. Mrs. Sarita Gautam	Vice Secretary
5	Mr. Rajendra K Paudel	Treasure
6	Mr. Hem B. Lama	Members
7	Mr. Lalit B. Bhujel	Members
8	Mr. Lokanath Paudel	Members
9	Mrs. Anna K. Bayelkoti	Members
10	Mrs. Bhawani Paudel	Members
11	Mrs. Mana Suwal	Members
12	Mrs. Rita Thapa	Members
Advisors		
1	Mr. Kul B. KC	
2	Mr. Ram Krishna Paudel	
3	Mr. Bishnu Ram Paudel	
4	Mr. Tukkar B. Chand	
5	Mr. Baburam Paudel	
6	Mr. Shankar Paudel	
7	Mr. Bishnu Ram Sharma Paudel	
Tole representatives		
1	Mr. Om B. Paudel	
2	Mrs. Nirjala Gautam	
3	Mr. Krishna B. Thapa	
4	Mrs. Sabitri Paudel	
5	Mrs. Sannu Maiya Chand	
6	Mrs. Saraswati Paudel	
7	Mrs. Shanti Bishankhe	
8	Mrs. Nannu Bhujel	
9	Mrs. Kavita Rokka	
10	Mrs. Apsara Thapa	
11	Mrs. Nanimaiya Paudel	
12	Mrs. Rama Suwal	
13	Mrs. Pavitra Bhujel	
14	Mrs. Jayanti Chand	

APPENDIX 4: Photographs



Photo 1 Discussion with Chairperson and Secretary of Patle CF



Photo 2 Drinking water tap at the lap of Patle CF

Photo 4 Patte CF and irrigated land from an aerial view

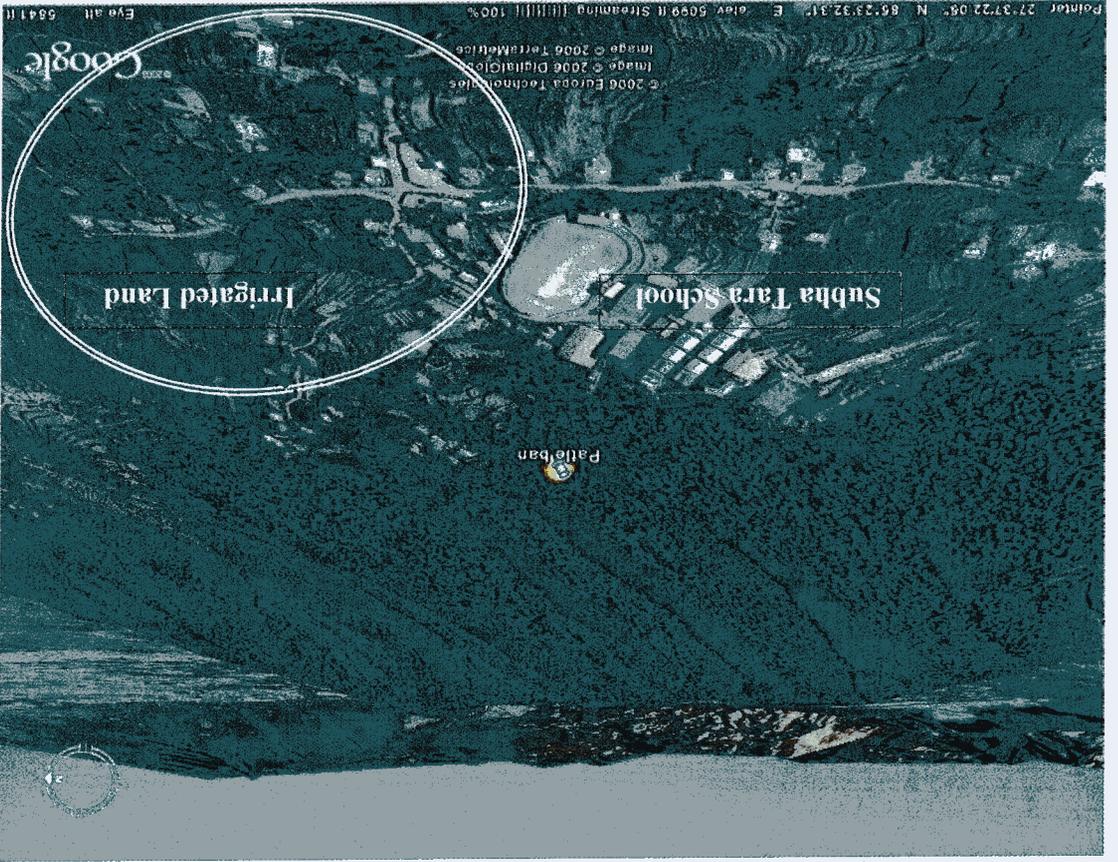


Photo 3 Patte CF from an aerial view



Photo 6 Interview with Mrs. Anna Kumari Bayelkoti, a member of EC



Photo 5 Women focus group discussion at Terabise tole

