

Community Activism for Sustainable Forest Management in Nepal: Lessons from Tarpakha Community Forest

Authors : Prem Bahadur Giri

Abstract : The nationalization of forests during the early 1960s had become counterproductive for the conservation of forests in Nepal. Realizing this fact, the Government of Nepal initiated a paradigm shift from a government-controlled forestry system to people's direct participation in managing forestry, conceptualizing a community forest approach in the early 1980s. The community forestry approach is expected to promote sustainable forest management, restoring degraded forests to enhance the forest condition on the one hand, and on the other, improvement of livelihoods, particularly of low-income people and forest-dependent communities, as well as promoting community ownership of a forest. As a result, the establishment of community forests started and had taken faster momentum in Nepal. Of the total land in Nepal, forest occupies 6.5 million hectares which are around 45 percent of the forest area. Of the total forest area, 1.8 million hectares have been handed over to community management. A total of 19,361 'community forest users groups' are already created to manage the community forest. To streamline the governance of community forests, the enactment of 'The Forest Act 1993' provides a clear legal basis for managing community forests in Nepal. This article is based on an in-depth study taking the case of Tarpakha Community Forest (TCF) located in Siranchok Rural Municipality of Gorkha District in Nepal. It mainly discusses the extent to which the TCF is able to achieve the twin objectives of this community forest for catalyzing socio-economic improvement of the targeted community and conservation of the forest. The primary information was generated through in-depth interviews along with group discussions with members, the management committee, and other relevant stakeholders. The findings reveal that there is a significant improvement in the regeneration of the forest and also changes in the socio-economic status of the local community. However, coordination with local municipalities and forest governing entities is still weak.

Keywords : community forest, socio-economic benefit, sustainable forest management, Nepal

Conference Title : ICCFP 2023 : International Conference on Community Forestry and Practices

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : July 24-25, 2023