

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

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

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

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