

AGRARIAN STRUCTURES AND DISTRIBUTIVE OUTCOMES

A Study of Community Forestry in Nepal

A thesis submitted by

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(Nepal)

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Glossary

<i>Aama Samuha</i>	Mother's group formed for sectoral development purposes
<i>Ailani</i>	Common property land forcibly occupied by landless migrants for shelter and for cultivation
<i>Agnirekha</i>	Fire line, involves digging around the forest
<i>Ban</i>	Forest, jungle
<i>Bari</i>	Non-irrigated terraced land
<i>Bhari</i>	A local measurement of head load; one <i>bhari</i> weighs approximately 30 kg for fodder and 40 kg for fuel wood
<i>Bigha</i>	Unit of land measurement used in the Terai. One <i>bigha</i> is equivalent to 0.67 hectares of land
<i>Birta</i>	A land grant awarded by the King or ruler to a certain deserving group of people
<i>Bista</i>	Patron client relationships between artisans and the higher caste groups. The artisans serve the higher caste and refer to them <i>Bistas</i>
<i>Bote Majhi</i>	An indigenous ethnic group (fisher folk) in the Terai
<i>Brahmin</i>	Priests and high caste group in the Hindu caste hierarchy
<i>Chhetri</i>	A warrior high caste group in Hindu caste hierarchy
<i>Dalit</i>	Political connotation used to denote the lowest strata of the Hindu caste hierarchy and so-called untouchables
<i>Damai</i>	Tailors, so-called untouchables
<i>Dashain</i>	The great Hindu festival
<i>Gaun</i>	Village, settlement cluster
<i>Gitti Kutne</i>	Stone crushers
<i>Ghar</i>	Home
<i>Haat bazar</i>	A local weekly/fortnightly market
<i>Inar</i>	A well (water well)

<i>Jaban</i>	Husband or wife; family members
<i>Janajati</i>	Indigenous ethnic groups
<i>Jyotish Mantra</i>	Horoscope verses
<i>Kami</i>	Blacksmiths, so called untouchables
<i>Khar</i>	Thatching material
<i>Khet</i>	Terraced irrigated land
<i>Kulo</i>	A small irrigation channel
<i>Muluki Ain</i>	Civil Code of Nepal
<i>Newar</i>	An indigenous ethnic group about half of whom are Buddhists and half Hindus. They are popularly known as business community
<i>Niguro</i>	Fern shoot used as vegetables
<i>Numbari</i>	Registered land
<i>Panchayat</i>	Local administrative and political unit during Panchayat regime, similar to a Village Development Committee today
<i>Perma</i>	A mutual labour exchange in the community
<i>Pewa</i>	Private property of a woman/girl
<i>Rana</i>	An influential Chhetri family who ruled Nepal for 104 years (1846–1951). Shah kings were celebrities during this period
<i>Rojiroti</i>	Work for bread and butter
<i>Ropani</i>	A unit of land measurement used in the hills, one <i>ropani</i> is equivalent to 0.051 hectares
<i>Sal</i>	<i>Shorea robusta</i> , a timber species common in lower belt of Nepal
<i>Samiti</i>	Executive committee of a community based organisation. Executive committee of Forest User Group is commonly known as <i>Samiti</i>
<i>Sarki</i>	Cobblers, so-called untouchables
<i>Sukumbasi</i>	Squatters, illegal immigrants
<i>Tamang</i>	An indigenous ethnic group originated from the hills
<i>Terai</i>	Lower plain belt of Nepal
<i>Tharu</i>	An indigenous ethnic group originated from the Terai
<i>Thikka</i>	A form of land lease
<i>Tole</i>	A Nepali term to define a settlement cluster or hamlet
<i>Ward</i>	Smallest administrative unit. Nine wards make up a Village Development Committee (VDC)



Acronyms

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
BISEP-ST	Bio-diversity Sector Programme for Siwalik and Terai
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBO	Community Based Organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CF	Community Forest/ Community Forestry
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord
CPR	Common Property Resource
CPRM	Common Property Resource Management
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
DFO	District Forest Office/ District Forest Officer
DFSP	District Forest Strategic Plan
DOF	Department of Forests
DSCO	Department of Soil Conservation
EC	Executive Committee
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal
FSCC	Forest Sector Co-ordination Committee
FUG	Forest User Group
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWG	Gender and Equity Working Group
GON	Government of Nepal
HMG/N	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
LFP	Livelihoods and Forestry Programme
LSGA	Local Self-Government Act
MFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
NACFP	Nepal Australia Community Forestry Project
NACRMLP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihood Project
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission

NWC	National Women's Commission
ODG	Overseas Development Group, UK
OP	Operational Plan
P&E	Poor and Excluded
PPSI	Pro-Poor and Social Inclusion
RP	Range Post
SFDP	Small Farmer Development Programme
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
VDC	Village Development Committee
WC	Ward Committee



Abstract

Explanations of the limited achievements of common property resource management (CPRM) organizations in securing equitable distributive outcomes at local levels are insufficient because they have insufficient understanding of the influence of the community structures in which they operate. Taking the example of community forestry strategy in Nepal, and comparing the outcomes of forest user groups in the distinctly varied locations of hills and plains (Terai), this study provides a detailed empirical exploration of local-level structures, relationships and processes that result in inequitable distributive outcomes.

The study uses comparative case study methods. It proposes a shift in emphasis away from the 'unitary' model of community and exclusive focus on access to forest products as the major incentive for people to become involved in forest management. Instead, it suggests a focus on the complexities and variations in agrarian communities in terms of internal differentiation, and of forest and non-forest (i.e., economic and political) incentives derived from user groups in order to adequately explain the distributive outcomes of these organizations.

The study demonstrates that the communities in which user groups function are diverse and internally differentiated. It is argued that economic and political structures and social institutions set the context for individual and group behaviour. How economic and social groups act and behave is shaped in large part by local-level structures and institutions that are characterized by exploitation, exclusion and unequal access to resources, opportunities and voices. The complexities of formal rules and the mechanisms of user groups are guided by informal rules, mechanisms and processes embedded in the way people relate to each other in differentiated communities.

Highlighting the pivotal contrasts between the hill and Terai communities, this study demonstrates that powerful underlying structures operate in agrarian communities to benefit certain classes and groups. At the household level, differential access to benefits from community forestry is greater in communities with a high degree of economic and social differentiation.

The influence of gender relations is more visible in a community with less economic differentiation. Macro-level structures and processes by which policies are developed and implemented also reflect the same local-level realities of exclusion, exploitation and unequal power relations that favour some class, caste and/or gender. The study thus raises questions about the usefulness of highlighting the role of 'communities' for equitable distributive outcomes when wider macroeconomic and political factors do not encourage a transformation of unequal power relations in the communities.

Keywords: common property resources (CPR), community forestry (CF), equity and access (EA), participatory exclusion (PE), forest resource use, distributive outcomes, Nepal

Location of study area in physiographic zones of Nepal

