

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Socio-economic outcomes of community forestry for livelihoods of rural people

Project Description:

The scale of community-based forestry worldwide is increasing, and already covers twice the area of plantation forestry. Much of the theoretical and practical understanding of community forestry originates from Nepal, where a community-based approach to forestry was pioneered in the 1970s. This research aims to analyse the extent a long-term investment in community forestry has generated the desired socio-economic outcomes for rural communities in Nepal.

Today, community forestry is one of the high-priority rural development initiatives in Nepal – to achieve sustainable forest management and reduce poverty in rural villages. During the last 30 years of community forestry development, the management of about 1.23 million hectares of forests (25% of existing forests) have been handed back to more than 14,500 local forest user groups (about 35% of the total population).

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Project team members (ILWS, CSU):

Mr Binod Prasad Devkota (Principal investigator), Dr Digby Race (Principal Supervisor), Dr Joanne Millar and Dr Rik Thwaites (Co-supervisors)

Project Duration: July 2008 – June 2011.

Objectives:

This research aims to analyse the nature and range of socio-economic outcomes of long-term investment in community forestry for different segments of rural communities, particularly those groups identified as the target audience for community forestry (eg. women, ethnic minorities). The specific objectives of the research will be to analyse the:

- short and long-term socio-economic outcomes of community forestry for local rural communities;

- factors that drive and constrain the socio-economic benefits for local communities from community forestry.

Methods:

This research will draw on experiences of community forestry in a wide range of countries, and focus on collecting qualitative and quantitative data with fieldwork in several districts of Nepal.



Above: People's participation in community forest land management



Above: Location of a typical community forest and rural settlement

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