Making community forest management active and equitable: conceptual framework and lessons from Nepal mid-hills

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Enhancing livelihoods and food security from agroforestry and community forestry in Nepal ACIAR FST/2011/076 2013-2018

Australian Government
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research

Many partners

University of Adelaide

University of New South Wales

World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF Bogor Indonesia)

International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Nepal)

Forest Action Nepal

Nepal Agroforestry Foundation

SEARCH-Nepal

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Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal (FECOFUN)

Presentation overview

Paper aim:

present a conceptual framework for active and equitable community forest management and suggests pathways to make it active and equitable based on lessons from Nepal mid-hills

1. **Context of active and equitable community forest management**
2. **Conceptual framework**
3. **Lessons from Nepal mid-hills**
   a) *Reasons for passive and inequitable community forest management*
   b) *Pathways for active and equitable forest management*
4. **Concluding comments**

Environmental degradation → forest rehabilitation → food security

Millennium development goals

Pic of degraded forest

participatory forest management → silviculture practice + CFEs

Paradigm shift in FM from state-centred to people controlled FM

- through policies and institutional arrangements -CF

Forest peoples have

- done reforestation
- protected forest
- sustainably used forest

forest people remained poor

Nepal community forestry context

- More than 3 decades of community forestry (CF)
- Nepal's CF is widely acclaimed as one of the best examples of the successful participatory and decentralised forest management(Springate-Baginski et al 2003, Pokharel et al, 2007, Dahal and Chapagain 2008).
- CF in Nepal is successful in forest protection but improving livelihood and food security through CF remained a challenge
- Reason: CF management is inactive and inequitable

What is active CFM? What is equitable

- **Active forest management** implies the application of 'hybrid' approach to forest harvesting practices and silviculture treatments are scientifically informed and locally accepted, meeting ecological, socio-cultural and economic goals
- Equity = 'fairness' (procedural and distributional)
- Philosophical proposition of fairness
  - Equal opportunity
  - Merit-based compensation
  - Priority to the poor

Forest Policy 2015 and legal and regulatory framework

Forest bureaucracy and regional market

Planning and management process at community level

Quality, quantity and diversity of forest products and services

defines marketable products

defines silviculture practice

Market and value-adding activities

sets scale of timber enterprise

defines enterprise sustainability

Local planning and governance processes

available resource defines level of forestry

planning

operations

management plan determines silviculture

Power play

ACTIVE AND EQUITABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

involves

- ✓ **Inclusion of local knowledge on forest use and science-based silviculture practice**
- ✓ **Improving forestry value chain and markets**
- ✓ **Inclusive forest planning**

allocates labour

alleviates poverty

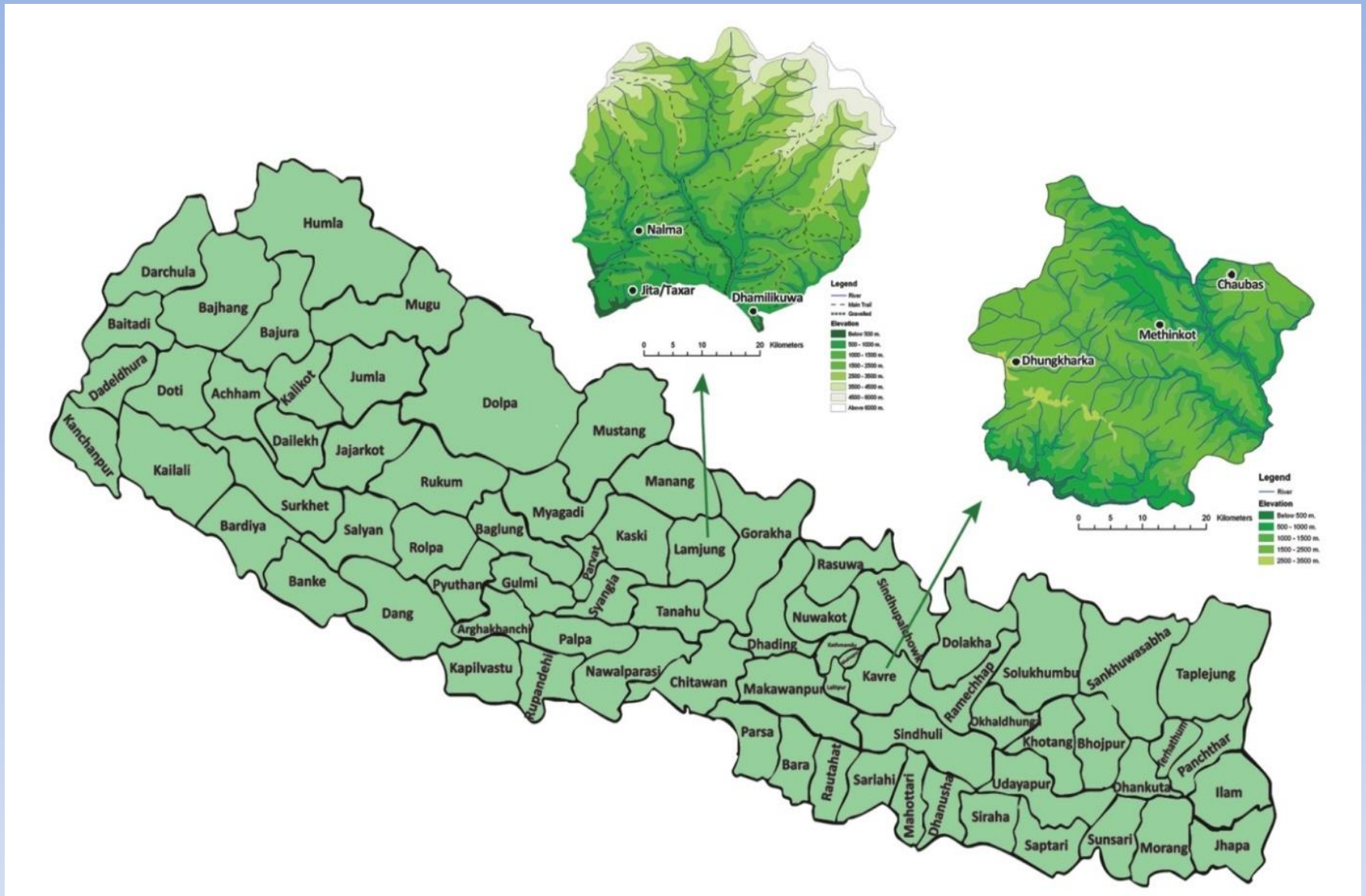
IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD AND FOOD SECURITY

EnLiFT Nepal

ACIAR
aciar.gov.au

Methodology

- Participatory Action Research
  - Silviculture demonstration and trials plots
  - CF Operational plan revisions
  - Trialling innovations for market-responsive institutions
- Data collection methods
  - Key informant interviews
  - Field observation/journals (ethnography)
  - Focus group discussions
  - Archival of records
  - Literature review (including grey literature)
  - Tree measurements



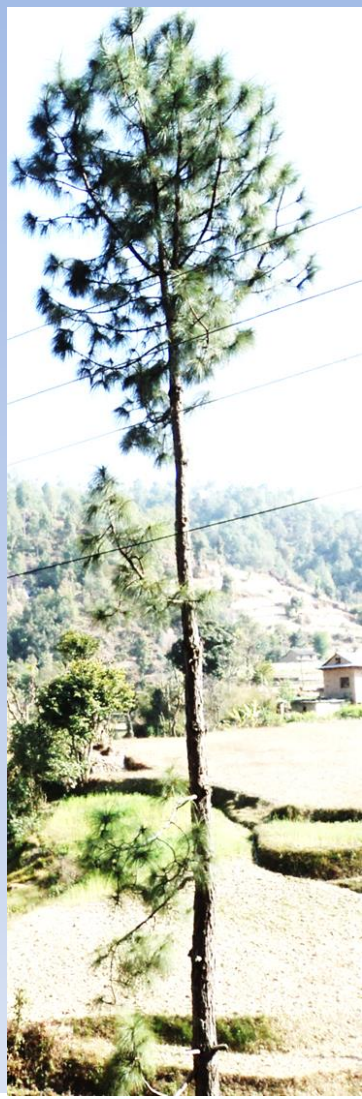
Map of Nepal showing the districts and village development committees where EnLiFT Project is being implemented

Reasons for inactive and inequitable forest management

- *Conservation and forest protection ethos in Nepal*
- *Complex regulatory requirements for forest products harvest and marketing*
- *Lack of silviculture skills*
- *Poor timber value chain and lack of entrepreneurial skills*
- *Elite capture, local politics and social discrimination*

Manifestations of conservative ethos

- *subsistence-based timber harvest*
- *annual allowable cut – 50% of the annual growth (grossly underestimated)*
- *lack of forestry-based enterprises*



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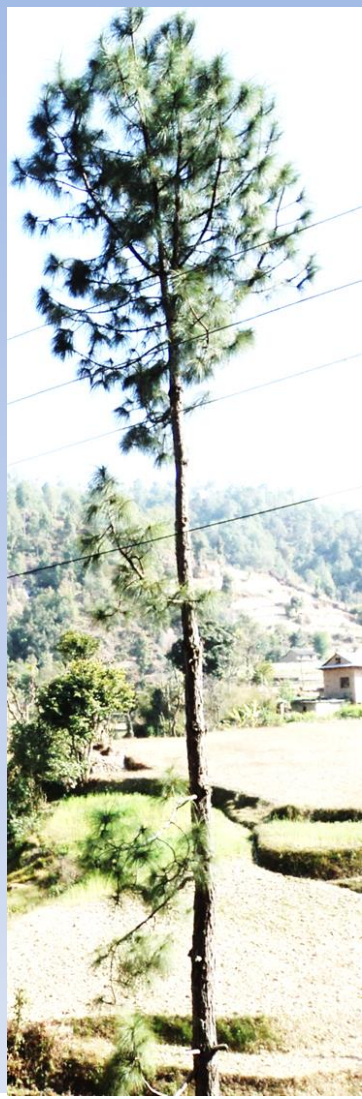
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