Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

Date:	December 16, 2011	Entry Number:	1208
Case Study Name:		Social Heterogeneity and Community Forestry Processes: Reflections form Forest Users of Dhading District, Nepal	
Author:		Pandit, R. & Bevilacqua, E.	
Document Type:		Paper in scientific journal	
Year:		2011	
Language:		English	
Document Location:		Small-scale Forestry	
Full Citation:		Pandit, R. & Bevilacqua, E. 2011. Social heterogeneity and community forestry processes: Reflections from forest users of Dhading District, Nepal. *Small-scale Forestry*, 10, 97-113.	
Region:		South Asia	
Country:		Nepal	
Ecosystem Type:		Forests – (many types due to differences in altitude and climate ranging from sub-tropical to arctic).	
Social Characteristics:		Three social groups – elite, women, and disadvantaged, rural but near urban area	
Scale of Study:		Community	
Resource Type:		Forestry	
Type of Initiative:		Research driven project	
Community Based Work:		Community forestry	
Keywords:		Social groups, forest user group, institutional development, users' participation, benefit sharing	

Summary:	Community forestry has been characterized as a successful model of community-based forest governance in Nepal that shifts forest management and use rights to local users, often socially heterogeneous in caste, gender and wealth status. This heterogeneity forms the basis of social groups, which differ in their needs, priorities and perceptions regarding community forestry implementation processes. This paper explores the dynamics of three community forestry processes—users' participation, institutional development, and decision-making and benefit-sharing—among forest user groups as perceived by three social groups of forest users—elite, women and disadvantaged—from eight community forests of Dhading district, Nepal, using qualitative and quantitative techniques. It is found that social groups have differing levels of perception about community forestry processes occurring in their user groups. In particular, social elites differ from women and disadvantaged members of the group in users' participation in community forestry activities and institutional development of forest user groups. An important policy implication of the findings is that social inclusiveness is central to the effective implementation of community forestry processes, not only to safeguard its past successes but also to internalize the economic opportunities it poses through reducing deforestation and forest degradation in the future.