

Community forestry at Kathmandu District

Damodar Sharma¹

Community forestry (CF) is the largest programme of the Department of Forest. Along with the private forestry this programme is expected to absorb about 47% of investments in this sector by the year 2001 (MPFS 1988). Under this program all accessible hill forest will be handed over to the local community as Community Forests (CPFD, 1991)

Increasing population coupled with the increasing need of forestry products, caused a decline in the area and productivity of natural forest cover in Nepal by 5.7% from 1964/65 to 1978/79 and 3.4% from 1978/79 to 1985/86). And, since, forest management was mostly of protective and restrictive type, with no peoples' involvement in management activities, forests kept on declining. Such management system did not work satisfactorily. The 1978 legislation gave the Department of Forest authority to handover forest to elected village leaders of the local village unit called *panchayat*, but despite the policy orientation to the village leaders, legislation was very conservative and unpractical. The various Forest Acts and Rules (1979, 1986, 1993, 1995) have promoted to smooth the CF programmes. Now, more and more area of forests are being handed over to communities throughout the country. Kathmandu district is one of them where, unfortunately, the present state of community forestry has not been studied and documented so far. The present study makes a modest attempt to understand and document different aspects of community forestry development in the district.

Kathmandu shares borders with Nuwakot and Sindhupalchowk districts in the North, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Kavreplanchowk and Sindhupalchowk districts in the East, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Makwanpur district in the South and Dhading, Makwanpur and Nuwakot districts in the West. The forest area covers 14118 hectares which corresponds to 34.3% of the district. The altitude ranges from 1373m to 2732m and the climate is sub-tropical to temperate. There are 65 Village Development Committees (VDCs) and one Metro-municipality

with total population of 675341 (male = 351316 and female = 324025).

Southern slopes are facing severe forest degradation. Forests are characterized by frequent fire, overgrazing and poor drainage condition.

Methods

After reconnaissance survey of field semi-structured interview with the respondents, members of FUG were conducted. Tools of PRA such as, reconnaissance survey, focus group discussion, interview with key informants, triangulation and probing were used to collect valid information. With the help of premeditated check list, accuracy of gathered information were confirmed. Data from secondary sources were also collection.

Data processing was done through a master sheet, available data and information were tabulated. Some summary measures like percentage, trend and pattern were computed.

Results and discussions

Before nationalisation of forests in 1957, major forest areas were under the personal properties. Their protection as well as utilisation practices depend on owners' personal interest. Thereafter, the forests were thought as the sources of revenue and hence called as *Hariyo Ban Nepalko Dhan* (forest are Nepal's wealth). This philosophy worked till the mid of 1960. Later the situation altered and first Plantation Office was established by the name of Bagmati Zone Plantation Branch. The *shoot and protect* concept was further strengthened to protect valuable forest resources.

Forest types

The forests of Kathmandu District can be categorised under six dominant types as mentioned below:

¹ District Planning Adviser, Local Governance Programme (UNDP), Dolkha District

Schima wallichii - *Castonopsis indica* forest
Pinus roxburghii forest
Pinus roxburghii - *Schima wallichii* forest
Quercus lanata and *Pinus excelsa* forest
Quercus lanata and *Rhododendron arboreum* forest
Quercus semecarpifolia forest

Schima wallichii and *Castonopsis indica* forest are found on the lower valley floor and *Pinus roxburghii* is dominant in the lower hill slope. While in the middle hill slope, *Schima wallichii* is also mixed with *Pinus roxburghii*. In Mahabharat range *Quercus lanata*, *Pinus excelsa* and *Rhododendron arboreum* are found on the cool temperate hill slopes. *Quercus semecarpifolia* forest type is dominant on the upper hill slope.

The total area of the district is 41200 ha of which 14118 ha. is forested land. The forested land can be divided into three categories: tree cover area (9648 ha) bushes and shrubs (4103 ha) and pasture (367 ha).

The number and area (ha) of community forestry in Kathmandu District is increasing so do the number of beneficiaries (Table 1).

Table 1: Status of community forestry at Kathmandu District (as of 2054)

Fiscal year	Community forests		No. of benefited households
	Number	Area	
050/051	14	440.77	1983
051/052	22	1117.48	2823
052/053	18	692.64	2646
053/054	17	289.64	1443
Total	71	2540.53	8895

Source: District Forest Office, Kathmandu.

Forests of the district have been under various management authorities (Table 2). The most intact forest is obviously that of Royal Nagarjun and Royal Gokarna Forest. The latter is however, leased to a foreigner to develop an international level golf course. The religious forests are also untouched.

Table 2: Management authorities of forests at Kathmandu

Forest Type	Area in ha.	Management authorities
Religious forest	168.60	Various religious organisations
Lease Forest	24.00	Lessee
Community Forest	2540.53	Communities
Royal Nagarjun forest	1500.00	Royal place/HMGN
Royal Gokarna Forest	221.53	Royal place/HMGN
Shivapuri Reserve forest	11200.00	SPWP/HMGN

Source: District Forest Office, Kathmandu

Management practices

Protection

Traditionally, forest were protected by *Aalo Palo* (rotation of wachers) and *Mana Pathi* (supplying grains to the hired forest wachers). In the study area, FUGs have been protecting their forest to control the over-use of forest resources.

The control mechanisms by FUG were found to be more effective. Protection is being done either by appointing forest watcher paid by FUGs or on rotational basis among the users. Anyone violating the rules and regulation documented in Operational Plan for Forest Management (OPFM) would be prosecuted.

Harvesting

Harvesting is done on the basis of need and the existing status of forest. In the past, harvesting decisions were taken on the basis of traditional knowledge and skills of users. The status of forest and its future development plan were not considered. Unscientific and over harvesting were the major causes of failure of traditional harvesting practice that lead to the fast depletion of resources within a very short time. And, availability of forest products became very difficult. Owing to such difficulties initiatives of CF were taken in many areas of forests of the district.

Now, the CF has given more emphasis on the harvesting that is sustainable and environmentally friendly. The approval of District Forest Office on OPFM ensures this sustainability. In addition, strict follow-up of the OPFM especially harvesting scheduled is done.

Generally, the Forest User Committees have a certain area of forest and harvesting schedule and improvement felling according to their OPFM. At the same time, removal of dead, dying and diseased tree are carried out. Similarly intermediate operation such as cutting, thinning, singling and pruning are carried out in the same forest. Forest compartments have also been prepared for better management and sustainable harvesting.

Conflicts

Despite many successes in community forestry there are some challenges ahead in the path of community forestry management and development in Nepal. A few conflicting issues in the CF of the district have been reported. The conflicts were related to decision making and peoples' participation based on political ideology and different interest groups. Three types of conflicts namely, among users, between user groups and between FUC and VDC members were noticed.

Recommendations

The following recommendations would improve forest management practices now existing at Kathmandu District

1. Greater participation of women in forest management and development programmes
2. The equity of disadvantage groups and poor users should be encouraged and their voices need to be well represented in OPFM. Provision of training FUGs on concepts of community forestry management programmes is necessary
3. Long-term strategies should be made to maximise the need based forest products while ensuring forest regeneration
4. There should be no frequent transfer of the government staff. They should be allowed to work at a district for at least three years
5. Regular workshop, training and seminar on motivation, natural resource management and CF activity should be organised
6. Tree Stand Improvement programme needs to be well focused by every CF
7. FUG should be strengthened through adequate post-formation support
8. More attempts should be made to resolve conflict in the FUG level. The legal awareness programme should be launched by the government to explain in detail the recent community forestry legislation

References

- CFDP 1995. Community and Private Forest Division, Community Forestry Manual.
- MPFS, 1988. Master Plan for the Forestry Sector in Nepal, Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Kathmandu, Nepal,

Annex-1:

Community forests at Kathmandu District (as of Ashad 2054)

SN	Range post	Name of CF	Location (in VDC) of CF	CF Area in ha.	CF Household numbers	CF Hand-over date
1	Lapsiphedi	Aaldandan	Suntole	201.00	84	051-06-13
2	"	Dhulbu	Lapsiphedi	130.00	148	051-07-08
3	"	Manegairho	Nanglebhare	3.56	65	051-12-20
4	"	Panighat	Suntole	53.75	53	051-12-20
5	"	Ratmate danda	Lapsiphedi,	33.00	62	052-04-10
6	"	Thangsang danda	Bajrayogini			
7	"	Lapsaura danda	Lapsiphedi	41.00	78	052-04-10
8	"	Lapsaura danda	Lapsiphedi	44.00	64	052-04-10
9	"	Jaharsipauwa	Lapsiphedi	149.00	281	052-03-22
10	"	Bishambhara	Suntole	107.75	114	052-11-02
11	"	narayan				
12	"	Bhumi danda	Lapsiphedi	26.70	96	053-02-03
13	"	juridanda				
14	"	Khoriya pakha	Suntole	44.00	33	053-03-07
15	"	Lambo danda	Suntole	47.00	41	053-03-11
16	"	Ugratara	Bajrayogini	44.00	89	053-03-11
17	"	Chauki bhanjyang	Lapsiphedi	2.10	41	053-06-07
18	"	Chakhdol Youth	Mulpani	4.33	134	053-06-06
19	"	Rajat and Udhan forest	Mulpani	4.26	61	054-03-15
20	Jugdol	Guth sallaghari	Baluwa	56.25	161	052-03-22
21	"	Gamcha	Baluwa	13.40	149	052-12-30
22	"	Tin danda Women	Baluwa	55.4	30	054-03-25
23	"	Ahaldanda	Baluwa	56.4	46	054-03-25
24	"	Chiandanda Women				
25	"	Batule sim	Baluwa	5.00	106	054-03-20
26	Chandeshwori	Aaite bare	Bishnu (Budhanil Kantha)	16.00	224	050-12-15
27	"	Chyan danda (Women)	Chapli bhadrakali	7.00	116	050-12-15
28	"	Panchkanya basuki	Chapli Bhadrakali	29.00	237	051-08-28
29	"	Thane danda	Chunikhel	45.00	186	051-08-28
30	"	Putali danda	Chunikhel	36.10	159	053-02-03
31	"	Ratmate danda	Chunikhel	35.00	107	053-03-31
32	"	Kapantapu danda	Kapan	14.00	123	054-03-25
33	Panchmane	Devesthan sindanda	Kavrasthali	25.60	154	051-04-05
34	"	Maruwa pakha	Jeetpur Phedi	3.60	42	051-04-05
35	"	Salkote	Jeetpur phedi	18.20	36	051-04-05
36	"	Simalko pakha	Goldhunga	7.50	52	051-08-28
37	"	Paribanpakha	Jeetpur Phedi	3.50	90	052-10-17
38	"	Thanagadhi	Jeetpur phedi	4.80	42	053-03-07
39	"	Mahakal	Dharmasthali	6.02	59	054-03-02
40	Sita Paila	Phasku	Ramkot	17.50	100	050-12-15
41	"	Panchkanya	Ramkot	12.64	138	052-12-25
42	"	Kalpeshower				
43	"	Jhangajhiti	Dhahckowk	19.20	128	050-12-15
44	"	Jhakribas	Ramkot	44.00	165	051-04-05
45	"	Chapko ban	Ramkot	54.80	135	052-12-27
46	"	Aduwabari	Ramkot	37.80	115	051-06-06
47	"	Hasantar	Syuchatar	42.50	191	051-06-06
48	"	Mahantako pahiro	Ramkot	1.28	51	051-06-06
49	"	Subbako ban	Badbhanjyang	7.93	97	051-09-28
50	"	Keurani	Dhachowk	51.90	435	051-12-29
51	"	Panchkanya	Syuchatar	1.94	70	052-09-10
52	"	Patleban Thonse	Badbhanjyang	163.20	918	052-11-11
53	"	Khola				

SN	Range post	Name of CF	Location (in VDC) of CF	CF Area in ha.	CF Household numbers	CF Hand-over date
48	"	Masine	Badbhanjyang	20.50	86	053-05-25
49	"	Rani Ban	Balambu	20.10	139	054-01-08
50	"	Juge Khola	Changu Narayan	3.28	79	054-03-25
51	Machchhegoan	Champadevi	Champa devi	185.00	322	051-04-05
52	"	Bosan	Chanlakhel	56.91	350	051-04-05
53	"	Paleko	Machhegoan	30.00	149	051-04-05
54	"	machhenarayan Adi Nathi sallaghari	Chobhar Bhutkhel	12.90	61	051-11-08
55	Mahadev Sthan	Lag lage pakha	Thankot	7.00	74	051-04-05
56	"	Mahankal sthan	Mahadev Sthan	4.16	80	052-12-25
57	"	Ganesh devi ban devi	Mahadev Sthan	15.00	54	053-03-31
58	Shesnarayan	Gopaleshowar	Dakshinkali	44.00	299	051-08-28
59	"	Pipale pakha	Chhaimale	8.64	143	051-04-05
60	"	Pandhero danda	Chhaimale	2.12	68	051-04-05
61	"	Chyan Danda Women	Chhaimale	4.90	100	054-03-15
62	"	Kharpa	Talkududechaur	54.25	74	051-08-28
63	"	Sano chuli Thulo chuli	Talkududechaur	38.62	84	054-01-08
64	"	Namobudh Dhanuki hapa	Talkududechaur	32.00	65	054-02-27
65	"	Samikhel	Chhaimale	63.75	85	051-11-08
66	"	Salledanda	Chhaimale	8.25	49	052-01-26
67	"	Machchha	Chhaimale	22.86	101	052-11-02
68	"	Lamagaun	Talkududechaur	56.25	116	053-03-20
69	"	Sapta Kanya	Chhaimale	7.84	115	054-03-15
70	"	Siddi Ganesh	Chhaimale	12.80	96	054-03-16
71	Kathmandu Metro- municipality	Mahipee	Kathmandu-16	1.49	Not Available	053-05-25
Total				2540.53	8895	