Restoring degraded forest lands through active participation of poor and women in mid-hills of Nepal
(An experience from Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme in Nepal)

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Introduction and Background

- Leasehold Forestry focused by Country Policy for: Contributing poverty reduction and Environmental amelioration.
- Operational provisions mentioned in Forest Regulation 1993.
- IFAD supports continued since 1992
  - Bridging Phase for 3 years by GoN own funding
  - Second Phase, LFLP: started in 2005 for 8 years
- Currently 2 IFAD Projects: LFLP and WUPAP running in 33 districts
- FAO piloting in districts: Palpa, Nawalparasi, Syangja, and Gulmi since 2010
- Also replicated by other projects: LFP/DFID and BISEP-ST/SNV
Community Participation for Restoration of Forests for increased resources and assets

- Degraded Forest
  - Forest restored with multiple products
  - Better Management of F lands
  - Forest Products supply increased for capital formation
  - Sustainable supply of F. products and Env. services
  - Increased income and reduced vulnerability
  - Capacities and Governance increased

- Poor and Vulnerable
  - HH poverty Reduced
  - Reduced HH poverty

Conceptual Model
Leasehold Forestry: Working Modality

- **Group Approach:** 5-15 HHs in a group.
  - Poor and homogeneous members
  - Direct access to resources, services and benefits.
  - Easy access to decision making

- **Involvement of Stakeholders:**
  - In Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Follow up

- **Service Delivery in Package:**
  - Forest Land leased for initially 40 years
  - Participatory Planning of activities
  - Facilitation for Group Constitution and Operational Plan
  - Supply of seeds, seedlings and other planting materials
  - Supply of seed goats
  - Empowerment: Social and Technical Trainings, Exposure visits

- **Focus on household Livelihood Improvement:**
  - Preparation of HH level Livelihood Improvement Plan (LIP)
  - Holistic approach: hit on increasing all 5 capitals: physical, natural, social, human and financial
  - Focused collaboration and coordination among all Dev. partners (GOs, I/NGOs and CBOs.)
Methods and Materials

- 352 LFUG Samples (10%, N=3439)
- Field observations
- Interaction and discussion with group members
- Published and unpublished documents
Results

- Socio-Economic Contexts
  - Majority of indigenous (janajatis) people
  - Below poverty line
  - Women's participation increasing, 15.4% (2006) to 39% in 2010.
  - Dalit's participation - 11% (2000) to 16%
  - Mostly rely on agriculture, daily wages
  - Women and poor have increased responsibilities in decision making process.
Results

• Forest Coverage increasing

  – 3 storey structures: upper (for timber), middle (for fodder/NTFPs) and bottom (for grass) being promoted.

  – up to 25% in 38% Leased Forests

  – also similar findings by Ohler (2000), NPC (2005) and Pandit (2009)

  – Species diversity : 57% and 86% increases over 5-6 years

  – good ground cover, increasing from 32% in new LFUGs to 78% in 6-7 year old LFUGs (Ohler 2000).
Results

- Plantation and weeding trend increasing
- Increased natural regenerations
- Stall feeding adopted by 95% groups: zero grazing inside LF.
- Increasing supply of forage/fuelwood.
- Users have got benefits: forage, fuelwood, NTFPs, (Mukherjee 2005)
- 8-9 hrs time reduced for collection of firewood and forage/fodder.
Results

- Goat herd size increasing during 2006-10
  - av. 3 to 5/HHs
  - max. goats 11 to 17 /HH.
- Farmers awareness raised to access livestock health services form service centres.
- Household income increased from livestock production 60% HHs.
- 90% of farmers access loan from s/c scheme.
- 60% of loan being mobilized from IGAs: agriculture, livestock, grocery, etc.


Issues and Concerns

• Livelihood Improvement Plan has been envisaged to ensure sustainability: needs support from all DPs.

• Benefit sharing mechanism between community and government to be clear.

• Priority of CF should be removed.

• Forest cover up to 50% crown cover as already recommended to be implemented.
Recommendations

• This pro-poor model should be scaled up.

• Legal issues should be solved and the provisions should be incorporated into the Forest Laws and Regulations.

• Working synergy should be developed to ensure support to groups towards sustainability.

• Women, Dalits and Indigenous people should be involved into further economic activities.
Thank You!

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