

Transactions costs and innovations among new institutions in community-based water resource management in Nepal – Ramchandra Chandra Bhattarai

National governments struggle with managing irrigation systems in most countries and operations and maintenance is rarely done adequately. In Nepal, as elsewhere, there is now a major push to strengthen community managed irrigation systems and devolve more responsibilities to farmers. In this context, Ramchandra seeks to estimate the transaction costs associated with farmer managed irrigation system. In an attempt to understand the evolution and sustenance of institutions, his study will identify transaction costs, evaluate their components and examine factors influencing them. The study will collect and use both secondary and primary data from about fifty irrigation systems and four hundred households. The results of this study will guide policy makers in the context of their support for community managed irrigation systems.

Poverty Alleviation through Forest Resource Management: An Analysis of Leasehold Forestry Practice in Nepal, Bishnu Prasad Sharma

Nepal adopted the Lease hold forestry (LHF) programme in the 1990s to tackle the twin problem of regenerating degraded land as well as alleviating rural poverty. This programme provides a poor household with about one hectare of degraded land for raising forest based products for 40 years, extendable by another lease. The LHF programme is a demand based programme that has rapidly expanded to 26 of the 75 districts of Nepal within a short span of time. Bishnu will study the degree of success LHF has had in reducing poverty among participating households. The results of this study will provide policy makers with important insights on management of degraded land for poverty alleviation and will be useful not only in Nepal but in other countries in South Asia, where similar problems are faced.

Economics of Urban Drainage system: A case study of Cuttack City, Orissa, India, Jogasankar Mahaprashasta (Study Grant)

Cuttack was the capital of Orissa, India, from 1135 AD till 1952 and continues to be an important city on the eastern coast hosting a large urban population. Flanked by two rivers, Cuttack is now beset with problems of unplanned urbanization and inadequate drainage. A major difficulty it faces is periodic flooding and water-logging. This creates health hazards, foul smell, disrupts communication and endangers life and property. Jogasankar believes that efforts to improve drainage infrastructure run into financial difficulties with local authorities who underestimate the demand for it. This study, therefore, seeks to estimate the willingness to pay by urban households for an improved drainage system in Cuttack City. There is already a plan to invest in drainage infrastructure and Jogasankar's study will identify the benefits of undertaking this action. It will aid policy makers in devising revenue instruments that would help pay for improved urban drainage.