

**REDD+ and conflict:
A case study of the REDD + projects in Nepal**

Prepared by

**Dharam Raj Uprety
Harisharan Luintel
Kamal Bhandari**

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Abbreviation

ANSAB	Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-resources
CF	Community Forest
CFUG	Community Forestry User Group
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
DDC	District Development Committees
DFO	District Forest Office\Officer
EC	Executive Committee
ERI	Environmental Research Institute
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry User Group Nepal
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GOs	Government Organizations
GPS	Geo-information system / Geographical information system
HH	Household
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
ICS	Improved Cooking Stove
IUFRO	International Union for Forest Research Organization
LF	Leasehold Forest
LHF	Leasehold Forest
LRMP	Land Resource Mapping Project
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
MOFSC	Ministry of forest and soil conservation
NEFIN	Nepalese Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OP	Operational Plan
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forest
REDD	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation
USAUD	United State Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committees
WBR	Well Being Ranking

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Introduction

The emerging REDD+ processes operate in complex social interfaces where range of stakeholders (e.g. organizations, user groups, experts, and policy makers) with diverse motives and priorities as well as social, cultural, economic or political interests interact. In this context, the introduction of REDD+, an international finance mechanism designed to incentivize the conservation and sustainable management of forest so as to reduce carbon emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, might have implications for conflict over land and natural resources. So far, communities, practitioners, policy makers and thinkers of forestry sector anticipate that the REDD+ will bring forward a range of long-standing contentious issues in natural resources management, particularly those pertaining to tenure arrangements, governance and resource access in the forestry sector. This is particularly relevant in Southeast Asia as conflict over forests and land is widespread in the region (Yasmi et al 2010). A study carried out by UNEP (UNEP 2010) also highlighted that REDD+ closely relates to the security and livelihoods of the 450 million forest-dependent people in the region.

Moreover, the requirements of REDD+ including additionality, leakages, permanence, safeguards, and monitoring, reporting and verification may demand new sets of stakeholders, institutions, policies and processes to emerge and function. The emergence of new institutions and policies may demand re-focus on the objectives of forest resources management which might contradict and/or undermine the traditional value and use of forest. In addition, the concept of REDD+ has been drawing attention of all stakeholders to reconfigure the power relations including roles, responsibilities and authorities of existing stakeholders. This has already indicating the emergence of power struggle and conflict among the policies, processes, institutions and stakeholders at all levels.

Realizing the emergence of conflict in and around the forest managing communities in view of REDD+ project and lack of adequate knowledge on the dynamics of conflict and REDD+, this study is jointly carried out by The Center for People and Forest (RECOFTC) and ForestAction Nepal with an aim to understand how the proposed REDD+ project aggravate and/or reduce the long-standing conflict around the forest particularly community forestry. The conflict is particularly looked in the light of communities' rights over resources, governance and access to the resources and benefits. This study is also expected to pave the way for a long-term research in conflict modeling including developing robust methodology to understand the REDD+ and conflict dynamics.

The report is an output of a quick study conducted between May and June 2011 in two REDD+ project sites in Nepal and organized as follows. Section two gives a general conceptual framework of the study while the section three talks about the background situation of Nepal in terms of forestry and conflict. The section four describes the methodology followed to accomplish the study. The site specific cases are given in the section five and the following section provides the discussions over different issues associated with conflict and forestry in view of REDD+. Similarly, section seven talks about the general approaches and practices of conflict management by different stakeholders at different levels. Then the paper concludes with some remarks.

Conceptual Framework

Many scholars have defined conflict in various ways. Most of them refer conflict as a debate, a contest, a disagreement, an argument, a dispute, a quarrel, a struggle, a battle or a confrontation (Uprety 2002; Warner 2001; Uprety 2007). Walker and Daniels (1997) and Uprety (2002) define conflict as an active stage of disagreement between people having opposite opinions. It is an emotive situation implying a struggle between opposing ideas and interests, confrontation, protest, and, potentially, violence (Sidway 2005; Uprety, 2007). Turner (1986) reviewed the classical theories of conflict and summarized the theory of Karl Marx' (1818-1883) as "a social system systematically generates conflict that tends to be manifested in the opposition of interest. It is inevitable and pervasive in nature that mostly occurs over the distribution of scarce resources, power, and material wealth". A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur e.g. one party is interfering, disrupting, or in some other way making another party's actions less effective (Deutsch 1973). Conflicts emerge in different forms such as grievances and disputes (Walker and Daniels 1997; Uprety 2007) particularly in the situation when new sets of opportunities, avenues, ideas, thoughts, challenges, issues, and vulnerabilities are in the discourse. Grievance as an initial stage of conflict, in which individuals or a group is perceived to be unjust, provides grounds for resentment or complaints which potentially erupt into conflict that clashes cultural, political, social, and economic interests of individuals and/or groups. At the final stage of conflict, people may make the matter public opting for confrontation (Buckles 1999; Walker and Daniels 1997; Warner 2000; Uprety 2002; Uprety 2007) or [forced] collaboration.

Since conflict is considered as social relations of power, it is affected by and manifested in the socio-economic, cultural, ecological and political dimensions of the society. Therefore, the indicators of conflict can be depicted in these domains. Some of such indicators could be different forms of social relations such as competition and [forced] collaboration that can be observed in terms of accessing scarce resources and exercising power in decision making. The insights regarding the dynamics of conflict could be properly understood only when it is observed in the practices. Therefore, the engagement of the researchers with empirical world (in this case community forestry), particularly where the social dynamics in terms of emerging opportunities and challenges, is high, is crucial so as to expand our knowledge base.

Background Situation

Nepalese society has historically been very socially, economically and culturally heterogeneous which has created deep inequities manifested in unequal power relations in terms of caste, class, gender and regional settlement (Bista 1991). The identities of all differentiated groups are associated with culturally shaped unequal and exploitative power relations including prestige and honor beyond their respective rights, interests and actions. This has caused emergence and continuation of inequities and conflict in the community forestry though it is considered as one of the successful and popular program in forestry. There are inter and intra-community conflicts. Some of the prominent inter-community conflicts are related to defining forest boundary, identifying community members, sharing of particular forest products, etc. Similarly, intra-community conflicts exist in cost and benefit sharing, access to forest resources, management decisions and actions, leadership selection, practicing governance, defining and practicing traditional use rights, etc. Some of the most common field level conflicts in the forestry sector in Nepal are briefly given in the **Annex 1**.

The ecological, physiological and climatic diversity demand different sets of flexible responses in terms of policies and programmes informed by wide range of adaptive knowledge systems for better management of the resources so as to meet the demand of communities and people at large. However, there seems to be uniform responses in terms of policies and programmes so far ignoring the diversity. Even such policy and programmes are found to be (i) more prescriptive giving less flexibility for actions, (ii) based on *so called* western scientific knowledge system ignoring the indigenous and traditional knowledge system, and (iii) following bureaucratic procedures giving fewer opportunities for learning and reflection, and (iv) unable to address the locally contextual issues and therefore somehow disempowering local communities. Communities are not found to be satisfied always with such policy measures and programme interventions and therefore express discontent in different ways.

Out of 14.71 million ha of the total area of the country, 5.8 million ha (39.6%) area of Nepal is covered with forests (Acharya D. 2003). In the past, the forest land has been converted to other land use categories, especially shrub-land, agriculture land and other land uses. For instance, there was 2.7% decrease in forest land annually from 1991/92 to 2001/02 while the annual rate of forest degradation i.e, increased shrub-land is almost 12.7% (*CBS 2008 cited in RPP Nepal*). The drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are diverse and complex such as high dependency on forest, illegal and unsustainable harvest of products, forest fire, conversion (encroachment and/or planned) of forest for the expansion of agriculture, settlement and physical infrastructure development, overgrazing, etc. These drivers are sustaining by one set of actors including landless people, forest-dependent communities, some political leaders, timber smugglers, land mafias, etc. while other sets of actors such as government forest bureaucracy, government security forces and administration, local community forestry user groups, etc. are bearing the cost of deforestation and forest degradation. Therefore, there are always tensions between these two types of actors.

A range of policies have been formulated over the time to manage the natural resources including forest sustainably. However, most of the policy measures have been found to be ineffective due to their conflicting nature. For example, the Forest Act 1993 contradicts with other several state sponsored acts including Local Self Governance Act (LSGA) 1998, Nepal Mine Act 1966, Mines and Minerals Act 1985, Water Resource Act 1992, Public Roads Act 1974 and Nepal Petroleum Act 1983, etc. in defining jurisdiction and authority over the use of natural resources available in the forests. This has been resulted partly due to the integrated nature of the resources, the poor coordination among different but concerned stakeholders, and very limited sectoral interest of the authorized actors. In due course of time, there have been several cases (even court cases such as case between DDC and DFO Sindhupalchowk) between government forest authorities with others actors responsible for concerned resources. Moreover, there are several incidences of tensions between government formal authorities and the communities and people at large (represented by their federations or organized body) regarding the formulation and amendment of policies and laws. Also, the more operational policy documents such as regulations, guidelines, circulars and directives which matter the most to shape the community actions are formulated solely by the bureaucratic machinery. Therefore, the communities generally do not feel the ownership on such policy documents which cause the conflict in implementing those policies. Moreover, the interpretations of the policy provisions by

different duty-bearers differ in many circumstances particularly where the financial resources are in the focus of decision. Such as harvesting and trade of timber from community forest is dependent on the decision made by the then current minister rather than the approved forest operational plan. In Nepal, there are several cases of contradictory decisions made regarding harvesting of trees by consecutive ministers in forestry sector.

Different forestry sector policies and practices have been criticized by different scholars for providing space for conflict to emerge by imposing impractical provisions and ignoring the role of certain historical stakeholders such as forest product traders/entrepreneurs. To mention some, such policies and practices have created the conflict between (i) protected areas authorities and the local and indigenous forest-dependent communities, (ii) forest bureaucracy and private sector actors for constraining the space for later (by introducing unscientific and arbitrary taxation, not providing fiscal incentives, creating unnecessary bureaucratic hassles, etc.), (iii) forest bureaucracy and communities (through federations of community forestry users) for sharing power and resources, etc. Community forestry policy and program, though, have been able to revert the trend of deforestation and forest degradation, there are several issues associated with it regarding the conflict on forestry. Some of such issues include unclear and ambiguous forest land and product tenure, complex and confusing property rights of different forest products, unclear provisions to shape stakeholders' relations and handling grievances, etc. The rampant corruption and bribe compounding with frequently changing policies and strategies in the forestry sector has created a situation where the trust among the forestry and allied stakeholders is destroyed. Similarly, the conflict between protected area authority and local communities including indigenous peoples is aggravated by curtailing the rights of local communities to access the forest resources and unmanaged/unwanted human-wildlife interfaces that cause crop depredation, livestock and human casualties, etc.

Methodology of the Study

Various social sciences research methods were used in the data collection process. These include desk review, expert consultation, case site selection, site observation, focus group discussions, key informant interview, meeting with CFUG office bearers, and the analysis of the information collected through various means. The brief descriptions of the methods used are described as follow.

Desk review

With an objective to review the existing knowledge on the forestry sector conflict in Nepal, a desk review was carried. During this phase, wide range of documents such as journal articles, books, research reports, project reports, etc. were reviewed. This has provided the information that are already available and the gap on knowledge about forestry conflict so as to know the background situation of forestry conflict in the country. It has also been useful to delineate the scope of the study including preparing conceptual framework and data collection protocols to some extent.

Preparation of checklist and data collection tools

Based on the insights from literatures, the TOR provided by RECOFTC Bangkok, and the *a priori* knowledge of the researchers, the detail checklists for the collection of data and information from the expert consultation and the field were prepared. These checklists were

discussed in the researcher’s team for checking relevancy, accuracy and sufficiency. Moreover, the checklists were locally adapted to collect the data from different respondents from different groups of people such as women, poor, *dalits*¹, and executive committee (EC) members.

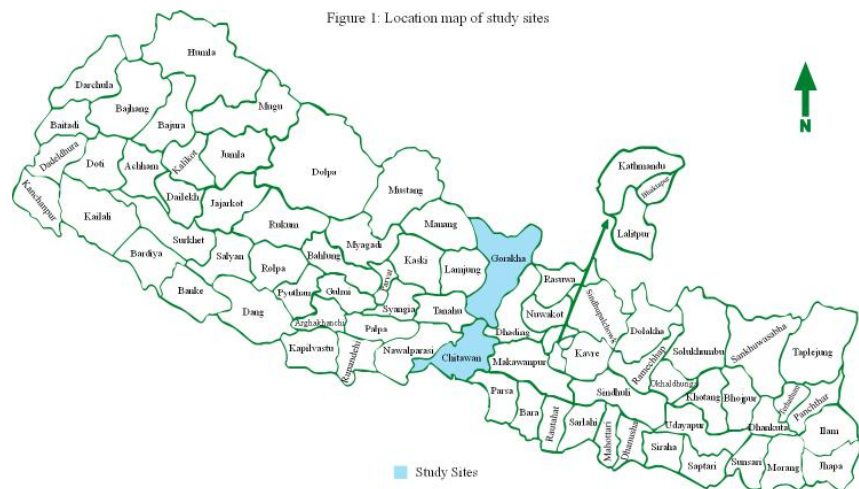
Expert consultation

To know the different perspectives and views regarding historical trend and current status and pattern of conflict in natural resources management particularly in forestry sector, two half-day expert consultation meetings were organized. The first meeting brought the experts’ who are working in the forestry field from the long past at the national, district and grass-roots levels in different capacities on behalf of different organizations including GOs, NGOs, federations, researchers institutions, donor-funded forestry projects, environmental journalists, etc. This meeting was organized to understand the broader context of conflict in the forestry sector. Similarly, the second expert consultation meeting brought the people who are directly and/or indirectly working in the REDD+ project in GOs, NGOs and federations in Nepal. The meeting was basically focused on exploring the possibility of conflict in the context of REDD+ implementation – both impact of REDD+ in existing forestry conflict and impact of existing forestry conflict on the newly emerged REDD+ implementation at the local level. A total of 15 experts from range of institutions and social categories (indigenous peoples, dalits, women, etc.) participated and contributed in the meetings (Annex 2). The consultations have provided a sense of confidence regarding the relevancy of the study and also recommended the sites for the field study.

Site selection

With an aim to observe the community dynamics relating to the conflict especially around the forest resource management in light of REDD+ implementation, two sites were selected (Figure 1 for location map). These two sites are the Birenchowk and Dharapani community forest user groups (CFUGs) of Ludhikhola watershed of Gorkha and Kayarkhola watershed of Chitwan districts where ICIMOD has been implementing REDD+ pilot project since 2009 in collaboration with FECOFUN and ANSAB. In these sites, the project has been implementing variety of activities that are needed to implement the REDD+ project such as awareness raising, capacity building of communities, forest carbon measurement and recording, benefits flowing to the communities, etc. and therefore there are high degree of community dynamism around REDD+ that may increase and/or reduce the conflict around forest. It is expected that the sites provide very good opportunity to observe the empirical evidences on the implication of REDD+ on forestry conflict and *vice versa*.

Figure 1: Location map of study sites



¹ Socially oppressed communities, considered as so called lower castes and often ‘untouchables’

Data collection from the field

During the data and information collection, the participation of women, poor, *dalits* and indigenous peoples particularly those who are involved in the community forestry are considered as the essential parts. Their concerns, voices, experiences and perspectives are considered as the most important source of evidence generation and study validation. With an aim to ensure the validity of the empirical data and information, the data collection also followed the principle of triangulation by adopting a range of techniques such as verifying data from multiple sources and channels. Investigators collected different sets of data and information during field visit by engaging themselves in the range of activities such as informal meeting with EC members (2), transect walk in the village and forest (2), focus group discussions (10) (Annex 3), key informant interviews (10) (Annex 4), observation of CFUG activities and review of project documents. A total of 89 persons were consulted during the field study.

A brief overview of each methods adopted in the field is mentioned as follows.

- **Meetings with EC members** were organized to understand the overall functioning of the CFUG, to get permission to conduct field research and to plan for different activities in the village.
- **Transect walks and observations of CFUG activities** were carried out in the village so as to observe the outdoor activities of the community people while identifying the general social settings of the villages. Observations of CFUG activities were also made to know the in-depth contextual and qualitative information that are generally not orally expressed in the group by the community members. Site observation and transect walk helped a lot to be familiar with the local context particularly forest condition, dependency of different sections of communities on particular forest products, settlement pattern, proximity from the forest, linkage with road, etc. In Gorkha district, the research team walked about 10 km. around the study sites spending nearly 4 hours for this purpose.
- **Focus group discussions** were intended to identify the perceptions and concerns of different interest groups. A total of 10 FGDs (2 with women, 2 with *Dalits*, 3 with indigenous peoples and ethnic groups, 3 with CFUG office bearers) five in each study sites were organized on the basis of the diversity of the population and their concerns exist in the CFUGs. Such discussions helped to document emerging or historical conflicts at the local level as well as the diversity of the concerns by different social groups of people.
- **Key informant interviews** were carried out to obtain the information and data on individual experiences and perceptions on areas specific to their fields of engagement. These were targeted to receive the precise, rare and targeted information that seldom received from group interview and focus group discussion so as to supplement the information collected through other means. This is also used to triangulate and validate the information collected from FGDs. This is basically conducted with the local school teachers, former CFUG leaders, local facilitators working in REDD+ project as suggested by CFUG office bearers and also identified during the interactions with local people.
- **CFUG and project document review** was done to access some information that are recorded by the CFUGs such as group's constitution, forest work plan, meeting minutes, progress reports, etc.

Discussion, analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data

Most of the data and information are compiled and analyzed qualitatively. The investigators made critical reflections on their observations and the collected information on the basis of the prepared checklists and also their relevancy and adequateness to understand the conflict in and around community forestry. Then the information were analyzed, synthesized and organized in a logical fashion. Accordingly different paragraphs are constructed in such a way that the study findings are augmented and emerging trends and patterns are bolstered.

Case Studies from REDD+ Implemented Watersheds

In Nepal, the relevance of REDD+ is put into discourse among the relevant stakeholders. Particularly how the potential benefits from REDD+ is derived and distributed among the communities and ensure the contributions to the local livelihoods have been discussed. The empirical evidences and the insights are generally drawn from the pilot project entitled “Design and Setting up of a Governance and Payment System for Nepal’s Community Forest Management under REDD” which is jointly implemented by International Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio-resources (ANSAB) and Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) with the financial support of NORAD. The project aims to study and demonstrate the feasibility of REDD+ payment mechanism in Community Forestry (CF) through the involvement of local communities that will ultimately improve the socio-economic conditions of the users living in the three watersheds (Charanawati, Ludhikhola and Kayarkhola) regions of three districts (Dolakha, Gorkha, and Chitwan). The project was started in mid 2009, and will be accomplished in 2013. The project involved a total of 104 CFUGs comprising 15,000 households in the districts. In each watershed, a REDD+ network was formed which is working as a focal point for REDD+ activities in the region. The network is functioning as secretariat to keep the records of carbon stock of community forests, monitor the community activities against the criteria developed to implement the REDD+ and disburse funds to each CFUG based on the agreed criteria including performance on REDD+. Among these three watersheds, two watersheds viz. Ludhikhola and Kayarkhola of Gorkha and Chitwan districts respectively were selected for generating empirical evidence to accomplish this study. The brief description of the selected watersheds is given in the sub-sections below.

Case 1: Ludhikhola watershed

General descriptions

Ludikhola watershed lies in the Gorkha district of the Western Development Region of Nepal. It represents the hill physiographic region, altitude ranging from 318 m to 1714 m. This watershed covers an area of 5750 hectare (ha). There are a total of 31 CFUGs managing 1888 ha of forest area (out of 10, 913 ha of total area). This watershed is characterized by social diversity with presence of ethnic groups, indigenous peoples, Brahmin, Chhetri and Dalits. A total of 400 households (HHs) comprise 23,190 populations in the watershed. The average size of the HHs is 5-7 (Baseline report 2010). The watershed consists of mid-hill sub-tropical forest composition constituting both broadleaves (*Shorea robusta*, *Castanopsis indica*, *Schima wallichii*, etc.) and conifers (*Pinus roxburghii*, etc.).

History of conflict

Focus group discussions revealed that the watershed was highly deforested due to unmanaged timber harvesting. Illegal trade of timber outside the watershed and the district was one of the major problems during the latter half of 1990s. During the time, most of the forests were under government management because the handing over of forests to communities was in the process. Therefore, the local communities did not assume the management responsibility while the government bureaucracy was also preparing for the handing over of the forest. The timber traders took the advantage of the situation and harvested the large quantity of timber for sale to urban areas. Many people in the FGD have said that the timber trade was one of the most lucrative businesses during the time. Since most of the timber traders were from outside the villages, they tried to exploit the forest without considering the forest condition and productivity. They tried to develop the nexus with the local elites and the local forest bureaucracy and therefore a kind of confrontation was created with communities. Local people reported that more than 90% timber was exported outside of Gorkha district by the timber traders. Local communities also used to collect timber in an *ad hoc* basis whenever they needed, and some community members who were capable used to collect more than their need. The timber traders along with some local elites and local forestry officials had control on timber harvest and trade, and local communities had ‘no say and no participation’ in any kind of benefits and decision making. This is due to not handing over of forest to the communities. Even the formally handed over forest were somehow harvested due to lack of awareness and ‘we feeling’ among the community members. Gradually the awareness and ‘we feeling’ of local communities increased and therefore the CFUGs started to assume the accountability for forest management. This has led to a confrontation with the timber traders and local elites to stop the *ad hoc* harvesting of timber.

Similarly, prior to forest handover to the communities, intensive grazing was other major problem as government managed forests were *de facto* open access which contributed to forest degradation. Because of the deforestation and over exploitation of forest products, the people used to spend most of their time to travel to the distant-forest for collecting forest products. Forest dependent people particularly the women used to travel long distance crossing the border of their communities in order to collect the forest products e.g. grass, firewood, and pole. The users who used to claim traditional use right in the particular patch of forest did not allow outsiders to harvest forest products from their claimed forest. Therefore, forest users particularly women who were (and are) forest product collectors suffered the most. This has led to emerge cross-border conflict (inter communities encroachment of forests) which had worsened the social harmony of the communities. However, the situation has improved after the forest is handed over to the communities and awareness level of the local people has risen. A women participating in FGD of the Birechok CFUG said “we do not need to travel to the distance forest now because our own CF is good enough to supply the forest products that we need”. Participants during discussions said that community forestry promoted ‘a sense of we feeling’ and ‘sense of ownership over forest’ among the local communities. Such change is partly due to the conscious efforts of some NGOs and GOs including trainings, exposure visits, interactions, workshops, networking, etc.

Local people were with the opinion that the conflict around forestry was found to be emerged due to not only the competition for forest products but also the historical hierarchical social

systems and cultural practices of community people. In the study site, majority of people are belonging to indigenous communities and ethnic groups (for instance Rana Magar) who generally prepare and consume local alcohol as part of their traditional practices. The easy access to alcohol might create some problem sometimes particularly when the drunken person voice against the people s/he do not like. This was evident while the research team was conducting the FGD. A drunk person came and started talking rough words with us saying who are you?, why are you here?, how much dollar you consumed for this work?, etc. He also became furious towards the women participating the FGD and said “these women do not get any work and go to discuss with anyone”. The women in the FGD tried to take him away, but their several attempts failed, and finally they called *Katwal* (a person who works as negotiator for the community people and who also act as village watchman) who took him away. The women then said “this *Raksi* - alcohol often create problem in our community. This is now become a tool to express dissatisfaction in our community”. Such alcoholic culture often disturbs social harmony, and relationship among the community members, they added. Though the culture of alcohol production and consumption is still prevalent, however the situation has changed over time along with rising awareness, education, and assimilation with other caste people.

Current state of conflict

The community reported that there is no any serious intra- and inter-community conflict in comparison to historical conflicts. Serious conflict means, the case that need external interventions (such as police, court or any other legal/para-legal body) to mitigate. Though there are several policy related issues at the national level community forestry processes and grievances of the people on the CFUGs’ practices at the local level, CFUGs have not observed any serious conflict so far. At present, the communities have shown some agreement in CF management, REDD+ network and benefit distribution. Though all the members of the REDD+ network are aware about the REDD+; some of them even know how to measure carbon and deal with the leakages, it has also been revealed that the level of knowledge about REDD+ is poor among the ordinary members of the CFUGs. The ordinary members who are not aware about the REDD+ project implemented in their CF, are found collecting forest products particularly the fuelwood and pole ignoring the CFUG rules and permission from the CFUG office bearers as usual. The field research team in the Birechok CFUG saw two women who were carrying green fallen branch along with some bunch of dried branch were interrogated by the CFUG office bearers. Some of the questions they asked are “why you have collected these green branches of tree?, do not you know this CF is now under REDD+ project?, who gave you permission for collecting these products?”, etc. The women replied, “we need these products, that’s why we have collected, we don’t know what is REDD+, but we know we need fuelwood for cooking and grass for our livestock”. The CFUG office bearers then warned them, “*since this is first time we have seen you carrying* (implied meaning stealing or carrying without permission) *forest products, we are not taking any action against this work. However, if we see this next time, you will be punished.*”

Most of the CFUGs members who know about the REDD+ project in the area found to be optimistic and enthusiastic for becoming the member of REDD+ network for possible benefits result from REDD+ project. REDD+ network is the apex body formed by including at least two (one man and one woman) member from each participating CFUG in REDD+ project. It is noticed that the interest of becoming a leader of REDD+ network has been increasing. The

present REDD+ network members also feel that the growing political interest particularly by political activist to influence local level institutions for widening the scope of the political parties at the grassroots level is also reflecting in formation of REDD+ network. Though it is not very high so far, by observing the conflict of district FECOFUN regarding the election of executive committee which was primarily guided by political ideologies, it could be concluded that this trend affects REDD+ network in the near future.

The district FECOFUN chapter is not able to function properly because of the influences of the conflicting political activists. Increasing political influence within the REDD+ network also can easily be transformed into a leadership conflict. Elites might start political lobbying to win the election of CFUG EC and/or the REDD+ network which enable them to influence in decision making. Local communities are with the opinion that such conflict can be further increased while distributing REDD+ benefits to the CFUGs because diverse interests can emerge while allocating REDD+ REDD+ benefits. REDD+ benefit sharing might be disrupted when party politics dominates the network functioning. Mr. Bhuraman Ghimire, a school teacher and secretary of REDD+ network talked about such conflicts and added that politically informed conflict seen at district FECOFUN could also be transferred to REDD+ network. Some people such as vice president of Birechok CFUG emphasized to minimize the potential conflicts by preparing some agreed institutional mechanisms and procedures such as making clear norms for benefits sharing, leadership selection, fund allocation etc.

From the FGDs, and other means of research conducted at the site level, we have figured out the following current state of conflict in Ludhikhola watershed.

- **Grazing and livestock rearing:** Those who rear livestock e.g. goat, cow, buffalo etc. often go to forest for grazing. Currently, CFUGs have not altered the existing use pattern of the forest. However, REDD+ network members are found to be worried about the loss of ground cover due to grazing and activities of herder (often herder harvest green leaf, collect green poles, and some time they also make a shade house to protect themselves from rain) which result in a loss of carbon stock from the forest.
- **Boundary conflict:** Conflict regarding forest boundary normally occurs when the users from a CFUG crossed their CF boundary and entered into the neighboring CF to collect forest products. This type of conflict was intense in the past particularly at the time of hand over of state owned forest to the local communities as CF. However, the intensity of this type of conflict has been decreasing with increased awareness on the principles, processes and practices of CF particularly the rights, roles, and provisions of forest operational plan (OP). Initially at the time of forest hand over, users did not know the boundary of their CF because they were not provided with an opportunity to be involved in the forest demarcation process while the local forestry officials did it. However, gradually it has been known to all users through different types of trainings and interactions as time passes which contributed in decreasing cross-boundary activities and therefore conflict.
- **Insufficient supply of forest products:** According to the Baseline Report, 2010 of the ICIMOD REDD+ project and the women and *Dalit* FGDs conducted for this study, it has been revealed that the demand of forest products is higher than that of supply due to different reasons such as poor quality and smaller size of forest, ever increasing

population, and lack of access to alternative energy source. Most of the people do not have access on alternative sources of energy like LPG gas, solar, Bio gas. “Though REDD+ project has provision to extend the alternative energy, so far only 25 HHs obtain bio-gas and 150 obtain improved cooking stoves from the REDD+ project which is not adequate to meet the demand of the people”, said Mr. Bhuraman Ghimire of REDD+ network. Limited supply of timber and limited harvesting opportunities due to existing OP result insufficient supply of forest products to fulfill the demand of the users which often results into conflict in distribution of products. Only the few capable users (often elites, rich, relatives and allies of CFUG office bearers, etc.) get these products and the poor, women-headed HHs, marginalized etc. cannot get the sufficient forest products.

- **Inadequate communication amongst CFUG members:** It has been realized by the CFUG members that the communication mechanism among members is rather informal and ineffective. There is hardly written and/or adequately clearer verbal communication taking place. Even the communication is mostly one-way i.e, CFUG office bearers to CFUG members and there is absent of grievances collection mechanism. Therefore, some of the members particularly poor, marginalized and those who live in farther from the center of the village do not get proper information in time regarding different activities and decisions of CFUGs. This result high level of absentee in the meetings particularly in the general assemblies. This may cause not hearing the voices of the absentees which result into non- or mis-understanding of the decisions made. Hence, such users may violate the CFUG norms and regulations. For example, some ordinary users in Birechok CFUG of Gorkha district were not aware about REDD+ project implementation, and new norms developed in relation to REDD+. While the CFUG executive committee (EC) members saw two women carrying green leaf, and green branch of pole from the forest, they become furious and questioned them about their negligence in implementation of the decisions. It is surprising that the former chairperson of Birechok CFUG said, “*I am not aware what our current EC committee is doing. I am not invited to any major decision making.*” Generally, the former chairperson is given the responsibility of advisor in the CFUGs.

Timber extraction and distribution among the CFUG members is a serious problem in most of the community forest in the watershed. Recently, MOFSC has issued a circular to ban the timber extraction from the community forests. “It is a major hurdle to the EC”, said the secretary of Birechok CFUG. CFUGs have faced difficulty when they have to convince the ordinary members who were not aware about the government imposed ban on timber. ‘*I applied for the timber to build my cement and concrete house but the committee refused to provide me with Nal (a beam of timber) and reasoned that the committee would only provide timber who build ordinary (mud and stone) house*’, said Singha Bahadur Rana, a user of Birechok CFUG. After EC’s refusal to provide timber for beam, he requested timber for door and window but could not get it as the government had imposed ban on timber extraction. Conflicts also arise when the demand of the timber exceeds the allowable annual cut stipulated in the operational plan and CFUGs cannot supply timber to satisfy the ever growing demand.

Case 2: Kayarkhola Watershed

General descriptions

Kayarkhola watershed of Chitwan district covers 8,002 ha area and is located at 245 to 1944 m altitude from the sea level. A total of 3,905 HHs are living in this watershed and has population of 22,090. The unique feature of this watershed is that forest dependent ethnic communities like *Chepang* and *Tamang* have been living. Most part of the watershed is dominated by Sal (*Shorea robusta*) trees along with other associated timber species such as *Lagerestroemia Parviflora*, *Mallatos Phillipinensis*, *Terminelia Tomentosa*. Sal forest is one of the most valuable timber in Nepal used in variety of proposes. Sal timber is expensive (around USD 80 per cubic feet in local market) and therefore smuggled to even Indian market.

History of conflict

Study revealed that the conflicts in the watershed region have been occurring mainly due to mismatch between traditional use practices (shifting cultivation, forest product harvesting on the basis of actual need, etc.) of local communities particularly indigenous communities (e.g. *Chepang*) and state-induced community forestry practices (forest area cannot be used for any other purpose i.e. ban on shifting cultivation, regulation in harvesting, etc.). Conflict is also induced and aggravated due to the forest governance modalities introduced by the government. For instance, the government introduced the modality called ‘Leasehold Forest (LHF)’ through Forest Act 1993 that encompass only selected poor to be the member of user group. Sometimes, the users and non-users of LHF group have been facing conflict over the access and use of forest products. According to the Mr. Uttam Praja (*Chepang*), a facilitator of REDD+ project in the watershed, “shifting cultivation which is popularly known as *Khoria Phadani* in Nepal has been a major problem for the conservation and management of forest resources in Kayarkhola watershed”. Since *Chepang* have traditionally been practicing shifting cultivation as part of their livelihood strategy, it is very hard for them to stop the practice. However, other local communities have been complaining that they do not comply with the state-induced rules of forest management either in government managed forests or in leasehold forests or in community forests. *Chepang* activists claimed that their traditional rights over the forest were neglected and means of their livelihoods ignored. Uttam Praja, a *Chepang* leader of Dharapani CFUG said that unless the government provides any alternatives for their livelihoods, the shifting cultivation will not be stopped. Normally, shifting cultivation is being practiced in all types of forests including government-managed, community and leasehold. Conflicts aggravate particularly when the *Chepang* attempt to practice shifting cultivation in community and leasehold forests.

Current state of conflict

Issues like benefit sharing, shifting cultivation, crossing CF boundary, caste-culture and elitism are also observed as the underlying causes of conflict in the watershed. Different studies (Uprety, 2005, Uprety, 2007) revealed that many disputes occur not only because of lack of awareness and low level of education but also culture associated with caste, ethnicity and individual, and individual behavior. According to the CBS 2001 data, the literacy rate is lower in the rural region, than in urban in Nepal. Of them, the *Dalit*, and ethnic people are among the lowest to have literacy. Though it is hard to generalize absolutely, the anecdotal reflection shows a pattern that the Brahmin and Chhetri people seem to more diplomatic while *Dalits* and ethnic people are more straight in communicating and dealing with issues. This has implication in differing understanding on the issue of forestry at the local level.

Some of the major issues collected during the field studies are mentioned below:

- **Areas of CF ‘before and after REDD+ pilot project’:** REDD+ pilot project staffs that were trained with GIS applications used GPS for measuring the area of the community forests in order to find the exact area. The data was not congruent with the area previously measured with different survey instrument (compass survey) and recorded in the OP. According to the data set obtained from one of the REDD+ partner organization, ANSAB, the GPS application methods resulted a significant changes (increased or decreased) of forest area. For instance the area of Ram Laxman CF was 65.25 ha before REDD+ project, and the same mentioned in the OP, which became only 13.25 ha (almost 5 times reduced) after GPS method was applied in surveying. On the contrary, Bahunechor CF the area was 113 ha before REDD+ project was introduced, and which became 174 ha (increased 61 ha) after GPS method was used for survey. These types of differences have been the source of conflict because the area is directly proportional to the proposed REDD+ benefits.
- **Leadership and polarization:** It has been revealed from the FGDs and expert group consultations that vested interest of politicization at local level cause the weakening of traditional social harmony to some extent. Communities, CFUGs, hamlets or even individual family members became a part of the factions of different political parties. Such political differentiation had enormous impacts in CFUG functioning. The local party politics determine election or selection of the EC members in the CFUG. Political parties want to maintain their influence in community affairs as their positions or organization at local level would affect national elections. Such political division created strong leadership conflict which has been realized in many CFUGs including their federations and networks. CFUGs in Kayarkhole watershed are not exception and therefore community activities including REDD+ activities are being watched politically by local political actors. A CFUG leader in Kayarkhola CFUG said, *“we used to select CFUG EC in consensus, but this year we had election- truly resembling the election of constitution assembly. This caused communities divided into different political factions which degraded the long held social harmony.”* In group discussion of Janapragati CFUG, one of the members made a comment about why everybody wanted to be a CFUG leader. According to him, resource rich CFUGs become attractive to the leaders and therefore CFUGs elections are worth competing. He further added, *‘for the first time in my life, I saw CFUG leaders knocked every household asking vote for them.’*
- **Elitism and “I know behavior” often result conflict:** During the FGDs, we observed few CFUG leaders controlling the marginal groups. We requested president of Janapragati CFUG to arrange a *Dalits* FGD. He promised to arrange the discussion in the next day. At the moment, he saw one *Dalit* member and talked to him in a way that others should obey what he wanted. Though he talked about the CFUG provisions that allowed the *Dalits* get forest products free of cost, it seemed that it was the committee’s kindness, not the right of those people.
- **Fire in government-managed forests, and community response:** Low land forest in Terai region is under government management. Communities living adjacent to such forests lack management responsibility. So, they won’t activate themselves even in widespread forest fire. When asked about fire control in government forest, a CFUG

member responded that government should control fire in such forests. Such experiences tell us that carbon ‘leakage’ will accelerate where communities have no rights over the forest. Management of forest will be improved if they are handed over to the local communities.

- **Lack of knowledge about REDD and REDD+:** REDD+ is an emerging concept and therefore it is not surprising if communities are not aware about it. The interactions in the CFUGs showed that communities did not have adequate knowledge about the REDD+ process. People engaged in agriculture and other businesses have their own needs and priorities. So, they need sufficient orientation to realize this concept. Among the 16-17 participants, only two had little knowledge about REDD and climate change.
- **Provisioning of forest product harvesting after REDD+ and its implication on poor:** After implementing the REDD+ project in the Kayarkhola watershed, Janapragati CFUG has amended some provisions related to forest product harvesting. According to the new provisions, only two members of a HH are allowed to collect the products at the time of forest opening. Prior to this rule, there was no restriction- all family members had access to forest resources. The rule won't trouble those HH who are not much dependent on forest. However, for forest dependent people who have no alternatives to firewood as energy source are not happy with this changed rule. Such rules would be more stringent when the poor or marginalized have no access in decision making. For example, in Jamuna CFUG more than 60 percent users are *Chepang* (ethnic community) but only one member is included in the EC.

Analysis of Cases and Discussions

This section of the report provides the results in relation to management and conservation strategies of forests, access to and use of forest products, and potential conflicts that would emerge in the course of REDD+ implementation. In addition to this, the study also brings some insights on how CFUGs and their federation have been managing conflicts in the past and how they can cope with emerging conflicts in the future.

The main undercurrent of conflict observed through this study are: social exclusion of users in a CFUG and in EC, inequity in benefit sharing, improper and inadequate participation of marginalized, poor, *Dalits* and women on various CF activities, lack of communication among the stakeholders, improper allocation of CFUG fund and its use, lack of transparency, leadership's monopoly, less acceptable personal behaviors and attitude of CFUG leaders, forceful collection of levy, poor implementation of decisions, and caste-based discrimination and traditional exploitative cultural stigma. These conflicts are observed mainly at two levels: the CFUG's level and the policy level.

Complexities of forestry conflicts

Conflict in CF takes place at a variety of levels including from within the households to within the group; between two or more groups; and at the policy level, for example, between policy maker and policy implementer, between state authority and civil society organizations like

FECOFUN, etc. By analyzing the Nepal's context, the main actors attached to some extent in conflict are: government forestry offices (the MOFSC, Department of Forests, Regional Forest Offices, DFOs, etc.), local government authorities (DDCs, Municipalities, VDCs, Village Ward Committees, etc.), forest users' federations and networks (FECOFUN, etc.), and CFUGs. The dynamics of the actors involved in conflicts varied according to their position and the distances of their relationships. For example, DFO has closer relationships with CFUGs, as it is a state authority in the district for forest management. Conflict occurs between state and CFUG leaders including leaders of CFUGs federation, while state brings new policy, and guidelines, curtailing the power of local communities. Very recently, the government has proposed for amendments of the Forest Act 1993 in late 2010, and remained into the bureaucratic process for since six months, for which the user groups along with FECOFUN have been contending. They claim that the amendment severely constrains the users' rights. The central FECOFUN and many other civil society organizations have strongly opposed the act of government. Police intervene in many protest programs organized by FECOFUN center and district chapters and arrested many of its members. These programs were organized to pressurize the government to withdraw the Forest Act amendment. As a result, the government has withdrawn the amendment process (FECOFUN press release of June/July 2011).

The dynamics of the actors involved in conflicts are varied according to their position and the distances of their relationships. The distances mentioned here refer to the relationship and the influences of the actors to the CFUGs and to the community forests. For example, DFO has closer relationships with CFUGs, because DFO is the concerned government body for CFUGs and forest management. The level and intensity of conflicts vary on the basis of the CFUGs' ecological zones. In the Hill region, users have been found to compete for grass and fire-wood while the users in the plain regions compete for valuable timber and fire-wood.

Table 1: Conflict analysis in relation to actors and issues

Issues of conflict	Actors involved in conflicts	Interests of the actors
Forest boundary	CFUG members, traditional users, non-CFUG members, two neighboring CFUG members	Community people need forest products, When needs are not fulfilled they cross the boundary of their own CF, and enter into the other.
Benefit sharing and forest products harvesting	Committee members and non-committee members, non-members, proximate users, <i>Dalit</i> , ethnic people	Need timber to construct house, Need fire-wood to meet their daily needs Need grass for livestock Need cash income who do not use forest products like fire-wood, grass and timber Transparency in benefit distribution Need based distribution Equitable distribution Timely communication

Elitism and leadership	Local elite e.g. school teachers, timber broker, political activists (local leaders of different political ideology), CFUGs' existing and former leaders, elected former leaders of VDC and ward	Local elite want to be influential leader in any institutions e.g. CFUG, REDD+ network Local elites in many cases do not need forest product for daily needs, but they wanted to be in position to show their power at the local level, Political activists wanted their leadership elsewhere in the local institutions to keep their influence for winning election of CFUG and often other local institutions
Shifting cultivation and forest conservation	Ethnic people, in this case <i>Chepang</i> , landless people, CFUG members	People need a part of forest where they can grow crops to meet their family needs. CFUG members want sustainable forest management according to the provision made in OP, and CFUG constitution, which are revised in every four to five years
Forest management regime,	Government forest officials, FECOFUN members, CFUG members	FECOFUN members want more forest under community management Local people living proximate to forest encroached the forest land for different needs Government do not want to hand over healthy and Sal forest to the community Community want productive forest for economic benefits
Elitism, caste and culture	Local elite e.g. school teachers, timber broker, or their agents, Local leaders of political parties, political activists, upper caste people, lower caste people, CFUG leaders	Elite want influential position in CFUG committee. Lower caste people through their network, oppose the interest of upper caste Political activists want their influence at the local level (local institutions) Ethnic people want quota system for them External organization want to show the progress of their project by involving different compositions of people in the project activities without considering or assessing his/her previous track records of opportunities obtained
Dual users	Dual users Single CF users CF committee members	Dual users want more resources, extra benefits, and political influence Single users voices against dual users while distributing equal benefits between dual and single users

There are different issues of conflict in different place. Nature and intensity of conflict depends on the availability of resources, types of resources, pattern of benefits distribution, context of social system, location of forest resources, demarcation of forest boundary, forest management regime, traditional use right, shifting cultivation and change of national policy in relation to forest.

Less appreciation of traditional use pattern in the state-induced management regime

This type of conflict surfaces when traditional users in a certain community are deprived from using forest products after hand over of a patch of forest to a local community as CF (Upreti, 2007). While handing over a forest to a community, forest survey conducted by DFO delineates the CF boundary and social survey identifies the number of forest users. Though these surveys are conducted in close collaboration of the local communities, there are different grey areas for confusions. For example, the people from a community might go to different forests for different types of forest products such as fuelwood, fodder, grasses, timbers, NTFPs, Sal leaves, red soil, etc. The products like NTFPs, Sal leaves, red soil etc. are collected occasionally and therefore

people from farther communities though are not recognized as the formal and legitimate users of the CF generally come in certain season as part of their traditional practice. On the other hand, the formal and legally legitimate users of a CFUG are listed in the CFUG's constitution in which only the proximate users are generally listed as formal users. In such context, conflict normally occurs when a user of a CFUG goes to collect forest product to another CF either regularly or occasionally in which they have not been the formal and legally legitimate users. The users of a CF do not allow the non-users to enter their CF and if they find non-users within the forest boundary with tools collecting forest products, they seize the tools and send the culprits to the respective EC for necessary actions. *'If we found outsiders in our CF, we seize their tools and then ask them to come to our office to take back their tools'*, said one of the women participants in the FGD of Birenchok CFUG of Gorkha. The conflict gets worsen if the culprit attempt to defend or do not comply with rules. This type of conflict is experienced in the CFUGs of both the watersheds. Some of the sources of such conflicts are unclear boundary of forest with other forests types or private land, political boundary of two or more villages or districts in and near the forest, etc.

Unjust benefit sharing practices

Benefit sharing means the distribution of the outputs from CF to the legitimate users. Benefits are both in cash and/or in kind and direct and/or indirect. Direct benefits are normally in cash and/or kind (forest products), and indirect benefits means the training and exposure opportunities. Disputes arise when users realize that the system of benefit sharing is not fair and justifiable. This happens when the forest products are not sufficient to meet the needs of every household as per their demand and the influential users get more benefits than the poor and disadvantaged people. Conflicts, due to benefit sharing have been recorded in all CFUGs in the study. Generally, the poor people who depend on agricultural and livestock farming need more forest products, than others whose livelihoods are secured by other means such as jobs and businesses. For example, the *Tharu* ethnic people who live in a joint family, with an average family size of 20 people need more forest products particularly fire wood for cooking and grass for their livestock. The situation would be pressing when they have no alternative energy source of their own (Uprety 2007). Likewise, *Chepang* people who practice shifting cultivation. They assume that forest is the common land and they have rights to use in either way. Though the numbers of organizations are working to support *Chepang*, the study revealed that there is no change in attitude or perception of *Chepang*. These people often confront with the EC members when their demands are not fulfilled and their voices are neglected or when they are caught using forest resources beyond the OP of CFUG. *"we never get chance to attend any training and exposure visit, I don't know how members are selected to go to attend training and study tour"*, said women participating in FGD in Birenchok CFUG of Gorkha district.

Political interest in CFUG leadership

Because of the growing national and international attention on CF, many people who had neglected the group membership and group leadership in the past are joining in CFUGs as ordinary members whether or not they need the forest products for their daily needs. Though the CFUGs are becoming a forum for developing leadership at the local level, indeed, the conflict escalates when someone is nominated for EC member on the basis of political ideology. The conflict mainly occurs to be the chairperson and the secretary of the EC which are considered as coveted positions.

Slowly changing *De-facto* use practices into *De-jure* use and tenure rights

Shifting cultivation is an agricultural system in which plots of land are cultivated temporarily, and then abandoned. When crop yields decline, usually after 2 or 3 years, the patch is abandoned and fresh areas are cleared. This system often involves clearing of a piece of land followed by several years of wood harvesting or farming, until the soil loses its fertility. Once the land becomes inadequate for crop production, it is left to be reclaimed by natural vegetation, or sometimes converted to a different long-term cyclical farming practice. Shifting cultivation in Kayarkhola watershed was one of the major drivers of deforestation and degradation, and still the practices exist, but said to be gradually decreasing. *Chepang* communities who still live a nomadic life do such practice in the forest. The government also has given them the legal rights of the areas which were cultivated before some 40 years under the provisions made by Land Revenue Act of Nepal. In an expert consultation, one of the activists of Nepalese Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) Ms. Pasang Dolma Sherpa said “*to solve any problem in the forest and natural resources, there is a need to develop a better implementation strategy of the state-induced acts while changing the attitude of the people at all levels. When one respects the identity of others the problem is solved*”. She added that indigenous people have spiritual and emotional value intact with the forest, therefore it should be respected. Supporting this notion, Dil B. Khatri from ForestAction added that identity, attitude, and diversity should be acknowledged by the state and organizations. Shifting cultivation has many socio-economic as well as bio-physical implications. Burning of forest resources by putting fire causes CO₂ emission which contributes to global warming.

With an aim to revive the degraded forest and support the livelihoods of the poor people at the local level, the government has been handing over certain patch of degraded forest to the poorer group of people as LHF. Since shifting cultivation is considered as illegal and the introduction of LHF, the shifting cultivation practices is declining and many poor *chepang* communities are getting LHF. However, there exist both the tendencies to promote LHF and/or shifting cultivation at the community level so as to secure the land and/or forest tenure by the local communities. LHF provides an opportunity only for the identified poor while shifting cultivation though considered illegal may provide opportunity for all who engage in practice.

Growing elitism and negligence in addressing socio-cultural need of forest products

Nepalese society is composed of different caste and ethnicity; so far 59 different ethnic groups are recorded with their own cultural identity including language, custom, living, and other cultural practices). *Chepang, Tharu, and Rana Magar* are among the 59 ethnic groups of Nepal. Likewise, the Nepalese society is broadly divided into four major castes viz. *Brahamin, Chettri, Baisya, and Sudra*. While working with these diverse people, and observing the communities for this study, we have noticed that caste-based cultural practices also result conflict, disrupt social harmony, and polarize the society. In the study area, use of fuel wood for distillation of local liquor is common in the settlements of *Tamang, Magar and Gurung*. But there is no consideration of such requirements during the design of forest products distribution system. People belonging to these caste and ethnicity need more firewood than other, but OP provisions generally do not allow to the EC member to allocate extra firewood to those groups. Those who are highly dependent on firewood most often go into forest and collect firewood without taking permission from EC member or forest watcher. Conflict arises when they are caught in the forest with tools. While in most cases, the rich people who can afford modern means of cooking do not recognize the problem of poor people, and overlook their needs, and which after a long run may lead into conflict.

In addition to that, Nepal is a culturally rich country, but on the other hand Nepal has been facing some conservative cultural practices such as sense of untouchability among the people based on their caste. The caste related practices are still deep rooted in rural parts of the country. *So called* upper caste people particularly the *Brahimin and Chettri* have had hierarchical attitudes to the other castes and ethnicities. But, due to changing socio-economic conditions, political awareness and education opportunity for all, the *Dalits* and ethnic groups do not tolerate such attitudes and seek for changes in the relations based on such values and stigmas. This has created the pressure for change in the traditional and socio-cultural practices and therefore causes conflict between those who want rapid change and who slowly become sensitive on these.

Limited supply of forest products

The baseline study conducted by the project led by ICIMOD for implementing REDD+ in three watersheds indicated that the CFUG members in the regions have not been able to get firewood, and timber as per their need. This is why users of a CFUG go to government-managed forest or to another CFUG to meet their forestry needs. Users must follow CFUG's constitution and OP which normally regulate and limit user's access to the forest and allow forest product collection only when CFUG opens forest. To meet their basic needs, they seek alternative ways: most of them go to government-managed forest and harvest the products illegally. Another example in this regard is: in Nepal government banned extraction of timber from forest for the year 2011 citing a reason to celebrate timber holiday in the eve of International year of forest 2011. But the users who manage CF since last 20 years or more are not aware about the international year of forest and the government decision. They just needed timber and firewood for survival. They

demanded timber several times by filling an application to the CFUG EC. CFUG EC has no right to go beyond the circular of the government. Because of this reason, there was conflict between the users and EC members, and also between FECOFUN and government officials.

Complex situation of non and/or dual membership of users in the CFUG

Dual user means one household has become user in two or more CFUGs. By doing so, the household must bear the cost of management and can enjoy benefits from two or more CFs. There are multiple reasons behind the dual membership. If different community forests are nearer and the local people are using different forests for different or similar purposes since the long past, such local people can be the formal members of those community forests and the situation of dual membership create. As revealed by FGDs, there are some evidences of dual membership in the study sites. Local people particularly the facilitators and the leaders suspect that this situation may cause to emerge conflict while sharing the benefits of REDD+ in terms of financial resources. Also some of the key informants mentioned that there are some local people particularly the landless, poor and daily wage laborers left from being the member of CFUG and therefore they are not entitled to get benefits from the CF. So there is the situation in which some people get dual benefits and some cannot get even single benefits from the CF.

Conflict Management Practices used in Forestry Sector

Negotiation, mediation, and arbitration are common practices for managing the forest-based conflict in the CFUGs (Upreti 2007, Upreti 2002). Negotiation among the forest users by their own traditional practices help to manage conflict at the group level. Local people formulate informal conflict management practices by discussing the issues in public meetings. For any negotiation, they generally use a range of appropriate strategies and options (e.g. discuss the matter among the village elderly people, local level political leaders, etc.) as appropriate for the context to resolve the emerging conflict. The approaches used for conflict management depends on the nature and intensity of the conflict. For managing the policy level conflict, the right based approaches are used. FECOFUN central office specially consulted an environmental law specialist to look after such conflicts. For example, once the government of Nepal has introduced a 40 % tax on the selling of products outside of a CFUG. FECOFUN filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court, and won the case. The Supreme Court ordered the government not to impose 40% tax to the CFUG. Central FECOFUN was mainly involved in resolving such conflict.

Many conflicts that emerge due to personal behaviors and perceptions towards others at the community level are often managed by customary practices. Customary practices for conflict management are often used in the Hill region and in rural village. Those practices are the interest-based approaches, which look for mediation, negotiation and other collaborative methods to resolve conflict. In the interest-based approach, local elderly people often work as mediators to deal with conflict. Conflicts that are value and perception based are managed by

consensus among the CFUG members. For this, CFUG members sit together and discuss among the group members about the conflicting issues. Long negotiations among the group members including committee members and elderly persons of the communities; finalize the conflicting issues that emerge in the group.

Following two cases of conflict management at the community level gives some insights to us for enhancing the learning.

Case 1: Conflict management in Kayarkhola watershed

Communities in the Kayarkhola watershed were not interested on the provided alternatives of firewood and fuel-wood. To minimize the level of dependency on firewood, the REDD+ project decided to provide Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) to the communities who were highly dependent on firewood. And according to the project data available from the site office a total of Rs 700 (per piece) subsidy for 150 Improved Cooking Stove (ICS) and Rs 6250 (per plant) subsidy for 25 bio-gas plants was given to the selected community members. The community member whose family size was bigger argues that they could be able to cook their food in time only in traditional stove. They are with the opinion that ICS is useful to only small family as this takes a bit longer time for big family. Therefore, larger size families put demand for biogas while smaller sized families demand ICS. Later, REDD+ network committee decided to provide 42 bio-gas plants entirely from the allocated budget for those people and according to the local facilitator Mr. Uttam Praja, the conflict that arose due to ICS installment were later resolved by the new arrangement.

Case 2: Conflict management in Ludhikhola watershed

In Birenchok CFUG of Ludhikhola watershed, the community members elected a mediator which is called *Katuwal* in Nepali language and whose main job is to work as messenger/negotiator between community people and EC member and/or between two conflicting parties. These types of people were recruited during the Rana regime (before 1950), and it goes generation to generation. Like in other places, a *Katwal* is also there in Birenchok CFUG of Ludhikhola, who do not get any cash for his work, however his family get crops in each crop harvesting season from the villagers. According to the community people, the role of *Katuwal* is to work as negotiator at the time of conflict, village watch man (protect village from thief) and raise concerned about any illegal activities in the village including in the CF. “*I just watch/observe who is doing what, including illegal harvesting of forest products, and I most often work as a mediator to any conflict among the community people*”, said *Katuwal* of Birenchok CFUG.

Concluding Remark

Several issues of conflict can be observed particularly in the developing context of REDD.

Forest resource based conflict is one of the issues of great concern in the recent days. People everywhere compete for forest resources they need to survive as they are highly dependent on these resources. Forest is now not limited into the boundary of a country, rather it is now become a matter of international concern because of its role play as climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore conflict in forest resource management is not a matter of national, but also become a matter of international community. Timely response of the voices of forest dependent communities, is vital to minimize any future risk that could sadden the principle of REDD. There could be several issues which could be potential risk factor to the forest dependent communities such as elite capture on benefits, potential loss of access to forest land, and lack of a system to take voices of poor in decision making.

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Annex 1. Summary of Results from Experts' Workshop and FGD

Result from experts' workshop & Analysis

An expert level workshop was concluded in Kathmandu Nepal on 6 May, 2011 focusing on REDD, REDD+ and Conflict. The expert consultation mainly focuses on trends in conflict over land, forest and other natural resources with specific regards to actors, causes, scale, intensity, impacts and what possible conflict can emerge after being REDD implementation in Nepal. *The major causes of conflict identified during the workshop were:*

- a. *Conflict between community forests and free bounded labor:* most of the cases the free bounded labor encroached the part of community forest in mass, and the CFUG members who have been managing that forest since many years oppose or often confront with these people, which result conflict.
- b. *Forest land encroachment:* Such type of conflict normally emerged between an individual who encroach the part of forest land (either it belonging to the state and or to the community forest) with state and or CFUG. Many studies and our observation The intensity of such conflict is found very high in Nepal
- c. *Boundary conflict:* This types of conflict occurs between state and communities (those who are managing forest as community forests), between Individual and Community forest user groups, between park authority and buffer zone communities, between two community forest user groups, between community forest and private forest
- d. *Conflict among the communities' members who collect forest products from the state owned forest claiming that the patch of the government forest is belonging to an individual who have been harvesting products from that patch since many years. Their claim on the government forest is based on their traditional use right. While other members of that community or any free rider attempt the products from that de-facto ownership part. The example of such conflict can be seen in Sankhuwasabha district while collecting Alaichi (Cardamom).*
- e. *State community conflict:* This type of conflicts have been observed in multiple reasons: e.g. Conflict in proposed community forest while harvesting forest products like timber.
- f. *Community forest vs. traditional use right:* Such types of conflict normally occurs where CF were handed over in haste, and no external interventions have been done to educate people in relation to the importance of CF, CF governance, norms and values of using forest products harvesting (e.g. OP, constitution). In such forest, the traditional users do not aware about OP and Users's constitutions, and naturally do comply these rules. While few committee members' normally vital position holders control or limit their harvesting needs, the conflict surfaces in the community.
- g. *Political influence in the CFUG leadership and other development intervention upsetting the development intervention, disrupt the organizational strength.*
- h. *Shifting cultivation and claim of local people on common land or in forest as their de-facto right often create conflict while law enforcement applies or limit the access of dependent.*

(e.g. state owned forest while handing over to the local communities, some ethnic people or an individual who has been using/ conserving a part of forest land since many years claimed that that part of forest could not be a part of CF. Though individual do not have legal right on the patch of forest, and while handing over to the communities, the state do not care the opponent saying that he has not legal right and hence, the patch of forest that is claimed by individual also become a part of CF. The conflict arise while community member enter into that part claiming that the part of forest is belonging to the community forest and other party do not allow them to enter into the forest.

Like-wise shifting cultivation which is particularly a part of culture of the Chepang communities (one of the ethnic nomadic people) is in practice in many parts of the country. These people do not even know what community forest is, and what regulation abide them to do shifting cultivation. The live and livelihoods of these people are highly dependent on forest resources, and practices of shifting cultivation.

Annex 2: Name List of Experts

1st Half

S.No	Name	Organization	E-mail address
1	Dharam Uprety, Ph.D.	ForestAction	dharam.uprety@gmail.com
2	Niru Gurung	ForestAction	angee.frn@yahoo.com
3	Nirmal B.K	ForestAction	nirmalkumarbk@gmail.com
4	Bidya N. Jha	MSFC	bidyanathjha@yahoo.com
5	Naya S. Paudel, Ph.D.	ForestAction	naya@forestaction.org
6	Chup Bahadur Thapa	FECOFUN	chup.thapa@gmail.com
7	Bhola Khatiwada	COFSUN	bholacofsun@gmail.com
8	Raju Chhetri	DFO,Dolpa	raju.chhetri@yahoo.com
9	Prajwol Bastakoti	ERI	prajwolbkt@gmail.com
10	Toral Patel	RECOFTC	toral.patel@recoftc.org
11	Harisharan Luintel	RECOFTC	harisharan.luintel@recoftc.org
12	Krishna Murari	ForestAction (Journalist)	kmbhandary@hotmail.com
13	Anju Khand	ForestAction	ak@forestaction.wlink.com.np

2nd Half

S.No	Name	Organization	E-mail address
1	Eak Rana	ICIMOD	erana@icimod.org
2	Dil Bahadur Khatri	ForestAction	khatriidb@gmail.com
3	Keshav P. Khanal	REDD Cell	keshav_khanal@hotmail.com
4	Nabaraj Dahal	FECOFUN	dahalnabaraj@gmail.com
5	Prajwol Bastakoti	ERI	prajwolbkt@gmail.com
6	Toral Patel	RECOFTC	toral.patel@recoftc.org
7	Dharam Uprety	ForestAction	dharam.uprety@gmail.com
8	Niru Gurung	ForestAction	angee.frn@yahoo.com
9	Harisharan Luintel	RECOFTC	harisharan.luintel@recoftc.org
10	Pasang Dolma Sherpa	NEFIN	Pdsherpa2008@gmail.com
11	Lakpa Nuri Sherpa	NEFIN	nefin.ccmin@gmail.com
12	Dil Raj Khanal	FECOFUN	dlkhanal@yahoo.com
13	Anju Khand	ForestAction	ak@forestaction.wlink.com.np

Annex 3: Name List of People at FGD

Kayarkhola Watershed

1. Focus group (Chepang)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Sita Ram Chepang	Shaktikhor -5	Ethnic
2	Taitan Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
3	Santamaya Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
4	Sita Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
5	Mira Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
6	Juna Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
7	Shreemaya Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
8	Ram Maya Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
9	Ujeli Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
10	Sumitra Chepang	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic

2. Focus group (Women)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Kamala Puri	Shaktikhor -5	Chetri
2	Kalimaya Gurung	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
3	Sabina Puri	Shaktikhor-5	Chetri
4	Khil Kumari Shrestha	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
5	Mina Kumari Gurung	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
6	Dipa Shrestha	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
7	Goma Puri	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
8	Hom Kumari Silwal	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
9	Tula Giri	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
10	Tara Shrestha	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic

3. Focus group (Dalit women)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Chandra kumari B.K.	Shaktikhor -5	Dalit
2	Sumitra B.K.	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
3	Bal kumari B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
4	Dil kumari B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
5	Som Maya B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
6	Nara Maya B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
7	Saraswati B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit

4. Focus group (Blacksmith)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Krishna Bahadur B.K	Shaktikhor -5	Dalit
2	Harka Bahadur B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
3	Chandra Bahadur B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
4	Megha Bahadur B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
5	Mani Raj B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
6	Dipak B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit
7	Ram Saran B.K	Shaktikhor-5	Dalit

5. Focus group (Executive member of CFUG)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Lekha Bahadur Thapa	Shaktikhor -5	Chetri
2	Bishnu Rayamajhi	Shaktikhor-5	Brahamin
3	Netra Rijal	Shaktikhor-5	Brahamin
4	Pan Bahadur Khadka	Shaktikhor-5	Chettri
5	Ghan Bahadur Basnet	Shaktikhor-5	Chettri
6	Surya Badur Praja	Shaktikhor-5	Chepang
8	Suk Lal Praja	Shaktikhor-5	Chepang

FGD at Ludhikhola watershed

1. Focus group (Ethnic women)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Padam Kumari Thapa Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
2	Devi Thapa Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
3	Manita Thapa Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
4	Kamala Thapamagar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
5	Padam Maya Rana Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
6	Changu Maya Ranna Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
7	Januka Rana Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
8	Sarmila Thapa Magar	Gorkha 9	Ethnic

2. Focus group (Dalit)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Janu Gaire	Gorkha 9	Dalit
2	Lila Majkoti	Gorkha 9	Dalit
3	Sanu Maya Shreemal	Gorkha 9	Dalit
4	Tila Kumari Malbul	Gorkha 9	Dalit
5	Phulmati Malbul	Gorkha 9	Dalit
6	Bishnu Malbul	Gorkha 9	Dalit
7	Santa Bad. Nepali	Gorkha 9	Dalit
8	Gita B.K	Gorkha 9	Dalit
9	Junni Maya Gaire	Gorkha 9	Dalit
10	Ujyali Gaire	Gorkha 9	Dalit
11	Parbati Malbul	Gorkha 9	Dalit

3. Focus group (Executive member of CFUG)

S.N	Name	Address	Caste
1	Punya Prasad Ambai	Birenochok CFUG,	Chetri
2	Khadananda Regmi	Birenochok CFUG	Brahamin
3	Nokh Bad. Rana	Birenochok CFUG	Ethnic
4	Sarmila Thapa Magar	Birenochok CFUG	Ethnic
5	Purna Bad. Thapa	Birenochok CFUG	Ethnic
6	Kaman Sing Rana	Birenochok CFUG	Ethnic
8	Madan Bad. BK	Birenochok CFUG	Dalit
9	Annu Rana	Birenochok CFUG	Ethnic
10	Kalimaya Basyal	Birenochok CFUG	Chettri
11	Sanimaya Ramtel	Birenochok CFUG	Dalit
12	Nandana Lal	Birenochok CFUG	
13	Sita Regmi	Birenochok CFUG	Brahamin
14	Bhuraman Ghimire	Birenochok CFUG	Brahamin

Annex 4. Name list of Key Informants

Kayarkhola watershed

S.N	Name	Position	Address	Caste
1	Uttam Praja	Local Facilitator of CFUG	Shaktikhor	Chepang
2	Man Bahadur Khadka	Coordinator of REDD network	Shaktikhor-5	Chettri
3	Amrit Panta	Field Officer of REDD Project	Shaktikhor-5	Brahamin
4	Jagadhish Narayan	Ranger of Shaktikhor Rang post	Shaktikhor	Madhesi
5	Akal Gurung	CFUG member	Shaktikhor-5	Ethnic
6	Amber Thapa	CFUG member	Shaktikhor-5	Chettri
7	Bhakta Bahadur Silwal	CFUG member	Shaktikhor-5	Chettri

Ludhikhola watershed

S.N	Name	Position	Address	Cast
1	Singa Bad. Rana	Teacher and x secretary of CFUG	Gorkha 9	Ethnic
2	Yam Bad. B.K	Teacher and Fruits group secretary	Gorkha 9	Dalit
3	Krishna Prasad Chimire	community leader	Gorkha 9	Brahamin
4	Bhuraman Ghimire	Secretary of REDD network (Ludikhola watershed)	Gorkha 9	Brahamin
5	Gol Bad. Gurung	CF User	Gorkha 10	Ethnic
6	Sharmila Ranamagar	LRP of REDD	Gorha 9	Ethnic
7	Manohari Pariyar	Member of REDD network	Gorkha 10	Dalit