

## Editorial

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In this issue of the *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, we introduce research articles around community forestry that focus on landscape restoration, ecological resilience and livelihood improvement and shed light on how they may lead to sustainable resource management.

The article by Staddon starts off on a broader conceptual approach. Taking macropolitical considerations when discussing resilience, she challenges the dominant narratives with thoughtful commentary on the role of care ethics in moving the conversation away from narrow technocratic understanding towards more politically engaged approaches.

Similarly, Feiersinger *et al.* critically review the effectiveness of community forest operational plans in influencing forest cover dynamics in two community forest user groups (CFUGs) of Nepal. They found that the outcome of CFUGs depends more on how communities engage with management rather than what is written in the operational plan. This suggests that written plans alone are not sufficient, as actual implementation, local engagement and socioecological factors significantly influence outcomes.

Exploring institutional and governance dimensions and reflecting on the importance of local-level institutions in restoration, Dahal *et al.* discuss the significance of community-based forest management in forest landscape restoration. They analyse the overall situation of forest landscape restoration, taking the context of the Asia region as a reference case, with quantitative data. The findings indicate a strong relationship between successful restoration of degraded and deforested land areas and adoption of community-based forestry models.

Villages in Nepal's hills and mountains face significant challenges in water availability for drinking and irrigation. To address the challenges, the Government of Nepal has been implementing ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) projects to reduce climate vulnerability. Khanal *et al.* present how EbA strategies have enhanced water availability and maintained soil moisture in the hill districts of Nepal. Their findings on the participatory approach and gender sensitivity show the possibility of EbA for local resilience.

Rajbhandari *et al.* study the impact of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) on rural livelihoods, with a specific focus on a *Sishnoo* powder-producing enterprise, and investigate the roles NTFP-based micro-enterprises can play in a economically and socially advancing rural communities.

Invasive alien plant species (IAPS) pose significant threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly in ecologically sensitive regions like Nepal. Shrestha *et al.* investigate the distribution and ecological impacts of IAPS across altitudinal gradients in Jajarkot district. The article underlines the impacts of IAPS on indigenous biodiversity and advocates specific interventions and effective management.

NTFPs are a vital part of Nepal's economy, providing for people's needs without causing degradation. However, their availability is increasingly threatened by climate change and other human-induced pressures. Noting this issue, Adhikari *et al.* study the status of availability of NTFPs and local perceptions of climate-related changes in forest-dependent communities in a village in Dolakha district. Their findings indicate the need for stronger regulatory mechanisms, sustainable harvesting guidelines and community-led restoration efforts to safeguard NTFPs and strengthen resilience in rural Himalayan landscapes.

Some of the articles in this issue have been drawn from the presentations during the International Conference, Revitalising Community Forestry in the Era of Socio-environmental Crisis, held on March 4–5, 2024 in Kathmandu. This issue offers a broad and integrated perspective of the approaches, obstacles and opportunities for reaching ecological sustainability and improved livelihoods through community forestry in Nepal.