



Self-organization and Agency for Sustainable Forest Management

Case study in the hills of Nepal

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Abbreviations

- Actor Network Theory (ANT)
- Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio resources - ANSAB
- Community Forestry (CF)
- Community Forestry Division (CFD)
- Community Forest Management (CFM)
- Community Forestry Programme (CFP)
- Community Forest User Group (CFUG)
- Development Regions (DR)
- District Forest Office (DFO)
- District Forest Officers (DFOs)
- Department of Forests (DoF)
- Department of Forest Research and Survey (DFRS)
- Department of Plant Resources (DPR)
- Executive Committee (EC)
- Federation of Community Forestry Users (FECOFUN)
- Forest Officer (FO)
- Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS)
- Integrated Human Ecology Project (IHEP)
- Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP)
- Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)
- National Planning Commission (NPC)
- Nepal Foresters' Association (NFA)
- Nepal Safer Motherhood Project (NSMP)
- Non timber forest products (NTFPs)
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- Public Private Alliance Programme (PPA)
- Resource Manager (RM)
- Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)
- Transfer of Technology (ToT)
- UK's Department for International Development (DFID)
- Village Development Committee (VDC)

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1 Introduction

In recent decades, numerous researches have been conducted and many efforts are aimed at achieving sustainable forest management (SFM). Different options have appeared, mainly focused on different logging techniques, but other approaches have gone further, combining technical (logging techniques) with economic (introduction of sustained products in the market) and social aspects (direct benefits for local communities).

One of these approaches is the Community Forestry (CF) or Community Forest Management (CFM). In the case of Nepal, Community Forestry has been characterized as a successful approach for improving the community-based forest governance, under the concept of Community Forest User Group (CFUG). The CFUG is a legal status that refers to the organization of the community around forest issues.

For this research, I developed a case study in the hills of Nepal, where a CFUG establishes their own strategies to obtain institutional support for many activities, while at the same time develops a Sustainable Forest Management. The community is called *Kurkoth 3* and it is located in the *Parbat* district. The forest they have managed for the last three decades is called *Jhauri*. Therefore, the CFUG received the same name: *Jhauri* CFUG.

Most of the researches related with Community Forestry have looked at the CF approach from the Transfer of Technology (ToT) model or model of diffusion. The ToT model focuses on, for instance, the impact that the CF have had in the forest coverage, biodiversity, market, etc. To focus on the impact refers to a 'linear model of innovations', which says that innovations are developed by experts, disseminated through extensionists or intermediaries and then applied by final users (Leeuwis and Aarts, 2010. P. 22). From the ToT perspective and assuming that the CF is related with innovations in the forest, we could also accept that the local community has a passive role in the innovation process. Indeed, from this perspective local communities' participation in the forest management is reduced to follow the rules and instructions of 'the expert' (in this case the District Forest Officer - DFO).

This traditional view for adoption and diffusion of innovations has been extensively criticized by many communication specialists. They argue that the ToT approach ignores all the interactions and negotiations that shape the process, the variety of factors that play a role and make the process complex. Besides, the process for innovations, in general, is very uncertain because diverse and often conflicting actors are taking many different and often confused decisions at the same time (Akrich et al, 2002a. P. 194). Therefore, the ToT also ignores the relation between an innovation and its socio-economic environment (Ibid. P. 205).

As a response, new approaches that recognize innovations not just as a set of new technical devices, but also as a set of new social and organizational arrangements have appeared (Leeuwis and Aarts, 2011. P. 22-23). This way to approach innovation allows exploring the set of conflictive, complex and dependent dynamics that occur in the collective process. New social and organizational arrangements refer to understanding the links which bond the innovation to all of those which manage it. It focuses on creating links, interactions and attracting as many allies as

possible to build tougher and durable networks (Akrich et al, 2002a. P. 205). Therefore, it emphasizes the agency of individual materials for creating structures or networks, instead on the structures already existent.

In this research I do not want to limit the role of the communities to implementers. I prefer to highlight their capacity of agency, their capacity of act and decide. Thus, I introduce the CFUG in a different role, the role of creators. In this vein, I present the Jhauri CFUG as an example of self-organization and innovation.

The self-organization concept is defined as a change that occurs from the 'unintended' outcome of many actions and complex interactions between the elements or, from a broader approach, it could be defined as a change that occurs without external control (Leewis and Aarts, 2010. P. 26). The self-organization concept focuses on the changes and innovations that occur from the 'users' initiative. It is opposite to the ToT approaches because it gives an active role to the 'users' and allows to understand the decision power that users have in front of any innovation.

In this research, the self- organization concept allows to understand the process inside the *Jhauri* CFUG, especially at the beginning, when the community members organized themselves for the forest management.

Then, the aim of the research is to answer the question of how local organizations -in this case the CFUG- that manage natural resources integrate, participate and promote agency in a multi-stakeholder platform, as national and private initiatives.

For this, I attempt to analyze the case with a different approach to the study of power: the Actor Network Theory (ANT). By using this approach, I show that local people are able to use the external initiatives and incorporate them into practices, while at the same time they learn the institutional language and vocabulary, in order to get institutional support. In sum, they translate the external initiatives into local practices, by meaning of self-organization practices.

During the research, I employed ethnographic methods as participant observation and in depth interviews to understand the translation and framing process in relation to the Community Forestry. I explored how these elements have been created and what have been the main facts that affected the process in the community.

This document starts by describing the background information that limits the case. Then, the theoretical framework and research design are described. Formerly, the story of the *Jhauri* CFUG is presented, followed by analyzing the details of the interaction between the CFUG and the other institutions. The inclusion and exclusion processes inside the community, which are related to gender issues, are also analyzed in the same chapter. Finally, I consider the political, social and practical implications of the research in the discussion and conclusion chapter.

2 Background information

2.1 About the country

Nepal is a mountainous country in the central Himalayas. Its history is characterized by its isolated position and its two neighbors, India and China. The total population of the country is 23 million approx., with 2.2 per cent annual growth rate, according to the National census of 2001.

Nepal was ruled by the monarchy, but after a long decade of civil strife with the Maoist insurgency the monarchy was abolished in 2008. A peace treaty was signed and elections were held in the same year.

Even if the war affected several projects, Nepal is a country full of international NGOs and the Forest is one of the most stable sectors. However, currently most of the governmental efforts are focused on the establishment of the democracy and the creation of a new constitution. Thus, the forest sector is not part of the governmental priorities at the moment. This has an impact in the setting up of new forestry projects. Many international NGOs develop projects with very little participation of the central government and, in many cases they establish stronger relations with local organizations and other NGOs.

2.2 About the Forest Sector

The Department of Forest in Nepal was established as a state agency in 1942 with focus on forest conservation and for a long period many efforts were made to strengthen the power of the forest officers. In 1957 the private forests were nationalized with the promulgation of Private Forest Nationalization Act, which legally centralized the authority of forest management under state control (Kanel, 2007). Moreover, special rights - even to arrest forest lawbreakers without warrant - were assigned to forest officers with the promulgation of the Forest Act of 1961 (Ibid).

However, in Nepal many communities are interspersed with small patches of forests and people in the villages are very dependent on forest resources for fulfilling their basic daily needs like firewood, leaf litter and fodder. Therefore, forest management was always of high concern to the local people. In 1978, the Community Forest Program (CFP) was created, in order to involve local people in the forest issues and reduce their forest impact. The concept of Community Forest Users Group appeared one decade later, but the status of autonomous forest management institution was provided just after the promulgation of the Forest Act in 1993 and the Forest Regulation in 1995 (Paudel and Vogel, 2009). Both statutory instruments had strong implications on peoples' organizations around the forest. Several organizations appeared at that moment, many CFUGs were created and during the last decades, nearly 1.23 million ha of forest (which is about 25% of total forest land) have been handed over to more than 14,400 CFUGs.

3 Conceptual and Analytical Framework

3.1 Community Forestry

For many years, the Community Forestry (CF) was considered as a strategy to reduce the local land use pressure by merging conservation with forest uses for basic needs (Wiersum et al, 2011). However, the definitions of CF currently emphasize on a set of community based activities for sustainable forest management. Still, some approaches go even further and focus on the significant role that the local community plays in forest management and land use decision making.

For this research, the more accurate definition of CF was made by Tania Murray (2002): '*Community forest management is the assemblage that has emerged in the space of struggle between villagers and forest bureaucracies on the forest edge*' (P.267). This definition focuses on two ideas. First, people who live close to a forest can manage it successfully over the long term (Murray, 2002. P. 267). Second, CF refers also to an assemblage. Foucault (1980) defined assemblage as heterogeneous elements that are assembled to address a specific goal (P. 194). Therefore, assemblage includes institutions, objects, regulatory decisions, laws, scientific statement etc. and people.

In sum, CF management refers to the assemblage of heterogeneous elements that result from the negotiation processes between the local communities and the institutions that work with the forest. This definition is also much related with the main theory that leads my theoretical analysis, the Actor Network Theory (ANT), which I will explain more in detail in the next section.

3.2 Actor network theory

In order to understand the self-organization process, I analyze the case from the Actor Network Theory (ANT). The focus of ANT is that society is seen as a set of different networks of heterogeneous materials that interact between them to generate changes, groups, order, etc. This approach allows me to integrate the different elements involved in a self-organization process.

From the ANT approach, I use the concept of translation, which is related with the historical background, the factors, actors and other elements that interfere and influence the process of setting up the network.

The ANT is an approach to the sociology of power, a way to understand the social as a '*patterned network of heterogeneous materials*' (Law, 1992. P.380). ANT explores the process of communication, the interaction itself and the creation of structures. Two main ideas behind ANT should be highlighted here. First, we might start with interaction and presume that interaction is all that there is (Ibid). Second, for analytical purposes, during the interaction individuals and also objects are included together. Then, objects and nature are also actors in societal processes, but objects (including animals) will be called *actants* (Latour, 1997. P.2). Therefore, the actors and actants involved in the CF range from local and indigenous communities, environmental NGOs, governmental institutions and also, the forest, the statutory instruments, some cultural settings, etc. Heterogeneous materials include individuals, institutions and things.

Latour (1997) explains the different features of the ANT and why it is more accurate for modern societies. The word 'network' changes the metaphor of society; instead of being a surface or sphere one gets filaments, nodes, and associations, which is more appropriated metaphor for modern societies (P.2). However, ANT is not similar to a technical network, which is stable and organized. The technical network is just one possible result of an Actor-Network (P.1). The whole concept of ANT allows us to analyze the space and proximity as two different things. Two elements could be near in a physical space, but if we analyze the connections between them they could be remote from each other (P.3). Then, space is more than a geographical area; it is related to the connections and associations between the elements. This perspective changes the idea of different levels in the society, as global and local or small and large scale, because a network is never under or below another one, it is just longer or more intensely connected (P.4). Then, local means near and intensely connected and global could be far but intensely connected also.

One organization could be analyzed as a network itself with different elements, or it could be a part of another network. This also applies for actors and actants, 'an actor is a patterned network of heterogeneous relations' (Law, 1992. P.384). In this way, the actor network approach allows to show the dynamics of the interaction between the actors and actants and the role of each one in the process.

For my research with the *Jhauri* CFUG, I looked the process of self-organization as the development of a network in which people organize themselves and construct meaning during the interaction. Hence, to understand the way people organize themselves I use the concept of *translation* and to understand how people construct meaning during the interaction I use the concept of *framing*.

3.3 Translation process

The translation process is related with the historical development by which a network is set up in a particular situation, context and time. Translation is a verb instead of a noun (Law, 1992 P.385). It focuses more on the process than on the result (Callon, 1986. P.215). The concept of translation recognizes that the meaning of transcripts, conversations and objects is not merely conveyed between actors without change, but this meaning is constructed when it passes from one actor to another (Latour, 1987 from Burgess et al., 2000. P. 123).

At the same time, translation is related with power and the capacity of actors to persuade others. Thus, it is about struggling to achieve rights of representation, to speak for others and to give particular definitions and roles to them (Burgess et al., 2000. P. 123). Therefore, to translate also refers to express in one's own language what others say and want (Callon, 1986. P.214).

The role of the researcher from the translation perspective is to describe the networks in their heterogeneity, and to explore how is that they come to be patterned and to generate effects like organizations, inequality and power (Law, 1992. P.381). Hence, the notion of translation underlines the continuity of displacements and transformations which occur in a situation: movements of goals and interests, but also, movements of devices, human beings, and inscriptions (Callon, 1986. P.214). It is about strategies for mobility and resistance, but also about durability. Then, durability is about ordering through time, and mobility is about ordering through space (Law, 1992. P.387). Therefore, it is more focused on the uncertain process of overcoming

resistance and consolidating a network, instead of focusing on the result or the impact of the network.

In order to understand better the process, Callon (1986) identified different stages for the translation. First, the *Problematization*: the moment when different actors define and negotiate a series of expectations on the identity, relationships and goals of each one.

Second, the *Interessement*: it is related with the actions that actors attempt to make, in order to be part or not of the process. Here, Akrich et al (2002b) introduce a character that is crucial in the process, the *spokesperson*: 'the negotiator or the dealer, who risks everything because he believes to be into a good thing without having any certainty about it' (Akrich et al, 2002b. P. 219). During the *interessement*, the *spokespersons* will find many *resistances*. The *resistances* refer to natural and human entities that block the process. The role of the *spokesperson* is to overcome these resistances. The *spokespersons* are the dealers, the ones who talk and represent the group in front of the externals. They are in the networking process, but they are also the ones who create and promote the innovation process. The concept of *spokesperson* is very close to the concept of the *innovation broker*. The *innovation brokers* are defined like mediators which functions are: formulation and reformulation of innovations, continuous network formation and adaptation, and facilitation of multi-stakeholder interaction (Klerkx and Leeuwis, 2009. P. 851). Both concepts are inclusive, but in this research I use *spokesperson*.

Third, the *Enrolment*: it happens when the *interessement* is successful; the actors are enrolled in the plan. At this moment the most important point is the development of strategies, alliances and negotiations that go with the *interessement* to make it successful.

Fourth, the *Mobilization*: it occurs when the actors, that were first displaced, are reassembled at a certain place in a particular time. At this point the network has been setting up.

As we can see, all the social process can be described as a translation, which leads all the actors involved as a result of various metamorphoses and changes (Callon, 1986. P. 214). In some cases, at the end of the four moments a constraining network of relationships has been built and all the different points become a part of one single node in a larger network. However, every now and then, there will be new situations or problems, and then the parts will resist and become individual nodes again.

3.4 Framing theory

During the translation process every actor will take some 'positions'. That is to say, they will use some frames to try to make the process more successful for themselves. Frames refer to the way in which the different actors define and negotiate their identity, relationships and goals in a process. In other words, to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more relevant, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a solution for the issue discussed (Entman, 1993. P. 52).

Some authors recognize different perspectives to understand frames and framing, in relation to the nature of frames and in relation to what is getting framed (Dewulf et al., 2009. P. 160). In relation to the nature of frames, two major trends can be identified the cognitive and the

interactional. In the first one, frames are understood as individual *cognitive representations* or references schemes in which people organize, interpret and process issues, relationships and interactions (Dewulf et al., 2009. P. 160). In this case, the frames do not change easily. The cognitive approach tries to study the content of the interaction, the cognitive background of the person (Gray, 2003. P. 12) and uses the language as a mere representation of people frames.

On the other side, in the *interactional* approach frames are understood as *interactional co-constructions*. It emphasizes on how parties negotiate the meanings during the interaction (Dewulf et al., 2009. P. 163). Here, the focus is not just on the message, but also in the way that people convey the message, which is called the framing process, as the activity of exchanging 'cues' that indicate how ongoing interaction should be understood (Gray, 2003. P. 12; Dewulf et al., 2009. P. 163). Therefore, the frames can be adjusted or even changed under specific circumstances and people use the language to construct frames (Dewulf et al., 2009. P. 163).

Dewulf et al (2009. P. 166) define different types of frames in relation to what is framing: issue, identity, characterization and relationship frames. From the interactional approach, these types of frames can be defined as follow:

Issue frames: answer to the question of 'what is the situation about?' This refers to how people and institutions represent the issue (problem, situation, conflict) in the interaction process or how the parties construct meanings of the issue during the interaction.

Identity frames: answer to the question of 'who am I?' It corresponds to how each party presents itself during the interaction. This is important because it helps to analyze possible resistances to the process in relation to the actors.

Characterization frames: answer to the question of 'who are they?' This is about how each party presents the others during the interaction. In a conflict, generally, each party presents the other with positive or negative characteristics.

Relationship frames: answer to the questions about how people perceive their relations with others. One type of relationship frame is power. For instance, one type of power relationship is the capacity of involving or excluding certain group of people in a process.

For my analysis, framing as an interactional co-construction seems to be more appropriate, because it focuses on the interaction, the moment when the translation process occurs.

Consequently, the concept of translation helps me to describe the process of development of a network during the time and, through framing theory I can analyze how the actors use the language as a tool to construct meaning during the interaction. I also use the issue, characterization, identity and relationship frames to understand the connections and interactions between the different actors and actants.

3.5 Research questions

On the basis of the previous concepts and theories I have formulated my main research question and sub-questions.

3.5.1 Main research question

- *How the Jhauri CFUG integrates, participates and promotes agency in multi-stakeholder platforms?*

3.5.2 Sub-research questions

In relation to the translation process:

- How did the *Jhauri* CFUG organize themselves in terms of Problematization, Interessement, Enrolment and Mobilization in order to link to the Community Forestry network?
- How do they create and promote innovation?

In relation to framing:

- How do they frame the community forest?
- How do they characterize the other actors of the network?
- How do they frame their identity?
- How do they frame the relationship with the others?
- What are the consequences of the framing process?

In relation with translation and framing:

- What are the consequences of the translation and framing process in the Community Forest Management at the *Jhauri* CFUG?

4 Research design

4.1 Methodology

In order to avoid future misunderstandings, here I will emphasize the difference between methodology and methods. The former refers to the way researchers understand, approximate and produce knowledge. The latter refers to the tools he or she uses in order to get such knowledge (Haverland and Yanow, 2012. P.2). Therefore, according to the methodology certain methods are more accurate than others.

Haverland and Yanow (2012) explain the main methodological traditions in social science: positivist and interpretative. According to them, none of them is better than the other, they are just different perspectives to knowledge. Hence, positivist research (sometimes also called quantitative research) assumes that reality exists by itself and can be analyzed, observed and sometimes controlled and changed by the researcher. Here the main focus is on finding the factors that cause a particular phenomenon.

On the other hand, the interpretative research (sometimes also called qualitative research) presumes that knowledge or reality are socially constructed and, for instance, in order to understand these socially constructed realities the researcher should interact with the actors in their own conditions and circumstances (Haverland and Yanow, 2012. P.8). Here the main focus is on understanding the reasons why a phenomenon occurs.

4.2 Study Approach

For this thesis, my approach is from the interpretative research, because I am interested in the reflexivity. From the interpretative perspective, I developed a case study, though case studies could be used in both methodological traditions. Some authors classify case studies in quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (interpretative). Quantitative case studies refer to multi-sites studies which main goal is to establish causal inferences or test some hypothesis. Therefore, they are more related with the positivist methodology. On the other hand, the qualitative case studies help to understand the complexity of a single case. It is expected to find the detailed interaction inside the case and with its contexts (Stake, 1995. P. 16). Qualitative case studies are also called single-site studies. According to Yanow (2008), the single-site case studies are meaning centered. They allow an inductive and human-centered analysis driven by the wish of learning about the multiple social realities of different actors in their environment (P.4). Therefore, for this interpretative research I developed a single-site case study or qualitative case study in the rural area of Nepal.

4.2.1 Case study

Nepal is one of the worlds' leaders in community forestry. Approximately 1.23 million hectares of forests are managed by 14,431 community forest user groups (CFUG). As a result, 1.66 million households receive benefits from the forest. This is equivalent to about 40% of all the country's households (MoFSC, 2009). At the same time, most of the indigenous communities are totally dependent on a variety of forest products for their livelihoods. Others recently started to practice agriculture, but still depend on forests for many goods. Therefore, a recent trend in community forestry includes also the use and distribution of Non timber forest products (NTFPs).

The country has a regulation that supports and promotes the Community Forestry and some local projects and programs have promoted different approaches for sustainable forest management (SFM) at community level. For this reason, most of the communities are organized in Community Forest User Groups (CFUG). Some of these CFUGs have obtained experiences and reputation regarding their performance in SFM. This is the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, located in the village called *Kurkoth 3*, in the *Parbat* district. The exact name of the village is *Kurkoth*, ward number 3, but in the forest sector it is identified by the name of the forest, which is *Jhauri*. Therefore, in my research I name it the *Jhauri* CFUG.

In 2003, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC) awarded third prize of the *Ganeshman Singh Forest Conservation Award* to the *Jhauri* CFUG, as recognition for the development of SFM activities. Since then, the *Jhauri* CFUG is recognized in the forest sector by many NGOs and government institutions due to its proactive approach and successful organization.

In 2004 one experiment to identify local criteria for assessing forest management was initiated by two CFUGs in *Parbat* district, one of these communities is the *Jhauri* CFUG. The goal at that time was to obtain the certification with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). In 2005, *Jhauri* and five other CFUGs in different regions identified local criteria and indicators for assessing successful community forest management (Pokharel and Larsen, 2007).

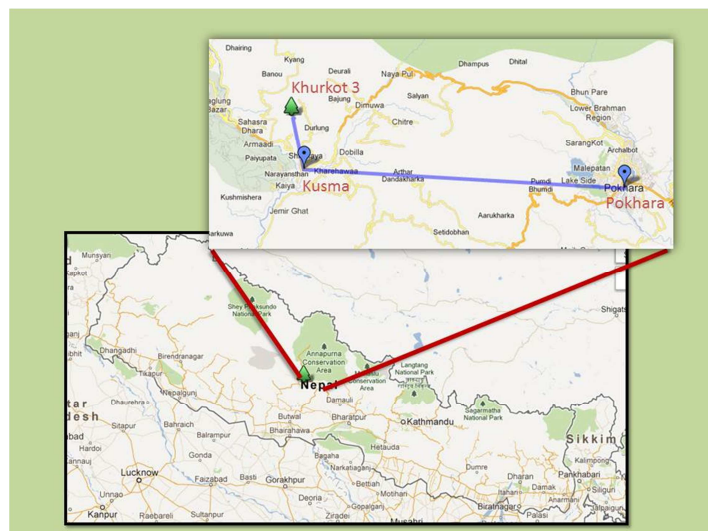


Figure 1: Location of the Village in Nepal

At the beginning I chose the *Jhauri* CFUG because the process to create the local criteria and indicators was presented in many reports as a successful approach, though this community finally did not apply for the FSC Certification. Therefore, I wanted to explore the possible reasons why they did not apply for the certification and the different directions that this community has followed before and after the experiment in 2004. I was looking for an example of self-organization, where different elements organized themselves through different interactions and they had to struggle different resistance, in order to get a common goal. In this case the goal should be the sustainable forest management.

4.3 Data collection and ethnographic methods

I used ethnographic research methods to collect my data. The main method was the participant observation, which implicates that the scientist studies a particular social situation for an extensive period of time, while he or she lives and interact with the studied community. The goal is to develop an in depth exploration of human interaction and culture. In my research I could not stay

in the village for an ‘extensive’ period of time, therefore I have to combine the participant observation with other methods as interviews and focus group discussions.

I travelled to Nepal for a period of eleven weeks. In total, I spent five weeks in *Kathmandu*, three weeks in *Jhauri* CFUG and three weeks between *Pokhara* and *Kusma*. *Pokhara* is the biggest city close to *Kurkoth* and *Kusma* is the headquarters of *Parbat* District.

In *Kathmandu*, I planned my trip to *Jhauri* CFUG and made five interviews with representatives of three different institutions related with the forest sector. This period of time helped me to understand the political, social and cultural context where the case was merged in. As I was a foreigner, this period was really important for me. I got in touch with the policies, the recent history of the country, the religions and their big influence in the day by day life of the Nepalese people.

Before I arrived to the village, I had contacted my translator. For me, it was very important to create a strong connection with her. She should understand clearly the type of research I was doing; how important it was for me to understand almost the literal meaning of the sentences; how the way that people talk also could have a contribution for my research. I also explained her that sometimes it looks like some topics are not related with the research, but people keep talking about them. This should not be ignored, because it could have a meaning for them that are important and necessary to mention. Therefore she should try to translate everything: “you will be my ears”, I told her.

During the time I spent in the village, I was most of the time with the translator. We stayed there for two weeks, in the house of one of the community leaders and we shared most of the time with the women of the house.

Activities /time	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11
Location	KTM	KTM	KTM	Jhauri	Jhauri	Kusma/Pokhara	Kusma/Pokhara	Jhauri/Pokhara	KTM	Jhauri/Pokhara	KTM
Desk research about the case	■					■					
Interviews with institutional representatives		■	■				■				■
Identify main actors and stakeholders and develop field work strategy		■	■								
Observant participation				■	■			■		■	
Interviews with community members				■	■			■		■	
Focal groups discussions				■	■						
Reflection				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Revision of information collected				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Adjustment of the plan, according to findings				■	■	■	■	■	■		
Final report and reflection									■	■	■

Figure 2: Field work time schedule

In Pokhara, I analyzed the data I had collected during my time in the community, found some information gaps and organized my second trip to the village. I went back to *Jhauri* after two weeks for a period of three days and made some additional interviews. This occasion I spent more time with the male leaders. After this, I moved to Kathmandu to transcript the interviews and process the information. There I had some difficulties due the lack of electricity during this period of the year, but I could process most of the material. Finally, I visited the community one last time and had the opportunity to join them for a journey to the forest for collecting the firewood.

In order to get information about the context and the case at the same time, I used a combination of different methods:

4.3.1 Participant observation

Through participant observation, the researcher is able to observe the interactions of individuals in a group and experience the meanings they give to different situations (Jorgensen, 1989. P.9). Therefore, it is a strategy and method for getting access to the internal and apparently subjective aspects of a case. Due to its proximity to the actors and situations, this method allows to understand what is going on, who is involved, when and how things happen and why, from the perspective of participants (Ibid, P.12).

I used this method during my stay in the village. I structured the observations by following a field diary where I recorded all my observations, feelings and reflections about the case and its context. I organized my observations in three different sections:

- Activities: Describe the main events and activities of the day. This helped me to remember how I reached my conclusions and it was a very useful tool for writing.
- Theories: Write down the theoretical ideas that the activities inspire me. This contributed to link the activities with my theoretical framework.
- Personal reflections: Write down my personal feelings and reflections. This helped me to understand and be aware of my subjectivity.

During the observation I focused my attention to four main points:

- Interaction between community and representatives
- Interaction in the village in relation with gender
- Interaction with the forest practices
- Forest condition

However, the most relevant point for my field work was the theoretical approach: The Actor Network Theory (ANT). This approach is a tool to understand and interpret the information. For my research, ANT approach was flexible and clear enough to allow me seeing the complexity and the different realities that are embedded in the case and to be aware of the little signs, the discourses and the people behavior.

4.3.2 In-depth and semi-structured interviews

I chose to use semi-structured interviews because they provide me with a lot of freedom, whereby it is possible to maximize conversations and collect in depth information. I tried to find assertions, a form of conclusions or interpretations that the interviewees could give me. At the same time, I

tried to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of the community members.

In Kathmandu and *Kusma*, I interviewed representatives of some institutions related with the forest (see the list below). Besides, I participated in a kick-off workshop of a new project called: Forest Certification for Ecosystem Services.

Interviews in Kathmandu and *Kusma*:

- Nepal Forest Association vice-president
- FECOFUN Program Manager
- FECOFUN General Secretary
- Himalayan Bio Trade Technical and export manager
- District Forest Officer from *Parbat* District
- Ranger officer from *Parbat* District
- Two ANSAB Officers
- President of FECOFUN from *Parbat* District
- Nepal Forest Association member and expert in Community Forestry in Nepal

The interviews helped me to understand the context of the case, identify the main events, the political framework, the vocabulary and the main actors involved in the Community Forestry in the country.

In the community, the interviews helped me to develop a version of the story of the forest and the CFUG organization. I was looking for the episodes of nuance, the sequence of events that have led this community to reach a high level of interaction with other organizations. I tried to perceive the different point of views that the actors have of the process. I did not pretend to find the 'true' behind these points of views; I just used all these points of views and my own point of view as tools to understand better the case. I focused on particularizations that make the case exceptional.

Besides, I tried to understand the alliances, transactions, languages, practices etc. that the *Jhauri* CFUG has developed in relation to the forest sector. As a result, I interviewed ten members of the *Jhauri* CFUG in their own context and I participated in many traditional activities and the seasonal collection of firewood

4.3.3 Document analysis

My first approximation to the case started with a desk research about the forest sector in Nepal. It was important to understand better the main events and policies related with the forest sector and the concept of CFUG. I also analyzed some reports about the projects developed in *Kurkoth* and the report about the project for developing local criteria and indicators: The Integrated Human Ecology Project (IHEP). With this information, I identified the main topics related with the forest sector and developed the interview guideline for the representatives of the institutions.

4.3.4 Workshop with women of the community



Figure 3: Workshop with women from the Jhauri CFUG

I was very interested in the story of the community and the main events that had influenced the forest user group. However, it was really difficult to find the dates and name of projects and institutions. Therefore I decided to make a workshop where the women could discuss about this information and reach some consensus.

At the same time I have noticed that the gender differences were very clear in the village, for instance for the divisions of tasks, the family roles and income generation. Then, I wanted to

analyze the gender issues in the community, the perceptions and even the disconformities and opinions that the women could had about this topic.

For this workshop I had long discussions with my translator. I had some experience on workshops with local communities, but my cultural background was different from the one in the village. In this case my translator was essential. I explained the goals of the workshop to her and she helped me to adjust and translate my scientific language to clear instructions. We created games to make it easier and funnier for them.

The workshop had to be at night when the women had finished their work at home. Finally around twenty women came and worked with us for almost four hours.



Figure 4: Annesha Pokharel, translating and explaining the activity

4.4 Reflection on fieldwork practicalities

My principal contact in Nepal, a Forest Officer (FO) with more than twenty years of experience in the sector, helped me to find my translator, a very young forestry student from Kathmandu, who was living in Pokhara. The recommendation of the people was to get a female translator and try to stay with her all the time, avoid interviews with men alone and in general avoid being alone.

We went to *Kurkoth 3* on a Saturday, which is the official holiday in Nepal. We moved to a family compound belonging to one of the male leaders of the village. The eldest women of the family, the wife of the community leader, explained us the rules of the house which were pretty simple: first, they could not have parties, celebrations or eat meat for a period of one year because the mother of his husband had passed away recently. Second, we will have to share our room with her daughters. We accepted the conditions and the next day we arrived with our personal belongings.

Since the first day, I noticed that I was very dependent of my translator and therefore, our relationship should be very good. I was very lucky because she was very interested in my research and she was studying forestry. Hence, she was very proactive and alert. Besides, she speaks very good English.

As a woman, I had access to the women world. This is important because for my male friends that were working in other projects and villages, the women activities and conversations were a mystery. The women were very shy and quiet in front of foreign men. In contrast, I could enjoy and join the women to most of the activities. However, women were always busy. Therefore, most of the information I could get from them was through informal interviews and chats.

At the beginning I tried to make a plan, a schedule, some appointments, but it did not work. Through the days, I realized that the best methodology was to be always prepared, carry all my materials, notebooks, questionnaires, and recording machine with me and take every opportunity for an interview, a visit or a chat. People were very willing to help me, but they did not plan their days so much. They resolve the situations as they come, day by day. Then, I had to adapt my schedule to their style. I had to learn to be more flexible.

People in the village were mainly Hindus. In their tradition, it is believed that the foreigners are very special guests because they bring good luck to the family. Maybe for this reason they always received me with a smile, gave me some tea and asked me some questions. They were very curious about me and in general, I felt that Nepalese people were very gentle and collaborative with the foreigners.

For the interviews with the principal members of the Executive Committee (EC) of the CFUG I had to be more careful. They were very busy and travelled very often to the cities Kusma and Pokhara. Therefore, I had to make appointments and sometimes they could not be there and I had to reschedule the interviews. I could not spend as much time with them as with the women. They were very busy and hurried, but in the moment they started to talk to me, they gave me all the time and attention that was necessary and answered all my questions.

I felt most of the time people tried to be very open and honest with me. They did not have so much interest in my research. They were more interested in my personal life and family. They always asked my age, which was an important referent because in their tradition, they call each other using kinship relations as a referent. For instance, for elder women they use 'aunty', between women they called each other 'sister' and according to the age young sister (bainy) or old sister (didi). Men called me 'daughter' or 'sister' depending if they were much older than me or about my age. Often they asked about my relationships, my boyfriend, my mother, etc. but not really much about my research.

As a conclusion, I came out with a list of key points that helped me in my field work: tranquility to accept uncertainty as a part of my research; flexibility for adapting to the different unexpected situations; discipline to keep my notes and focus, despite of the difficulties; open mind to understand the different points of view even for basic concepts like time, process, spirituality, individual, family, love and many others.

5 Findings

5.1 The context

5.1.2 Administrative division in Nepal

In the rural areas of Nepal, people may depend almost entirely on forests for their livelihoods, especially in the hills. It has been like that from many years ago. *Jhauri* is a little (21 ha) and young forest in the hills of Nepal. Several species of trees and animals as monkeys, leopards, small mammals and different kind of birds, live on it or visit the *Jhauri* forest every day.

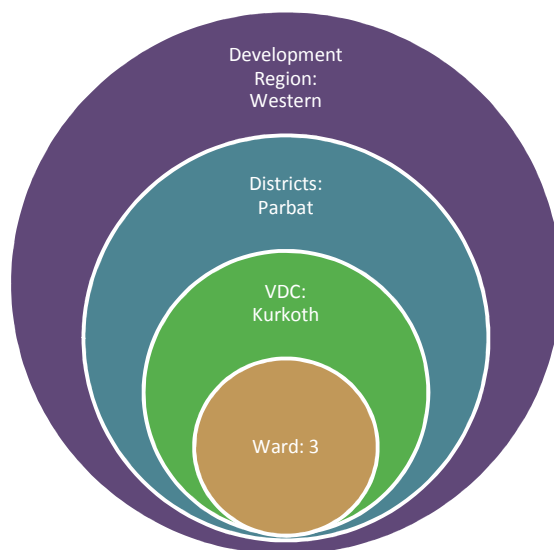


Figure 5: Administrative division in Nepal

The community of *Kurkoth 3* is in charge of managing the *Jhauri* Forest through the CFUG.

For understanding better the meaning of the CFUG, it is first necessary to understand the administrative division system in Nepal. The division starts with the Development Regions (DR). There are five: Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western and Far-Western Region. These regions are subdivided in Districts.

The community of *Kurkoth 3* is located in the middle hills of the *Parbat* District, in the Western Region. The *Parbat* district covers an area of 494 km² and *Kusma* is the district headquarters. The districts are divided in

Village Development Committee (VDC), therefore each district has several VDCs, similar to municipalities, but they have status as autonomous institutions with authority for interacting with the central government. In turn, the VDC are conformed by wards, which are more or less villages.

For my case, I focused in the VDC *Kurkoth*, ward number 3. Therefore, the official name of the village is *Kurkoth 3*.

5.1.2 The village

Kurkoth 3 or *Jhauri* CFUG comprised 83 households. The population belongs to the Hindu religion and they follow Hindu traditions strictly. In many sense, the village have the spirit of other times. The modern clothes and behavior that are easily found in Pokhara, just 72 km away, are not visible here. Women wear the red saris and men use the traditional Nepalese clothes.

Also, they practice the caste system, even if it has been forbidden officially since 2005. Most of the community members belong to the called higher caste, which encompass *Brahman* and *Chhetri*. In Nepal, the leaders were consolidated by linking power with the Hindu caste system. Therefore, *Brahmans* and *Chhetri* are traditionally the leaders of the country. The social order in the caste system



Figure 6: Kurkoth 3 village

can be defined as exclusionary, because it classified all castes within the broad framework of the Hindu system, which is based on concepts of purity and pollution (Bennet, 2005). The priestly *Brahmans* and the *Kshatriya* (kings and warriors) are at the top; after came the *Vaishya* (merchants) and the *Sudra* (peasants and labourers) and below everyone are the occupational groups, considered 'impure' and 'untouchable' (Ibid). In the village they recognize themselves as Brahman and feel very proud of it. Also, they think they do not have so many conflicts between them because they belong to the same group.

"We have 20.53 ha of forest for 83 households and all of us we are Brahman and Chhetri. In Nepal, the Brahman and Chhetri are the upper castes, they are active and the head people in the thinking. But we also have one lower caste family in our forest, only one. She just came three years ago and she is now in the committee". Mr. Preim Regmi¹.

The gender differentiation is promoted in many ways by traditional practices. To begin with, women menstruation has a negative connotation because they are supposed to be weak and impure in these days and therefore, they should be excluded and isolated during this period. This tradition was also forbidden in 2005, but many people in Nepal still practice it. Besides, this subject is a taboo; they do not talk about it. Another example of gender differentiation is showing in the marriage. Women are supposed to leave the family house when they get married and go to live with their husband family.

These traditional practices are reinforced by the division of tasks in the household. Most of the women activities are related with food production: planting, harvesting, washing, peeling, preparing, cooking, serving and preserving food. Besides, they have to clean the house, harvest and chop straw for the animals, milk buffaloes and make the offerings and pray to the gods. In addition, they have to take care of the children and kinship relations. For instance, they have to look for husband or wife for their children and prepare their weddings.

¹ Mr. Preim Regmi is a member of the Executive Committee since the creation of the CFUG.

Men are occupied working outside the house. Their main task is to generate income. Therefore, their activities could be very diverse. Even the forest activities that generate income, as for instance the brooms grasses business, are reserved for men.

“Me and my son make the brooms and sell them... My wife doesn’t know how to make them and, besides, she doesn’t have time”. Mr. Khaganath².

Because people in the community belong to the highest caste, they have got some level of education, especially men. Therefore, it is very normal that women stay in the house every day and men travel to the closest cities for working. In other cases, the husband has travelled to another country and sends money to the wife. The new generations have got access to education in foreign countries, even few women. However, the purpose of study is very different for men than for women. Men study to get a job and have good income, while women study to get a better husband.

5.1.3 House composition



Figure 7: House composition in the Jhauri CFUG

In this community, most of the farms are compound by: one house with two floors, three bedrooms, one kitchen, one shower, a toilet outside the house and one small stable for buffalos and cows. Normally, they have between two or three buffalos, which provide milk. Also, they use them to plow the land for crops. Besides, they have around four different agriculture areas close

² Mr. Khaganath is the Treasurer of the Executive Committee in the CFUG.

to the houses. They cultivate seasonal crops that fulfill their food needs, like: potatoes, lettuce, spinach, corn, rice, tomatoes, ginger, turmeric, cauliflower, peas, garlic, radish, broccoli, barley and one tree of lemon or orange. Besides they have one or two cotton plants and flowers, which are utilized for worshipping. According to the villagers, the main food products they need to buy outside the village are tea and sugar, most of the other products they can produce themselves.

Like in the mainstream of CFUGs in Nepal, in the *Jhauri* forest most of the products are used in the village for household activities: firewood, grass and fodder for animals; sometimes they use branches of wood for building tools or basic furniture and bamboos trees to make baskets, carpets, chairs.

5.2 Introducing the main actors

For the first approximation to the story, the main actors are identified. Some of them have a permanent interaction between them, but others just have very specific interventions in particular periods. In the analysis chapter, the interactions are analyzed and explained.

The **Jhauri CFUG** is the community that manages the *Jhauri* forest. A Community Forest User Group (CFUG) is a legal status that refers to the organization of the community around forest issues. Therefore, it is very common that the whole community is part of the CFUG. In this case, the *Jhauri* CFUG is compound by 83 households and the group was created in 1993. Inside the CFUG there is an **Executive Committee (EC)**. This EC refers to the community leaders that represent the CFUG in relation to the external institutions and projects. The creation of the committee is a requirement from the government for establishing the CFUG. According to the Operational Plan from this CFUG, the committee has to change every 3 years.

The **District Forest Officers (DFOs)** are the local representative of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC). The District Forest Office formalizes the incorporation of users into CFUGs; monitors and evaluates their performance; and support user groups by providing technical skills in field activities, like forest inventory and operational plan. There are 74 District Forest Offices under the Department of Forests. The District Officers have direct interaction with the CFUGs that belong to the district, however, most of the time the Rangers are the first contact of the CFUG with the government. The rangers are government officers of medium level, who assist the DFOs in their tasks and take care of the technical procedures.

The **Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MoFSC)** is responsible for formulating forest policies, in coordination with the National Planning Commission (NPC). Under its command, the Department of Forests (DoF) is responsible for the implementation and facilitation of the Community Forestry Programme, through the Community Forestry Division - CFD (See figure 8). Other departments under the MFSC coordination are: 1) Department of Forest Research and Survey (DFRS), which undertakes research in community forestry for natural forest management, nursery, plantation management, biomass estimation and harvesting techniques. It also provides technical supports to field workers and government staff. 2) Department of Plant Resources (DPR). It has expertise especially in research and management of NTFPS and medicinal herbs in activities like nursery management, after care, harvesting, storage, processing and other value addition.

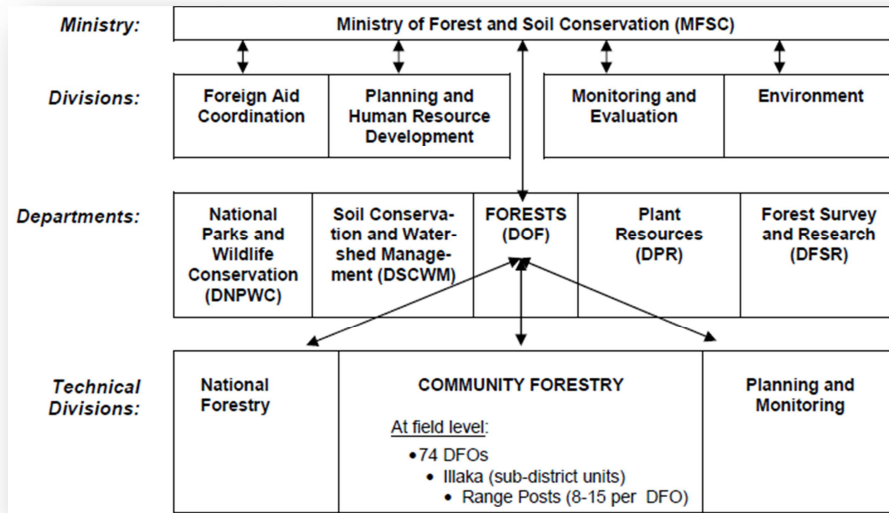


Figure 8: Community Forestry Government Implementation

(Messerchmidt and Singht, 2005 in Kanel, 2006)

Other institutions related with the forest management in Nepal are the national associations. The most relevant for the case are FECOFUN and NFA.

The **Federation of Community Forestry Users – FECOFUN** is a very influent association. It is a formal independent network conformed by 13,528 CFUGs, which represents 8.5 million of people in Nepal. FECOFUN emerged from the idea that CFUGs should be associated, in order to strengthen their role and representation in the policy making processes. Therefore, the main role of FECOFUN is in advocacy for representing the CFUG, preserving and protecting their rights.

The **Nepal Foresters’ Association - NFA** is a national association, which brings together Professionals in Forest. Its main goal is to promote SFM in Nepal and provides scientific expertise in forestry, biodiversity and issues related to natural resource management. It was created in 1974. In Nepal, traditionally most of the Forestry Professionals work for the government under the Department of Forest. The organization itself does not have any official relation with the government. The activities of the association are few, but they represent and are represented for all the Forest officers (FO). Therefore, Forest Officers include their activities as a part of the association activities. After the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme started in 2003, most of the FOs and the NFA promoted FSC certification as a market alternative for CFUG. They have promoted FSC certification for the last 10 years as a voluntary job.

Most of the **International NGOs** have a partnership with national NGOs. In the Community Forestry sector in Nepal, ANSAB is one of the most well connected NGOs. The main approach of their interventions is on capacity building for community enterprise of NTFP. **Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bio resources – ANSAB** was established in 1992 as a NGO working in South Asia and headquartered in Kathmandu, Nepal. It presents itself as an organization committed to biodiversity conservation and economic development through community-based enterprise-oriented solutions. It was in charge to implement the pilot for the Certification and

Sustainable Marketing of Non-Timber Forest Products in 2002-2005 in the Bajhang and Dolakha Districts. Since then, it has developed two more projects to expand the certification and build capacities for local enterprises in relation to FSC certified products. Currently, it is leading the process for the Forest Certification for Ecosystem Services (ForCES) Program, with the support of FSC and The Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Officially, they have not developed any projects with the *Jhauri* CFUG, but they are leading most of the projects related with CF and marketable forest products in Nepal.

Other influent international NGOs in Nepal are: United States Agency for Development (USAID), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) Nepal, Global Development Network, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

5.3. The story of *Jhauri* Forest

“Before there used to be a barren land...”

In every interview that I made in the community of *Kurkoth 3*, people started the story of the forest with this sentence: “Before there used to be a barren land...” and then, they immediately jumped to the present: “...and now we have a very dense forest...” I tried to get some dates and more specifications, but the linear time in my head, the academic way to look at time, was very different compared with the way people in the village look at time. For them, time is more cyclical. It is related with seasons and crops. It is more connected with the time of nature.

Nevertheless, I did several interviews with the villagers. I had to put the pieces of the story little by little, sometimes I had to ask one time, compare and then, ask again and finally I came up with one story of the *Jhauri* forest. I imagine there should be many other stories of *Jhauri*, but for this thesis on Self-organization and Agency for SFM, I will describe the general events that shape the story from the perspective of the local habitants.

In the following section I describe the main events in the *Jhauri* Forest and I explain how other process at regional and national level play a role in this story. Mainly, I focus on the story that people from the village told me. Most of the institutions, projects and policies mentioned here were mentioned in the interviews with the CFUG members.

5.3.1 The creation of the forest

Until the end of the 80s, the inhabitants of *Kurkoth 3* had to go far away to get the grass and fodder for the animals and the timber for the fire. They live in the hills and, at that time, the closest forest was in the upper part of the mountain. It was a very dense forest, but also a bit dangerous due to its geographical conditions. Some parts are very steep and unstable. Therefore, some of the people had accidents and even one person died. Besides, it was an illegal activity. The forest was a property of the government and it was officially forbidden to use its resources, hence, they felt they were stealing something.

For the women the situation was even worse. They were in charge of the house activities and they had to take one full day to go and get the grass and fodder. All the activities in the house were affected and they were very tired.

“I had to go at seven in morning and return late at night just to collect the grasses. In the monsoon season they used to be leeches, very big leeches, and we had to suffer all of this just for the grasses, the firewood and the timber. It was very difficult...” Mrs. Maya³.

Few years earlier (1978), the government of Nepal had realized that many communities were very dependent of the forest and, in order to control and prevent the deforestation, they identified that it was better to involve the Communities in the Forest Management. Then, the government promoted The Community Forestry Programme (CFP) which was focused on conservation. It is the biggest Program in the country. It involves 1.1 million hectares of forest and 35% of the population. This program gave to the communities the first tool to make legal use of the forest, but in a very conservative way, under the forest officers’ supervision and in just ‘low-value’ forests.

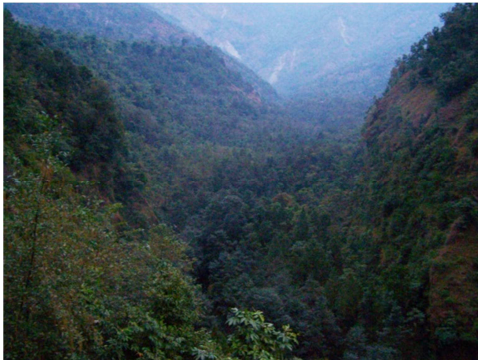


Figure 9: Jhauri Forest, November 2011

Biodiversity and water supply: in many interviews they recognize that many animals habit and use the forest. They consider this as an advantage because this means that the forest is dense and healthy. They also recognize that the forest protects the riverside from landslides and droughts.

Meanwhile, the community of *Kurkoth 3* was starting their own process. Close to the village, in the downhill, there is a small river. At that time, *there was a bared land* around the river and they employed it for grazing animals like cows and buffalos. Some members of the Regmi family, part of the community of *Kurkoth 3*, were working as government officers and had got some information about the Community Forest Program. They were aware of the problems in the village for getting the forest products and decided to look for a solution. One of them, Mr. Hem Raj Regmi, saw the land next to the river as an opportunity to create a little forest.

“We started the process for two main reasons: there was a lack of forest products and there was a bared land available close to the village”, Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi⁴ said.

The initiative to create a forest was not accepted immediately. Some members of the community were not sure. The land was a public property, and any investment could be lost if the government decided to use the land for other purposes or, even, once the forest will be there, the government could take it as a protected area. Besides, in the bared land they had the animals. Cows, buffalos and goat used to stay there during the day and return back during the evening. As they thought about to plant the trees, they had to control the animals to go to the place for grazing.

³ Mrs. Maya is part of the Jhauri CFUG Executive Committee

⁴ Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi is part of the Jhauri CFUG Executive Committee and secretary of FECOFUN in the Parbat District.

“Mr. Hem Raj Regmi⁵ came with the idea of making the community forestry. He told us, we have a problem to get the grasses, fodder and firewood. There is this bared land, why we don’t plant some trees and start our own forest?” Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi.

Until this point, the dream to create a forest was a crazy idea of the Regmi family without any external support. They did not have guarantees that the government would not take the land in the future and even this, they continued the process.

“Mr. Hem Raj Regmi used to say: <this (the forest) is really valuable. You people don’t realize it right now, but if we work hard, we can get gold from the forest and it is going to be really valuable. This will be our welfare and we should protect it>. He was really strict at the beginning, but now people are really aware about it.” Mr. Khaganath.

Mr. Hem Raj Regmi had the idea, but he could not make everything alone. He needed internal and external support. Hence, his family was promoting the project in the community and at the same time, he contacted the District Forest Office. The DFO helped them by paying some people from the same community for planting some trees and grasses. In this way, **they started a pilot of 5 ha for a period of one year and a half** (approx.).

During this period, nobody was allowed to use the pilot area. Still, the Regmi family was working in convincing the rest of the community. After some months, they started to use some products from the pilot, especially the grasses and fodder. People began to see the benefits and starting to accept the idea. However, people should be patient because for using the trees it takes almost ten years.

“There was already a problem with the grasses, the fodder and the firewood. For convincing the rest of the community we just made them aware that if we have a forest close by, it will be easier for everybody in the long term period. Also, their needs for the animals could be fulfilled with the forest. Gradually, they started to realize all those things. All can’t agree at the same time, it is impossible, but slowly and gradually the disagreement decreased and finally all were convinced”, Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi.

After the rest of the community was convinced, the main task was to sustain and improve the forest. The Regmi leaders started to mobilize and look for external support. They contacted some local institutions and the DFO and got more trees.

“At that time we didn’t choose the trees. Whatever we got, we just planted it. Like sissou and pines. We didn’t plant broom grass at that time. We didn’t think if it was good or bad. We just collected and planted.” Mr. Preim.

The process was messy and uncoordinated at the beginning. Many things had to change and adapt and people had to make some sacrifices.

⁵ During the Panchayat System in Nepal (1962 – 1990), Mr. Hem Raj Regmi was one of the representatives of the village. The Panchayat System or partyless system was an attempt to combine the concept of a Hindu monarch with other features of different political systems. In accordance to this system, the rural communities were conducted by a village council, called The Panchayat, which was presided over by a committee of five people (panchas). This committee decided village disputes, points of law, caste matters and revenue and state affairs, as they affected the village (Khadka, 1986). Currently, Mr. Hem Raj Regmi is the Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Forest.

“The old people started to plant the threes... then, they had to stop the animals to go there because they didn’t want the animals destroy what they have done. Also, during the monsoon season they should be really busy planting their own fields with rice and other crops, but they even sacrificed that time to take care of the forest”, Mrs. Maya.

Nevertheless the final result was positive. More than two decades later, the benefits of this innovative idea are still visible and people enjoy the forest and its products.

“You don’t know how the life was before the forest... but now it is so beautiful and, though it is not so big, not so dense, still we get everything to fulfill the needs for all the families and, if for one family there is not enough, we just help them, because the forest is for all and not for one”, Mrs. Maya.

This is the story of how they created their forest. But, this is far to be the end of the story. This is just the beginning. The creation of the forest was the initial point. The first chapter of how the community of *Kurkoth 3* became the *Jhauri* CFUG.

5.3.2 The creation of the CFUG

After some years of managing the forest, the community of *Kurkoth 3* had the first opportunity to link their activities to a larger network in an official and coordinate way. **In 1993, the Forest Act was created by the central government.** This Act changed the story of Community Forestry in Nepal. It recognizes the CFUG as a permanent self-governed institution, with rights to autonomously manage forest and fix the prices of forest products.

At that time, the situation inside the community was not optimal. They had many problems with the neighboring communities. Both conditions, the creation of the forest act and the situation inside the community converged in the perfect moment. *Kurkoth 3* needed to have a better control on their forest and the Forest Act gave them the tools to do it.

“We were having problems. There was a governmental forest in one side and a private forest in the upper part, which already had a CFUG. We didn’t allow them to come here and use our wood or fodder. In the same way as we felt the lack of forest because the other communities didn’t allow us to enter to their forest. Neither, we couldn’t use governmental forest and we could not continue fighting with the other communities”. Mrs. Sumitra⁶ Regmi.

This was the time to take another step. The Forest Act (1993) provided the communities with proper tools and rights to manage the forest. They could legalize their activities by creating a CFUG. Then, they could be protected from other communities and the government could not take the forest very easily.

“Before the forest act we thought that forest was just from the government. Though we planted it for our own benefit and with our own effort, we still felt it was not our forest. And whenever, the people from the government could come and if they wouldn’t like us,

⁶ Mrs. Sumitra Regmi is a female leader in the CFUG and Mr. Shesh Raj wife.

they could take the forest from us. Then, we were trying to get as many products as possible. But after the forest act came, we could utilize and also manage the forest in our own way. Then, we felt it was our own forest”, Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi.

The Regmi family male members guided the creation of the CFUG. First, they had to prepare a constitution and submit it for registration at the local DF Office, which then provided a certificate of registration.

“We went to the DFO and we said: Please give us our land. We will protect it, we will conserve it, we will use it and we also will give you something...” Mr. Preim Regmi.

The new CFUG, now called *Jhauri* CFUG (as the name of the forest was *Jhauri*), had to ‘prepare’ an Operational Plan that stipulated management goals, activities, and rules for using the forest products.

“We did a group meeting with the people of the village and some people read the documents and the others support back. Without discussion about it, just one person read and other people support back. Not questions and only men, maybe one or two women in that time,” Mr. Preim Regmi.

In principle, the CFUG was supposed to define which forest products could be harvested, set the price of these products, collect and distribute income, and use revenue for community development activities. However, for both the Operational Plan and the Constitution they had to follow a prefix model. They just filled little spaces with some specifications, like name, location, size and other forest features. Besides, for all the decisions they made they should follow the technical assistance and recommendations from forest officials. As final steps, they had to choose the Executive Committee (EC) members and make a nursery in the forest. With this process **they become officially a CFUG and they got 2.88 ha more of forest for a total of 7.88 ha.**

For the nursery, *“at first we got the seeds for free from the DF Office. Then, we started to plant them. Later, the DF Office established the nursery here and sometimes, they took some trees, plants and seeds to other communities in the district. In this way our knowledge was transferred. We are very active...”* states Mr. Khaganath.

In the other hand, for the creation of the Executive Committee (EC) the DFO identified the leaders, the men that had carried out the whole process, and choose them as the EC members. It was not a democratic decision at this time. The DFO commanded and people accepted. Then, it is not surprising than most of the community inhabitants do not remember how and why the EC was created. However, the role of the EC is very important; they are in charge of making the decisions related to the forest issues, which affect directly the community life.

“The men were guiding us. They told us what to do, what to cut, in which places to plant trees... But, though we knew all these things, it was in a new way. For example, we learned to cut branches just from the old trees, because those trees regenerated naturally. We (the women) collect the branches. Nowadays, we are used to do it, but we still need to be guided for the men about which places to cut and how,” Mrs. Sumitra.

In the rest of the country things were changing very fast. With the forest Act, many communities created the CFUG and many governmental and non-governmental organizations mobilized to help the communities in this process.

In 1995, another large network was setting up: the Federation of Community Forestry Users (FECOFUN). The unstable political situation of the country was already an important decision factor during this period. Then, FECOFUN emerged from the idea that CFUGs should be associated, in order to strengthen their role and representation in the unsolid governmental situation of the country. Soon, the *Jhauri* CFUG became one of the communities associated to FECOFUN.

5.3.3 External initiatives



Figure 10: The Chairman, Mr. Hem Raj Regmi

Here Mr. Hem Raj Regmi explaining the role of the CFUG as a vehicle for developing the community in general.

After 1993, the Community Forestry consolidated as one of the most active and successful approach for SFM in the country. As a result, 40% households in the country receive benefits from the community managed forests (MoFSC, 2009). Besides, with the support of many international NGOs and other institutions, many projects and initiatives have been developed for the CFUGs in Nepal.

In the *Jhauri* CFUG two initiatives were crucial for improving the forest management and the role of the members in the CFUG: The Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP) and the Integrated Human Ecology Project (IHEP) initiated in 2002 (See figure 14: Timeline of the *Jhauri* CFUG).

The Livelihoods and Forestry Programme (LFP) was a ten years Programme (2001 – 2010) at National level.

It was the continuation of the Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project 1 (1993-2001). The funding came from the UKs' Department for International Development (DFID) through a bilateral arrangement with the Government of Nepals' Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC). This Programme developed activities in 15 districts, including *Parbat* District. The LFP focuses on reducing vulnerability and enhancing livelihood opportunities of rural poor people through equitable and sustainable management of forest and other natural resources. The main activities of the LFP focused on improving the institutional situation, forest management, marketing for NTFP, promoting the community Forestry and minimization of costs for CFUG.

In the *Jhauri* CFUG the Programme was implemented in 2002. People remember this project because it helped them on building alternative sources of energy for fuel wood and timber, such as biogas systems and biomass stoves to reduce the dependence on forest. They got some capacitation to improve forest management, especially in relation to technical aspects, as different techniques for small logging and provision of crops and grass seeds for improving the forest soil. Besides, this program promoted the creation of Poverty Alleviation Group and, in collaboration with Nepal Safer Motherhood Project (NSMP), the Motherhood Group.

The Motherhood Group is composed just by women and for women needs. They created an emergency fund, which can be borrowed any time during pregnancy. It is mainly to help the women in the child delivery costs. But also, they can use the fund for the weddings ceremonies. They collect 5-10 rupees per month within the members and use the fund according to group decisions.

The Poverty Alleviation Group was created to help the poorest families of the community. They divided the community in four groups according to the income per year. The poorest (group D), who have no alternative employment or income, were given exclusive access to produce NTFP in the forest. In this way they are improving their situation.

“I received a plot in the forest for broom grass and medicinal plants. The executive committee decided to give us these benefits. We are six families in the community with these aids. We also received some goats, but some of them died or some families have sold them. But three families keep them and we are doing a good business with them,” Mr. Khaganath.

They received six ropanis for the poor families. One ropani of land (1 Ropani = about 508.72 m²) to each family, where they could plant broom grasses and medicinal plants. Then, they produce the brooms and sell them in the market, according to the local rate.

“It has been nine years since we started to cultivate the broom grasses, seven years since we can obtain brooms and five years since we started to sell brooms in the local market. We didn’t face any difficulties because there was a demand of brooms in the local market, so we could easily sell them and the production was increasing every year. First it was thirty brooms, next year were fifty, next year hundred. I have been doing this in a simple way. Whatever I have produced has got a market. Last year I sold some of the brooms to villages in other districts, faraway. But, we are not thinking to produce a large scale or sending the brooms to different places. If we want to sell in big scale, we need a big land”, Mr. Khem Raj Regmi.

On the other hand, **the Integrated Human Ecology Project (IHEP)** was also **implemented in Parbat District in 2002**. From the 13 existing CFUG in the district, two were selected and *Jhauri* was one of them. The project was supported by UNPD / GEF Small Grants Programme under a NGO known as Seed Tree Nepal. The project was launched in two CFUGs of *Parbat* district, *Salleri* CFUG from *Durlung* VDC and *Jhauri* CFUG from *Kurkoth* VDC since July 2002. The main objective of the project was to initiate forest certification process in Nepal ([Shreshtha and Khanal, 2004](#)) with The **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)** and developed capacity building activities related with SFM. **The main result of the project is visible in the improvement of the Community Forestry Operational Plan (OP).**

“At the beginning, there was a model for the OP and we just copied it. We didn’t care about it that much. But, for the second one, we already were given knowledge about all these criteria and indicators. It was through the project with FSC (IHEP) that we came to know about look after our forest. Then, we decided to make the Operational Plan for our forest and not just copy it from others. At that time, the way that we thought had changed

and we changed the OP in this way. We also separate some land for the medicinal plants after this project,” Mr. Shesh Raj Regmi.

The new OP (2003-2013) has many changes from the previous one. First, the process to make it was more participative and also, they received more forest, up to 20.53 ha. The first OP mostly focuses on the technical aspects, for instance, the schedule for the forest management activities, the distribution of forest resources and the forest conservation activities. For the second OP, the *Jhauri* CFUG had more experiences and therefore they adapted and included the aspects that they considered more important. Principally, they took the principles and indicators of FSC and adapted them to their own situation. For instance, they considered a provision of helping the poor members of the community, by providing loans with lesser interest rate for income generating activities. The CFUG also increased women representatives to 33% in their committees and reclaimed forest land from encroachers. However, the main goal of the project at that time, initiating forest certification process in Nepal, was not reached. The size of the *Jhauri* Forest and the costs related to the certification were the main reasons for this.

“Before the forest certification project we didn’t know about a good Operational Plan or a good Constitution. We were writing everything, but we were not doing things. We have things in the books or in the rules, but nothing else. Now we are writing and doing. But, certification is an expensive program. We have to pay in dollars and we are not getting any dollar from our forest products”. Mr. Preim Regmi

One of the main activities promoted with the new OP was the production of brooms. With the slogan ‘*Plant Amrisho⁷, raise income*’, they started to use the forest in a different way. Until this point the forest was used for the household activities, but with the initiative for planting broom grass the forest started to be a source of income generation. With time, they introduced other species, as for instance trees to produce medicinal plants. However, these decisions were very intuitive, since they did not have a plan for marketing the products.

“We just said, let’s try something new. If we plant medicinal plants, what could be the consequences? We don’t know how is going to be in the future. We will decide when we can get the product. We, the older generations, did not cut the trees for ourselves. Probably, the medicinal plants will be for the younger generations to make what they want and use whatever the production will be for their own benefit.” explains Mr. Khaganath.

The adaptation of the OP and the redistribution of the forest income in the community development activities made the *Jhauri* CFUG very visible to the forest sector in Nepal. In 2003 the MoFSC awarded the community with the third prize of the *Ganeshman Singh Ban Samrakshan Puruskar*, as recognition for the development of SFM activities, but also, because the income generated from these activities had been invested in improving community conditions. They built a school, a temple, a CFUG office, developed the programs for the poorest people of the community and arranged a traditional song contest.

For the time being, **the Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP) Policy was created in 1995**. The main goal of this policy was to create strategies to include the NTFP in the market and promote the Forest Certification as a tool for SFM. Therefore, many other projects were developed under this

⁷ Amrisho is a local name for the broom grasses.

Policy. For instance, one interesting initiative for the CFUGs was the Private Public Alliance (PPA), which focused in the Certification and Sustainable Marketing of NTFP in FSC system. **The project was implemented from 2002 to 2005 in two districts of Nepal: Bajhang and Dolakha, but not in Parbat.** The goal of the project was to link Nepali producers, foreign NTFP buyers, NGOs and government programs assisting the NTFP sector. This initiative was headed by ANSAB under the Public Private Alliance (PPA) Programme funded by USAID. In 2005, 11 CFUGs involved in the program were certified. FECOFUN was selected as the Resource Manager (RM) for the CFUGs certified and for holding the certification on behalf of these communities. The process of forest certification was continued in other communities by following the same methods. As a result, the total number of certified community forests reached 21. This was the first in Nepal, and most probably the first of this kind in the world, where local communities managing their forests are certified in a group at international standards. However, **the Jhauri CFUG could not join this initiative** because - among other reasons - they did not have enough surplus of forest products to sell in the market.

5.3.4 The Jhauri CFUG nowadays

The EC and the forest

The CFUG is led by an Executive Committee (EC) consisting of thirteen members elected by the village inhabitants. According to the constitution, every three years they have to select the EC members again. However, in the Jhauri CFUG there have not been many changes, most of the male members of the Committee have been the same since the beginning. This has promoted a strong and centralized leadership in the community. From the thirteen members of the EC, three are part of the Regmi family, six members are women - two of them are part of the Regmi family - and the other four members have changed few times.

“We develop the relations personally and as CFUG members. In our committee many people are educated. They work as officers for the government. For example, I am a teacher of sciences for the secondary school. Then, we go to the district area and get support there. Everything is possible through the words, because we can make people understand. But, if someone does not speak, then other people can’t understand him,” explains Mr. Preim.

People in the community do not want to change the EC members because they think they are doing a good job. Besides, they already know strategies, people and procedures to make things happen.

“We are organized easily because we have done our work by group discussions and our females are very active now. They have got their own group and they have their own saving system. And we are deciding everything by group meetings, not only by men, but women also”. Mr. Preim



Figure 11: Fuel wood collection campaign, January 2012

For the CFUG members the main use of the forest is to provide fuel wood, timber and grass. In order to control the extraction and avoid the overuse they have a schedule and a system for the collection of these products.

In order to promote the leadership in the village, other committees with different purpose were created: Poverty Alleviation Group and Motherhood Group. They promote specific activities for group members inside the village, but the biggest authority of the village is still the EC for the CFUG.

“We received some capacitation and after we discuss with the CFGU members of our village. Then, we helped other communities. In some of them, we discovered that in the EC they just have men and we said: you can’t do it like this. You have to involve women and the low castes also; you have to be supported by the people>. Or for example, others CFGU were cutting down some trees without make some blocks. We told them to divide the forest by blocks and cut the trees every year in a different block. After 5 years they should turn back to the first block. With this, they controlled some landslides. We are helping other communities and the DFO supports us for that. They gave us some money and technical support for this,” Mr. Preim.

Regarding the forest uses, they receive some remuneration from the DF Office. This money is like a core budget for the community. They use it for activities related with forest management, but they can also use it in the community development. The leaders of the EC, as the main head of the forest management, lead the decisions. They have got capacitation and improved their knowledge in many aspects.

In relation with NTFPs, **they still do not produce enough to sell in the international market and therefore, they cannot apply for the FSC certification.** The small size of the forest and the lack of time and men power make it really difficult for them to obtain surplus products from the forest. Some of the members cultivate broom grass and sell brooms in the nearest cities, but not at large scale. Meanwhile, they are waiting to obtain some medicinal plants from the forest and see if they can sell them in the local market.

“We do our work in group and that is the main thing. We work near to the DFO and LFP and many NGOs. We just go there and knock down: please support us, please give us some ideas how we can manage our forest as a good forest. How can we manage our forest in a sustainable way? What can we do and what will you support? This is the way,” Mr. Preim.



Figure 12: Poverty Alleviation activities

The Poverty alleviation program is addressed to improve the condition of the poor families in the community. The activities include allocation of land for goats and broom grasses and capacity building for NTFPs like brooms and bamboo products.

Nevertheless, **the community is very active in the forest sector and they develop their own initiatives with the constant support of the DFO and many other local organizations.**

Women participation and new members

Nowadays, women are officially allowed to participate, give their opinion and be part of the EC. But this is relatively new in the community. They included this point seven years ago, with the **implementation of the principles and criteria of FSC in the new OP.**

“Before, we people, we didn’t wanted to involve women in to make policies. We thought: we don’t need women, we are good and we are doing our best! But, when the other projects came, we talked to the women and then, we just knew this: grass and wood are the needs of the females in the houses. Then, the question was: How should we manage this and who have to manage it? Then, we decided, it was their problem and their needs. So, they should manage it. We just divided the forest in 5 blocks. The women, they decided to go for grass and wood collection. We just gave them an introduction at that time, and now they are free. They decide, they do the policy and they do the work. And also they are acting in the Executive Committee. They have some key positions. At least 6 positions should be given to the women. And they are getting support from all the women in the community”. Mr. Preim



Figure 13: Women activities in the village

Most of the women activities are related with food production: planting, harvesting, washing, peeling, preparing, cooking, serving and preserving food. Then, they are most of the time very busy. However, every now and then they take time to talk to each other, especially in relation to the children and kinship relations. For instance, they talk a lot about the future husband or wife for their children and prepare their weddings.

Both, men and women, recognize women participation as an important topic. Women feel they can and should participate, but they also feel they do not have time to go to the meetings. Besides, they also feel very insecure about giving their opinions in the EC. They said they do not have knowledge enough and men are doing well.

“Men are active because they have time, they know more and they organize better. But, if we also could do it, we won’t be bad. But now, we don’t have much time, free time to involve ourselves fully”. Mrs. Menuka⁸

⁸ Mrs. Menuka is a female leader in the community. She is the representative of the Motherhood Group.

However, they are very satisfied because before nobody asked them if they agreed with the decisions or if they were fine. Nowadays, men always ask them, invite them to the meetings and promote the women participation.

“If I would be a man I could have been more active and do many things. But, I have to ask for permission to my husband for everything. So, to be a woman has some limitations, but my husband is really supportive and I am very happy to do all those things”. Mrs. Menuka.

On the other side, in 2002 and 2009 new members entered in the CFUG. Chameli is a woman that went to live in the village after she got married. She has two daughters and one son. Her husband is living in London and frequently sends money for the living expenses. They came to the village in 2002 and started the negotiation for being part of the CFUG. Chameli family belongs to a lower caste, but this was not a problem for the community members. The EC leaders decided that Chameli family had to pay a stipend of ten thousand Nepalese rupees for the forest uses rights. This as a compensation for the years they did not take care of the forest and because they did not help to create it. After the IHEP project, the EC leaders invited her to be part of the EC as representative of the lower caste. Currently, she has to take care of her house, her kids, she is part of the EC and she also has to go to the forest to collect the products.

“As member of the EC I am invited to the meetings. But I don’t have anything to say. They ask me if I am fine with the decisions and if I understood, but most of the times I don’t say anything. I feel other people have more information and know more things than me.” Mrs. Chameli

Mina is also a new member of the CFUG. She went to live in *Kurkoth 3* five years ago, but she could pay for the forest uses rights just since three years ago. First she paid 10 thousand Nepalese rupees and later 5 thousand. Her husband is living in India and sends money for the living expenses. In the meantime, she has to take care of the house and the crops.

*“We are not rich; we don’t have so many things. I wanted to be part of the CFUG since the beginning but because I didn’t have money, I couldn’t pay the rights. I needed the firewood and all those things, but I didn’t have permission to go to the forest. After two years I talked to my husband and he didn’t agree because he believed it was really expensive. But I noticed that everyone else was going to the forest and I felt really bad because I couldn’t go. My husband doesn’t know about these things because he doesn’t live here. I talked to Mr. Chairman and he talked to the committee. I asked them to give me a little bit of consideration, so I proposed to pay the rights little by little and they accepted. Now, when we have to go to the forest, some women come and they tell me to go to collect the firewood. There is a flow of people and I just go with the flow to the *Jhauri!*.”* Mrs. Mina.

The payment for the forest uses rights is the strategy of the community for including new members in the CFUG. They do not make any differentiation for caste or gender in this aspect. The decision is made during the EC meetings and the money they collect is reinvested in the community.

5.4 Main events in the Jhauri CFUG

Figure number 14 summarizes the main events of the general story. These events occurred at different moments in different places, but I selected them because they have influenced the CFUG process. I have divided the events in 4 levels according to the place they occur: local, for the events that occurred inside the village; district, for the projects developed in the region; national, for the main programs and policies in the country and global, for the general trends in the forest sector.

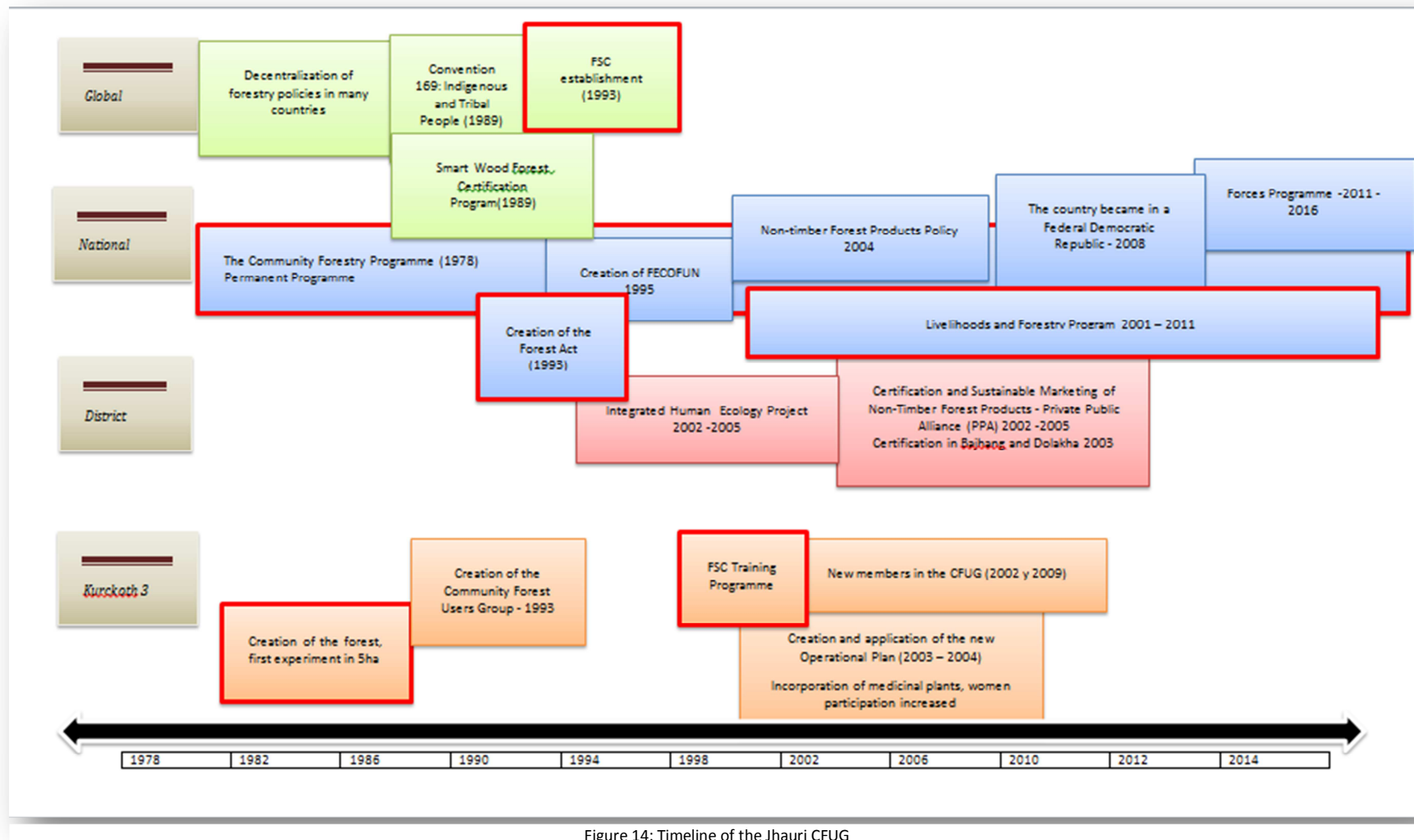


Figure 14: Timeline of the Jhauri CFUG

6 Analysis

In this chapter, I will explain **how the Jhauri CFUG integrates, participates and promotes agency in multi-stakeholder platforms**. This also allows me to elucidate the Community Forestry Management from the perspective of the Actor Network Theory, as the development of a network through the translation.

The translation concept allows me to show the case as an innovation, by exploring the set of conflictive, complex and dependent dynamics that occur in the case. It also allows me to understand the links which bond the innovation to all of those which manage it.

The framing theory allows me to analyze how the actors use the language as a tool to construct meaning during the interaction. In the same way, the issue, characterization, identity and relationship frames help me to understand the connections and interactions between the Jhauri CFUG and other institutions and between the EC and the rest of the CFUG members.

The main goal of the chapter is to understand the translation process for the development of a network and for linking to other networks, and the framing theory as a tool to create meaning during the interaction, in a way that every actor gets the support from others. For instance, the Jhauri CFUG gets support from external organizations and the EC gets support from the other CFUG members.

6.1 ANT and translation process

The creation of the forest is analyzed as the setting up of a network and for this I analyze the case as a translation process. Therefore, I focus on the process of coping with *resistance* and consolidate a network. In the finding chapter, several aspects of the translation process can be identified: the alliances and transactions of different actors, the strategies they use and the role of the community. In this section I will analyze them by using the different moments of the translation process.

6.1.1 Setting up the network

In the translation language, the beginning of the story is called *Problematization*, the moment when the actors define and negotiate expectations on the identity, relationships and goals of each other. In the case of the Jhauri, they started the *Problematization* with some hypotheses: 1. The government has the total power over the land and may use it for other purposes. 2. The community has no rights over the land and they do not have tools to negotiate with the government. These hypotheses were the more visible *resistance*. However, they continued with the idea of creating a forest.

The way how they dealt with the *resistance* was the key part of the ensemble. Many movements of goals and interests, but also, human beings occurred. People in the village did not trust in the DFO, therefore, the idea of the leaders of involving or asking the DFO for support was very efficient. This strategy leads us to the second moment of the translation: *the intersement*, the moment when the actors start to take actions. Mr. Hem Raj Regmi started to lead the process and became the *spokesperson*, the representative of the community for the external institutions, but

also the *innovation broker*. The *Interessement* is one of the most difficult moments of the translation because the *spokespersons* have to face many *resistances* and the process could succeed or fail, according to the response of the *spokespersons* to these *resistances*. The ability of response can also be called capacity of adaptation.

In this case the strategy was to involve the DF and then, involve the people by paying them for planting trees. During the pilot of one year, the *Regmi* family tried to convince the others. The strategy they used was to show the benefits with the pilot. This strategy has many elements of a scientific experiment: they had a problem, made some hypotheses, developed a pilot and found some solutions. The *Regmi* family could not have any aspiration to become scientist or innovators, but somehow they were.

After one year, most of the people of the community were convinced. At this point the *interessement* was successful. The community of *Kurkoth 3* entered in the third moment, the *Enrolment*. The actors were enrolled in a long term plan: take care of a forest and use it. Two points are important here; first they started to think in long terms and second, they understood that they can shape their landscape. Thus, the translation became evident, different elements were moved to create durability.

Consequently, the fourth moment of the translation process has been reached: the *Mobilization*. At this moment, a new character entered in the story: *the Jhauri forest*. The forest is an *actant* because it has the potential to respond. For instance, if the CFUG manages it properly, the *Jhauri forest* will react by increasing its biodiversity and density and, as a consequence, the DFO will be supportive with the CFUG activities. But also, the forest has been *mobilized*. That is, it has been displaced from the community to the different institutional offices. The forest participates through interposed representatives in the negotiation process and its role is going to be much important in the future steps.

After the moment of *mobilization*, the network has been set up. The actors that first were displaced now have been reassembled for one single goal: create a forest. However, the innovation is also about interest as many allies as possible; hence, the *Jhauri* CFUG did not stop the process here.

After the creation of the Forest Act, in order to become part of a larger network and obtain some benefits, the community had to create a CFUG. In this way, they started a new translation process again. The translation process is never finished. For instance, every time that a new project is developed in the village, the translation process starts with it. However, for the first stage: the creation of the forest, the moments of the translation were presented very clearly and separated from each other, but this may not be the reality. The moments of the translation most of the time are not clear and permanent, they overlap each other, they change and adapt, because they are developed during the interaction. Besides, different translation processes can occur at the same time, as it happened in the *Jhauri* CFUG.

6.1.2 One node in a larger network

In 1993, the *Jhauri* CFUG was created. After this moment, the interactions started to change in many ways. The Forest Act (1993) itself became an *actant* for three main reasons. First, it allowed the communities to organize, empower and engage in forest management as an autonomous practice. Secondly, it had created the space for interaction, slowly changing the 'vertical'

hierarchies and allowing the different actors to share information and perspectives. Thirdly, it permitted the setting up of new multi-disciplinary networks and organizations.

At the same time, the forest started to play its role. Inside the community, the forest has two roles. First, it is the mean to get some basic and direct benefits like fodder, grass, firewood and, with time, also some indirect benefits like animal habitat and river protection. Secondly, it became a place for experimentation.

“At that time we didn’t choose the trees. Whatever we got, we just planted it,” mentioned Mr. Preim and many other CFUG members. At the beginning they saw the barren land as a place where they could create a forest and they planted the trees without a plan. Then, they got a nursery and with it they started to see the forest as a place that they can shape, improve, organize and, as a consequence, get better benefits. **With the creation of the nursery clearly the forest became a lab, a place where the CFUG members could perform some ‘experiments’.** This idea is reinforced when they develop projects. For instance, with the IHEP they started to plant the broom grasses to generate income for the poorest families, but they did not have a fixed plan for it. Later, they started to plant medicinal plants in the same way, even if the trees for the medicinal plants could take many years to grow. This idea of using the forest as a lab also strengthened the role of the EC as *spokespersons* inside the community. Therefore, the forest became the lab of the innovators.

Outside the community, the forest had also its role. It is the means to get the institutional support, access to new projects and networks. As long as the forest stay dense and well managed, they could keep the rights to use it. The creation of the CFUG, supported by a dense and diverse forest, is the requirement to enter in this larger network. They became legitimate part of the Community Forestry Program. From now and on, they could apply for resources and ask the DFO and other NGOs for capacitation, money and support. And in the case of the *Kurkoth 3*, they immediately understood their new role and opportunities.

With the creation of the CFUG the leaders became an Executive Committee (EC). In the same way that the forest had a role inside and outside the community, the EC started to play its own role: *the spokespersons*. Inside the community the EC members were *creating innovations*, they continued working with the community and looking solution for their problems. Outside the community they also needed to deal with the institutions. They turned out to be the bridge between the community members and the forest institutions. Then, for instance, when the DFO made recommendations, the EC guides the others CFUG members to follow these recommendations.

Therefore, the creation of the Forest Act changed the interactions. Somehow, the Forest Act was also a translation process itself, because many actors and actants were mobilized to create a solid network and, indeed, many other networks were created, as for instance FECOFUN.

With the LFP in 2002, the *Jhauri* CFUG got new knowledge. They started to use new words: sustainable, poverty alleviation, climate change. With the creation of Poverty Alleviation Group and the Motherhood Group many people started to be involved in the decision making process and the leadership was no longer just in the hands of the EC.

The IHEP in 2002 – 2005 brought changes inside the community and outside. For this, the new OP was crucial. First, it was more flexible and integrated social, economic and decision-making aspects in a very specific way. For instance, they separated the forest aims in short and long terms. The short term aims focused on the forest users' needs; the long term aims emphasized the ecological and environmental forest benefits. They highlighted the social aspects by comprising forest products beyond the household needs and including them as a source of income. ([Appendix: Operational Plan, section: Aims of forest management](#)). Here the community shows again their capacity of self-organization and adaptation.

People looked more appropriate of the OP, as they included some clarifications to make it more adaptable to their circumstances: *'the price of timber depends on the present value in the market'* or *'the price will be fixed according to the EC decision'* ([See appendix: Operational Plan, section: Distribution and selling system](#)). However, the decisions' power is still centralized in the EC and any change in the forest products uses is possible depending on the situation, but with the approval of the EC: *'If any user has a need of timber for home or other construction work, he should give application of his demands to the executive committee'* ([Ibid](#)).

Besides, with the new OP, the community was ready for new challenges. The new standards and criteria implemented played a crucial role in bringing about substantial changes in the attitude and behavior of local community. For instance, they promoted the active participation of women by including six female members in the EC. In addition, outside the CFUG, they became an example for other CFUGs and they started to share their knowledge and experiences.

To sum, the IHEP project was a window that allowed the community to get connected with many other networks. At that moment they could not enter in the international market, but this project facilitated them to get more support for their activities. They became also more aware of their opportunities and developed more and new strategies.

6.2 Framing

Framing is the process by which people select some aspects of a situation and make them more relevant during the interaction. Therefore, I understand frames as interactional co-constructions. People use language and actions to construct frames during the interaction. To this extent, in the first part of this section, I develop the frames during the interaction and in the second part the relation between uses of frames and translation process.

6.2.1 Framing during the interaction

In this part, I would like to highlight the frames that play a role during the interaction of the CFUG and the external initiatives. For this, I will emphasize the perspective of the EC members. Many frames could be identified in this case, but I will focus on the characterization and relationship frames. Also, I will develop my arguments with the creation of the forest and IHEP initiative, because both initiatives are strictly related to the forest issues. Finally, I will analyze the role of the forest in the network from the framing approach.

Until 1993 the approach of the government for Community Forestry was ToT, they did not expect the communities to produce any knowledge or initiative; the communities were just supposed to follow the models and steps. On the other side, the communities needed to use or get forest products and, for them, the government rules were a sort of obstacle. This is an example of

Relationship frames and, in this case, it could be framed as a conflict. The *Relationship frames* describe how people perceive their relations with others. One type of *Relationships frame* is power. In this case, the government had a strong power over the communities by using a very constrained set of rules.

After the Forest Act (1993) was launched, the frames started to change in many ways. In the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, they felt more comfortable and secure about their activities: “...after the Forest Act came, we could utilize and also manage the forest in our own way. Then, we felt it was our own forest”, Mr. Shesh Raj commented. Besides, with the influence of the external initiatives, they became more aware of their role, developed new strategies and started to appropriate the language and vocabulary related with forest management. As the *Regmi* family and the EC members have the role of *spokespersons*, they ‘translate’ the language of the institutions and adapt their practices in the CFUG, in order to obtain specific goals. Like this, if the translation process is related with power and the capacity of actors to persuade others, we could consider *frames* like tools to persuade others. In other words, the strategy of the EC members is to frame the forest issues using the institutional language to obtain support. This is how they link the CFUG to other networks and manage their relationships.

On the other hand, the forest has a very important role. *Issue frames* describe how the parties construct meanings of the issue during the interaction. In this case the issue could be the *Jhauri Forest*. Then, the EC members, the governmental institutions, the NGOs and other actors claim to be translators of forest needs. Therefore, each actor frames the *Jhauri Forest* in a particular way, or each actor negotiates the *Jhauri Forest* meaning during the interaction.

For instance, in the IHEP the topic was certification, which involves many actors from the perspective of marketing. In this project the *Jhauri Forest* was framed as one NTFPs provider; but the communities framed it as a livelihood provider and as a household. At the same time, the companies framed it as a business or a money provider and the government framed it as a biodiversity protection and conservation area. Each actor focused on its frames and made them relevant in each opportunity. The success of the process, the mobilization, the setting up of the network occurred because these frames were not competing or excluding between them. From my perspective, the IHEP integrated all these frames, with pretty much success.

On the other side, the EC members also learned to use the *issue frames* for their own benefit. They understood that they could frame the forest in different ways and then convince others to join the CFUG network. In their new OP - created during the IHEP project - for instance, they included *short term aims* focused on the generation of income and forest users’ needs and *long term aims* emphasized the ecological and environmental forest benefits. **This way to frame the forest is a very creative strategy, in which they adapted the document for their own needs, but including the institutional requirements.** Besides, they are aware of this: “...We work near to the DFO and LFP and many NGOs. We just go there and knock down: please support us, please give us some ideas ... How can we manage our forest in a sustainable way? ...what will you support..?” explained Mr. Preim. Besides, they even are aware to use the language as a tool: “... Everything is possible through the words, because we can make people understand”, concluded Mr. Preim.

6.2.2 Frames and the translation process

I found that actors use *Issue frames* especially at the moment of the *problematization*, because at that moment they are negotiating what the situation is about. This process points out into the direction of certain solutions and therefore, framing the problem in a different way would have led to different actions with different consequences. For instance, the setting up of the 5 ha pilot represents the beginning of a process. But, this process could be framed in many different ways. For the inhabitants of *Kurkoth 3*, this was a pilot to create a forest that, in the future, will give different forest products to fulfill basic needs in the village. For the government, this was an opportunity to expand the forest and legalize some of the activities in the village. For my research, I frame this situation as a creation of a network and an innovation. In this way, each actor is highlighting some particular features of the situation. In this case, the *Issue frames* are not the same but they do not contradict or conflict with each other.

In the same line, actors use *identity frames* especially at the moment of the *interesement*, because they shape what actions should be taken and by whom. Here, the community identified themselves as creators of the forest. They are the ones that plant the trees and take care of them. As follow, the *characterizations and relationship frames* are used during the *interesement*, but also in the *enrolment*. *Characterization frames* is related to the identity of the others and *relationship frames* is related to the role and expectations of the others. Therefore, the community members identified the DFO as the representative of the government that supports the process. Yet, first the DFO was characterized as representative of the government who could take the land for other purposes. In this way, the *characterization frame* of the DFO changed and therefore, the *relationship frame* changed also. First, it had a negative connotation, but after, the DFO became an allied in the process. To finalize the process, the moment of the mobilization occurs when the different frames have been negotiated and the different actors have reached agreements and took actions.

Nevertheless, in the reality, the moments of the translation are not clearly separated and divided. In the same way, the frames are negotiated every moment. For instance, if one of the actors changes its behavior in any part of the process, new frames will appear because the frames are closely related to the interaction between the actors. In the same way, new actors and actants (as for instance new laws) could appear and change the interaction; the frames have to be reevaluated and a new translation process will start.

6.3 Effects of framing and translation

The process of network formation is definitely impacted by perceptions of inclusions and exclusions. Framing is a tool to make this inclusions and exclusions more visible. Then, in this section, by finding the differences and similarities in frames between individuals and groups I identify some power relations and the resistances that they could generate in the process of networking.

In the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, the EC members are the main bridge to communicate the rest of the community with the institutions and organizations. They also translate the institutional requirements and language to the community. Thus, there is no direct interaction of the institutions with the other CFUG members. Normally, the organizations interact first with the EC members and then, the EC members inform and implement some activities with other members of

the CFUG. As a result, the EC members have a strong influence in the exclusion and inclusion of members. Therefore, the easiest way to be included in the community network is to be accepted by the EC members. However, the belief system in Nepal is very extensive and it has a mixture of different traditions. The castes system and the gender differentiation are strongly promoted and supported by many cultural and traditional practices. Correspondingly, these traditional practices have a strong influence, for instance, in the role of women during decision making processes.

As we can see in the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, there is an attempt to promote women inclusion. Women were first excluded from the decision process and, with the time, they have been slowly included. At the beginning they were not even allowed to be in the meetings and now the EC members promote the women participation. However, inclusion is not just about being present or not in the meetings. Women are officially included, but during the interaction they are excluded in many ways.

Traditional practices, like women exclusion during the menstruation or the fact that they have to leave their family and move to live with their husband family, have a direct impact in the role of women in the CFUG. First, they are excluded of many activities during the menstruation; for example, they cannot assist to the meetings during this time. As they come from other towns and families, most of them are relatively new in the village, and they do not feel with the right to have opinions about many matters. These practices are reinforced by the division of task in the house. For instance, they cannot produce income, which make them very dependent of men and their decisions. Women frame men as a type of authority, because women need to ask for permission to men. This could lead to the lack of initiative and independency of women. Besides, most of the women did not have access to education and even today, they have not access to good information. Therefore, when they participate in the meetings they feel very insecure to talk and they feel they do not have enough information and knowledge to make suggestions.

However, we could not conclude that women are excluded and the networking process has failed. On the contrary, the traditions and practices that sustain the women discrimination are very tied and socially accepted by most of the members in the community. They frame these practices as normal and accepted. Therefore, the role of women in the network is clear. They have a supportive role, which is very important, because they translate the EC meetings in practices and, in this way, they have an influence in the network. Besides, in *Jhauri* CFUG, most of the members are very satisfied with this.

Nevertheless, despite of the traditional practices, it is important to recognize again the role of the EC members as innovators in this topic. For instance, the EC have designed a payment system, for the inclusion of new members, which does not make any differentiation between caste and gender. The payment is framed as a compensation for the time the CFUG have been taking care of the forest and the price is based on this. Therefore, in order to include new members in the CFUG network, they have gone beyond the traditions of caste and gender, they have been innovative, and the new members have been included and taken their role without any differentiation in caste or gender.

7 Conclusions

I started this research wondering *how local communities integrate, participate and promote agency in multi-stakeholder platforms*. For answering this question, I developed a case study in the *Jhauri* CFUG, a village from the hills of Nepal.

I attempted to explain the Community Forest Management (CFM) as the assemblage of heterogeneous materials, an assemblage that results from the complex negotiation process between the local communities and the forest organizations. Then, I approached the case as an example of innovation and self-organization. Finally, I used the translation and framing theories to make the negotiation process more visible.

In line with the theoretical framework and the analysis, my research shows **agency as the translation of the official projects by the local communities, in order to link up these projects to the local reality**. In this way, my conclusion is that the role of the communities goes beyond the 'participation' in the external initiatives and projects. Indeed, the process goes in the other way around, **the local communities are the ones that finally let the projects participate or not in the management of the local forest. First they select, organize and choose according to their needs and possibilities. Then, they adopt certain practices or they let some practices out; some things they ignore, some things they change. In this way, the local communities translate, adapt and adopt the knowledge, technologies and language from the projects, at the same time, they transform the new knowledge in practices and they use the language as a tool to convince the organizations to support them**. This is how the projects from outside interact with the practices in the village. This is the way how they integrate, participate and promote agency in multi-stakeholder platforms.

7.1 Translation process

The setting up of the 5 ha pilot represents the moment when the innovation occurred. For the community, the goal of the pilot was to create a forest and make use of the different forest products to fulfill basic needs in the village. For the government, this was an opportunity to expand the forest. From the theoretical perspective, I would say the community started the creation of a network, through the translation process. Though, they were not aware of the connections, assemblage and movements they were creating.

I developed the example of the IHEP, a project implemented in the village in 2002, and its influence in the network. I explain how the EC members in the *Jhauri* CFUG framed, selected and developed some practices and concepts related with this project. This allowed me to show the EC members as translators, because with every new project in the village they started a new translation process.

At the same time, as the EC members do not change for long periods, they become more efficient as translators, they do not just translate into practices, but they also have learnt to frame their practices in the language of the institutions, and they adapt their speech to the new interlocutor. In sum, in the presence of the institutions, they will frame their practices in the experts' language.

An important point to mention is that *characterization frames* and *relationship frames* are directly related to the perception of the others and the relation with them. In a conflict, generally, each

party presents the other with positive or negative characteristics. In Nepal, people try to avoid conflict as much as possible, then, most of the time they frame each other in a nice way.

7.2 The role of the forest

With this research I presented the forest as a real actor and, at the same time, as a socially constructed object. I used frame theory to explain that the forest is not just a place in the village, but it is also an idea or a perception that is framed in different ways for different actors, in order to achieve certain goals.

I framed the forest as a lab, where the *spokespersons* make experiments. This also allowed me to understand better the way how people manage the forest in the *Jhauri*. They are changing it and planting different products to see if they work in the future, thus they are getting better and more products every time. From an external approach, the forest is also a mean to get support from the institutions.

8 Discussion

I discussed that the ToT approach ignores all the interactions and negotiations that shape the CFM process, the variety of factors that play a role and make the process complex. This is because the ToT approach focuses on the structures and the results. Therefore, I decided to focus on the agency of the individuals, the process of negotiation before the structures are created.

The linear ToT approach does not fit in the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, because nobody came to the community and told them what they have to do. The process started from the bottom, precisely because they had a necessity, a problem to resolve and they were not passive waiting for somebody to come and help them. In the ToT approach the CFP will be considered as the creator of the interaction; but in this research I showed that the community used the CFP as a tool to resolve their problem. Then, the CFP was presented as an *actant* that gave the opportunity to the community members to promote their capacity of agency. The self-organization that came from the village, the strategy of using the CFP to obtain what they needed, the way to use the external projects as tools, I understand it as: *translation*.

In this case, contrary to the ToT approach where the innovations start on the top, different actors at local level generated the innovation. The *Jhauri* case is perfect example of what Akrich et al described as innovation process (2002a. P. 194), a much more uncertain route than the ToT process describes. Here, the actors took diverse and confused decisions and risks and they did not follow a fixed plan, it was a real experiment.

In the same way, from the ToT approach the experts or extensionist are considered the bridge between the innovation and the user. In the case of the *Jhauri* CFUG, the EC members are the main bridge to communicate the rest of the community with the institutions and organizations. To show this, I used the concept of *spokespersons* (Akrich et al, 2002b. P. 219) to describe the EC members, because they identified problems, found solutions and were willing to take risks. They took every opportunity to innovate and they used the forest as a lab to make experiments. Besides, the qualities of the *spokespersons*: vision, intuition, sense of anticipation, quick reactions and skillfulness (Akrich et al, 2002a. P. 189), started with Mr. Hem Raj Regmi, but they become collective virtues with time.

9 Recommendations

The work of the *spokespersons* is also to be aware of the opportunities that are available and try to take them. Some opportunities to link the *Jhauri* CFUG to larger networks are still there. The NTFPs Policy promote that the CFUGs sell the NTFPs in the market. With tools like the FSC certification they could enter even in a larger network: the international market. But, in order to enter in these new networks, the process is difficult. They have to fulfill many requirements and they need more financial resources. For instance, with the Private Public Alliance (PPA) some CFUGs already got the certification in Nepal. However, the current situation of the CFUG certified is not as good as expected. The costs involved in auditing, monitoring and managing certified forests are very high and the CFUG does not have financial support from other organizations. Then, the investment in obtaining and maintaining the certification is not compensated with the incomes that the certification provides. Still, the communities try to keep the certification because it has brought other indirect benefits. For example, the certified communities participate in capacity building and pilot projects.

Currently, an interesting approach is presented in the Forest Certification for Ecosystem Services Programme (ForCES), which started in 2011 and is sponsored by The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) through FSC. The project is part of a global Programme which involves 4 countries and with the support of other global organizations as UNEP, CIFOR and RECOFTC. In this initiative they promote that local communities, which do not have enough surplus to sell forest products in the market, but still provide Ecosystem Services as: biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and storage, watershed protection and erosion control, could receive some financial compensation for these services. The project has the goal of evaluating the market for these 'products' and develop the standards and criteria for this kind of certification. In Nepal, they will develop two pilots in the Dolka District, in Charnawati and Gaurishakar.

9.1 Political, social and practical implications

For the implementation of different projects at local level, the concept of local participation is considered as a very important topic. However, this concept of participation is still conceived from the ToT approach, and therefore, the main efforts are focused on the role of the institutions or the NGOs and improving local participation. On the contrary, the concepts of translation, innovation and self-organization - presented in this research - highlight the role of local communities as the central actors of the CF, because they take the final decisions on the management of their own forest. The agency of local people is the main focus of my research. As a consequence, I recommend that main efforts in forest initiatives should be addressed to promote the people agency and not the opposite, because many initiatives with laws and administrative requirements constrain people agency.

As a recommendation, if the interventions of forest management recognize the central role of local communities, they could understand better the potential of these communities. Then, they could adapt and improve their activities, methods and the outcome of the projects. The IHEP is a good example, because it focused on the capacity building at grass level for the adaptation of FSC C&P. However, this was not enough for linking the *Jhauri* CFUG to the international market. In this way, projects like the IHEP should also consider the need of connecting actors and actants in a broader network.

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Appendix

Jhauri CFUG - Operational Plan

Translation by Aneesha Pokharel

Edited by Paola Chaves

Name and address: Shree Jhauri CFUG, Khurkot 3, Parbat District

Area: 20.53 ha

Constitution: 95

RN of OP: 15

Composition of forest: Natural, plantation and mixed

Main species: *Schima wallichii*

Block division: 5 blocks

Total households: 66

Duration of the OP: 2062 to 2071 (2005 to 2014)

Legalized by:

DF Office

Name: Ganesh Rai

Signature

District Forest Officer

Date: 2062/03/12

Logo DFO

CFUG

Name: Hem Raj Regmi

Signature

Chairperson

Logo of CFUG

1 Historical background

This is Jhauri Community Forest. It is located at the Khurkot VDC, ward number 3 in Parbat District, which has a history of 100 years of existence. The forest could not escape from the problem of deforestation during 2030 BS to 2038 BS (1973 to 1981).

Initially it was used as a grazing land with some species of *Schima wallichii* (Chiloni or Makri sal), but later it turned into the heap of boulders. With the initiation of the then Chief Panch Pandit: Hemraj Regmi Sharma (Pradhan Pranch during the Panchayat System in Nepal, before the VDC system) the forest was created thanks to his efforts for conservation, preservation and development of the forest. In 2039/2040 (1982/1983) the nursery was established and the planting activities were carried out. At first, seedlings were brought from *Kusma* and planting was carried out in ward 3 and 4 of Khurkot VDC. The planting was done collectively, with the involvement of human labor. After the planting started, the grazing and browsing were strictly forbidden in the forest area. In the fiscal year of 2047 (1990) the community organized the plantation of 5 ha, for this the Nepal UK Community Forestry Project Banglung and the DF Office from Parbat were assisting the community. After this, the forest was handed over to the Community as a formal CFUG in 1993. Subsequently, 2.88 ha of forest were added in 2054 (1997) to the Jhauri CFUG.

This Jhauri CFUG also received the first prize in the whole district due to the continuous contribution and hard work of users, as well as the directions and guidance of the DFO, Parbat and other organizations related with the forest.

The main species of the Jhauri forest are: Sissoo (*Dalbergia sissoo*), Salla (*Pinus roxburghii*), Tooni (*Toona ciliata*), Cardamom, Amrisho (broom grasses), bamboo and many others, which are an indication of the forest beauty and the development of community forest management.

Small and yet beauty, Jhauri forest increased its territory in 2061 (2004) and became 20.53 ha in area. This forest was also awarded with the third position in the prestigious Ganeshman Singh Forest Conservation Award in 2060 (2003).

Although the territory of the forest is small, certain land is allocated for the poor families. This land is for the cultivation of broom grass, for any other demand of the forest users and to fulfill them in a sustainable way, but at the same time it follows the rules and regulations of the Nepali Government regarding this forest. This Jhauri CFUG with slogan "Plant Amrisho, raise income" has revised the Operational Plant 2061 BS (2004).

According to the Forest Act 2049/2050 (1992/1993) and the Forest Regulation 2051 (1996), the validity of the previous OP is ended.

2 Description of the forest

Jhauri CFUG, Khurkot, Parbat.

- a. Boundaries
East: cultivated, Khane Khol (stream)
West: Theido Bato (Lane) and cultivated
North: Stream in the upper part and Amrisho in the other $\frac{3}{4}$ of the top.
South: Horizontal lane to go Lampantho and walls.
- b. Area 20.53 ha
- c. Geographical condition: Located at the altitude of 900m to 950m from the sea levels.

3 Aims of the forest management

3.1 Short-run aims

- To fulfill the daily needs of the users by managing and conserving forest resources and by a sustainable forest management
- To organize income generating activities related to forest and to improve the livelihood and the economic condition of the poor people.
- To organize trainings and seminars about the management of NTFPs for the Poverty Alleviation Program
- Plantation of the forest
- To organize activities related to forest management and social development, in order to improve the development of the country
- To develop Amrisho cultivation
- Cultivation, exploitation and conservation of medicinal plants and NTFPs

3.2 Long term aims

- To keep environmental balance from sustainable forest management
- To improve forest condition
- To maintain the forest as a beautiful recreational area by preserving wildlife
- Preservation of biodiversity
- To destroy invasive species like Banmara (*Lantana camara* and commonly called forest killer) from the forest

4 Forest management activities

4.1 Income Generation Activities

- To encourage Amrisho cultivation by poor families
- To provide land to the poor families for their own management, for a period of at least 10 years

- To promote the users organization by forming groups like The Saving Fund, Safe Motherhood Fund, etc.

4.2 Other activities

- Preservation of: stream channel, drinking water system, electricity, roads, land and other resources inside the CF area
- Medicinal plants: To encourage user for the cultivation of medicinal plants
- Extension: To launch awareness programs for the preservation, conservation, management and development of forest by establishing communication board meetings in public areas
- Energy: to raise awareness about the scarcity of energy sources by promoting and searching alternative energy sources as bio gas plants
- Soil conservation: to control the floods, landslides and slope areas
- Plantation of NTFPs in barren land during the OP period
- As Nepal is a member of the WTO, the EC is thinking to export the Khucho (brooms) from Amrisho in the international market by managing forest in a sustainable way
- To manage community forest's office and seminar hall to organize seminars, conferences and meetings regarding forest management, health, education, agriculture and livestock

5 Process and procedure for preparation of the OP

The previous Operational Plan ended in 2059 BS (1992). The new Operational Plan is prepared with the technical support and assistance of the District Forest Office – Parbat, NESDO – Nepal – Parbat, LFP and through a General Assembly of all the users and EC meetings, analyzing the social involvement of the community.

Through the social and forest resource survey, the socio-economic aspects and stratification of the Community is easily shown, as well as the changes of the forest condition before handing over, and, finally, the forest condition at the present time is analyzed in a technical way.

To omit the previous errors in technical logging, this operational plan of Jhauri CFUG includes the principles, criteria and indicators as per the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), such that the concept of 'Good Forest' and therefore, The Policy of Sustainable Forest Management can be implemented.

5.1 Analysis of old operational plan

The Operational Plan goes in harmony with the existing Forest Policy, although many aspects were not included. However, through the active involvement of the committee in different meetings, discussions and general assembly, the time oriented policies are made, which has resulted in the formation of managed forest. According to old OP only 50% of the demand for wood, grass, firewood and leaf litters was fulfilled. While distributing the forest products or NTFPs, people in the category of very poor were supplied with a 10% reduction in the cost. This policy is also followed in the present OP.

In the old OP, the allocation of land for the poor families without any charge (or for free) was not mentioned, but in the new OP 6 families were provided with 7 ropains of land for broom grass

cultivation. Also, the provision of credit for goat rearing activities is indicated through the general assembly in order to promote the Poverty Alleviation Program.

The necessary forest products and NTFPs cannot be supplied only through the forests, therefore various grasses, napiers and other species of plants are provided from the nursery for free to the users and they can plant them in their own fallow land.

Before handing over, the condition of the forest was very poor because it was totally barren steep land. With the co-ordination of the people and district forest officer, plantations were made and gradually the forest has improved. The forest has become dense and diverse. After stopping the animal grazing, users have been consuming the forest products. Napiers and ground grasses with proteins are in plenty, which has helped the users who are involved in selling milk. Illegal cutting of trees has completely stopped.

This CFUG has focused on improving the forest condition, in addition to the institutional and social development and human welfare.

Regarding forest, its condition has been excessively improved by reducing the natural disasters and by increasing the forest products to fulfill the requirements.

Regarding institutional and social development, the CFUG has been established along with CFUG's bank accounts and the transparency of the CFUG accountability. Users are aware about the development of forest. The involvement of women in conservation, management and development of forest is remarkable.

For the local welfare, poor users are provided with various trading's, like broom-making, veterinary and forest management trainings, and consequently making them less dependent.

Capacity and skill development of users is also taken care of through their involvement in various group discussions and assembly. This CFUG has become a source of inspiration to itself, as well as to others CFUG.

6 Analysis of forest resources demand and supply and forest uses

S.N	Type	Unit	Yearly demand	Yearly supply		Less or More
				From cf	Private source	
1	Timber	Cu.ft	897	121.11	775.89	Less
2	Fuelwood	Bundle (load)	2045	709	1336	Less
3	Fodder	Bundle	3857	200	3675	Less
4	Napiers (grass)	Load (bundle)	9754	503	9251	Less
5	Agricultural tool	Number	60	10	50	Less

- Timber: Although there is a demand for 897 cu.ft, only 121.11 cu.ft is fulfilled from the forest, the rest is satisfied on their own or by buying from the market.
- Fuel-wood/Firewood: As the supply is less than the demand, users are encouraged to use alternate sources like Gober Gas (gas processed from cow dung). So, alternate sources are required to reduce the demand.
- Fodder: Alternate sources are being searched to fulfill the demand.
- Grasses: To fulfill the need, perennial grasses like molasses and stylo are planted.
- Agricultural tools: Necessary tools are bought from markets.

By analyzing the above table, demand and supply are not equivalent. To fulfill the needs, trees and grasses are also planted in the fallow lands. Likewise, improved gas stoves are also used to reduce the demand of fuel-wood. However, other alternative sources can be used to decrease the demand from the forest.

7 Basis for division of forest

Initially, the forest area was divided into 4 blocks to manage the forest sustainably. Currently, the forest is divided into 5 blocks on the basis of geographical boundary, streams, etc.

7.1 Aims for forest division

- To ease the management and preservation activities
- To get forest resources easily
- To utilize the forest resources by developing, preserving and managing forest.
- For the preservation and development of NTFPs (Non Timber Forest Products)
- For the continuous use of forest products
- For the conservation of biodiversity (wildlife and vegetation)
- To simplify the plantation and natural regeneration (afforestation)

7.2 Forest resource inventory and analysis

In the active involvement of the users, a participatory map representing the whole forest was drawn. According to the map and by visiting the forest, the forest was divided into 5 blocks. On the basis of abundance of species in the forest, the blocks were subdivided into sample plots and

the inventory of the forest resources was carried out. For the pole-sized species, sample plot of 10x10 m was considered while for measuring the samplings; sample plot of 5x5 m was considered. The data from each block is analyzed using the inventory directives of Forest Department Office and LFP. On the basis of annual increment and growing stock, demand and supply were analyzed and this OP is prepared.

8 Nursery

Jhauri has its own nursery since the beginning. For the condition and management of nursery initially, Nepal-UK Community Forestry Project assisted and later LFP and DF office has been assisting. Through nursery various species are being produced.

8.1 Nursery leaders

2 poor users are self-employed and trained as the nursery leaders to look after the nursery and carry out various activities.

9 Forest conservation activities

- Grazing is strictly prohibited inside the CF
- Forest is conserved by self-discipline of users
- Extension of forest conservation, management and development was broadcasted in the episode 311 of Aankhijhal radio program from Radio Nepal.
- Awareness about the forest conservation is extended through magazines and newspapers.
- Trainings, seminars and conferences are carried out about the awareness of forest encroachment.
- Users are made aware about the forest fire
- To discourage encroachment and illegal activities inside the forest, a system of award to the spy and punishment to the culprit is managed
- Control measure for soil erosion, flood, landslide
- Implicating of forest rule 2049 and forest regulation 2051
- Proper management for the conservation of wildlife
- Informing the ways of conservation to the people or organizations who come to visit the forest.
- Prohibiting to enter forest without permission
- Guarding the forest by the users

10 Forest management activities

1. Sanitation/cleanliness: All the unnecessary grass or branches, which remained after harvesting, are cleaned in order to favor growth of natural regeneration and planted seedling.
2. Coppicing (fingling): *Schima wallichii* is the best coppicing species. It has good ability to grow from its coppice. So, for that species in the first year, 3 coppices are put and others are removed. While in other species, the good coppice is kept.
3. Branches should be cut only in the proportion of 2/3 of a whole plant

4. Thinning: Threes which are dead, decaying, matured, old ones are selected for thinning. The CFUG committee should decide it.
5. Selection thinning: Trees that are matured, dead, diseased are selected for thinning.

11 Distribution and selling system of forest resources

11.1 Distribution of wood/ timber

- For the social development activities e.g. for schools, temples, bridge construction and other works, timbers will be provided for free.
- If users came to face any natural calamities, then according to nature, up to 20 cu.ft timber will be provided for free. The nature of urgent need will be evaluated by the evaluation committee.
- Timber can be got according to rotation
- Timber will be provided according to the OP (for place and time)
- If any user has a need of timber for home or other construction work, then he should give application of his demand to executive committee. Alternatively, evaluating the nature of damage, timber will be provided up to 50 cu.ft.
- Timber will be distributed according to well being ranking
- Timber will be collected according to forest act 2049 and forest regulation 2051.
- One should have permission paper to enter forest
- The price of timber is done according to the present value
- The matured tree should be conserved to produce seeds.

Example of price rate for different species

S.N	Species	Quantity	Rate				Remarks
			A	B	C	D	
1	Chillaune	1 cu.ft	22Rs	21Rs	20Rs	18Rs	
2	Mauwa	1	17Rs	18Rs	15Rs	14Rs	
3	Uttis	1 cu.ft	12Rs	11Rs	10Rs	9Rs	
4	Sisou	1 cu.ft	27Rs	26Rs	25Rs	24Rs	
5	Sal	1 cu.ft	55Rs	54Rs	53Rs	50Rs	
6	Others	1 cu.ft	22Rs	21Rs	20Rs	18Rs	

Distribution of pole-sized timber

- All the poles that are collected during the thinning period will be distributed according to the demand-application form and lottery system
- The price is fixed according to the decision of committee.

Distribution of fuelwood

- All the fuelwood should be collected or cut down between December and February.
- For the cutting of fuelwood all users are divided into a group of members and 1 leader is selected from each group.

- Committee will determine/fix the size of stacking.
- One member from each family should go to the forest during the work schedule
- The families who have not been participating during the work in the forest are not allowed to collect fuelwood.
- After the preparation of stacks of fuelwood, it is distributed according to lottery system.
- The pricing system for fuelwood is as follows:
 - 1 stack of fuelwood= Rs.50 –(A)
 - 1 stack of fuelwood= Rs.49 –(B)
 - 1 stack of fuelwood= Rs.48 –(C)
 - 1 stack of fuelwood= Rs.45 –(D) – In case of emergency or some cause

Distribution of Ground-grass

- All the ground grass is cut between August and October.
- Grasses are provided only to the farmers who really need it i.e. family having livestock
- Whole forest area is divided into many numbers form. Sign to distribute ground-grass and according to the lottery, grass is provided
- The family who got grass area are not allowed to sell it to another family
- The price of grass is fixed according to nature of grass

Distribution of Fodder

- Fodder is collected between November and February
- Fodder is distributed according to Bhari (load/bundle)
- Fodder is distributed for free

Distribution of Amrisho

- Amrisho species are harvested between December and February
- Price system= 1 bunch is Rs. 5
- Amrisho is provided for free to schools, institutions and offices.

12 Conservation system from wildlife and bio-diversity

- Hunting of wild species is strictly prohibited inside the C.F. If somebody is found to be involved, he/she will be punished according to forest rules and regulation.
- All the species found inside C.F are conserved.

13 Utilization of economic fund

All the money, which is received by the CFUG is saved in bank account in the name of Jhauri CFUGs. From this fund, 25% will be used for the development of forest works. The remaining money will be mobilized to the poor families in order to improve their livelihood. Those programs will be implemented as per the decision of the General assembly. After the decision the money will be mobilized for the development of physical infrastructure as well as human resource management. The expenditure will be transparent. Every year auditing is done.

The CFUG's members who have participated in the conferences, meetings, seminars must share their knowledge with others.

14 Human Resource development

- Mr. Prem Prasad Sharma Regmi - Forest certification and forest seed management
- Mr. Seshraj Regmi - Group mobilization and capability development
- Pandit Hemraj Regmi - Conflict management and forest management
- Mr. Khaganath Aryal - Identification and collection of medicinal plants

15 Forest certification

At the context of present time, it is our utmost responsibility to conserve forest for future generation. Now, we need sustainable forest management.