

Towards Expanded Property Rights to Local Communities over Forest Resources in Nepal: Lessons and Strategies

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Context of Expanded Property Rights

- ☞ Recognition of community rights & evolution of community forestry-formally since 1978
- ☞ Experiential learning
- ☞ Innovations
- ☞ New issues, opportunities, and challenges



Issues of Limited Rights to Communities

- ☞ Communities dependence on forest resources for livelihoods
- ☞ Limited use & management rights
 - Subsistent oriented
 - Small patches of forest
 - Degraded land
 - Limited range of products
 - Restrictions on use & trade
 - Multiple taxation



Issues Cont...

- ❖ Inadequate incentives for conservation
- ❖ Improper management & use leading to degradation of resources



Challenges for Expanded Property Rights

- ✔ Policy and Legislation Provisions
- ✔ Distortion in Policy Implementation
- ✔ Community Characteristics and Setting
- ✔ Inadequate Research and Study
- ✔ Inadequate Technical Assistance to Communities



Policy and Legislation Provision

- ☞ Gaps, inconsistencies and contradictions
- ☞ Complex and restrictive regulations (ban, permits, royalties ...)
- ☞ Overly bureaucratic process
- ☞ Low level of stakeholders participation in policy formation process



Distortion in Policy Implementation

- ☞ Interest & value clashes between community and government officials
- ☞ Rent seeking
- ☞ Discretion on interpretation of regulations
- ☞ Red tape
- ☞ Elite dominance: chairperson, committee rather than group



Community Characteristics & Setting

- ☛ Lack of awareness and motivation
- ☛ Inadequate technical capacity
- ☛ Unjust social structure
- ☛ Remoteness & physical layout



Inadequate Research and Study

- ☞ Complexity of property rights
- ☞ Understanding of multiple users' rights



Inadequate Technical Assistance to Communities

- ☛ Govt. services – number, motivation, capability, ...
- ☛ Limited NGOs and project
- ☛ Coordination



ANSAB's Approach

- ☛ Up-scaling from the grassroots
- ☛ Collaborative
- ☛ Adaptive
- ☛ Action and learning based
- ☛ Rights based (empowerment)



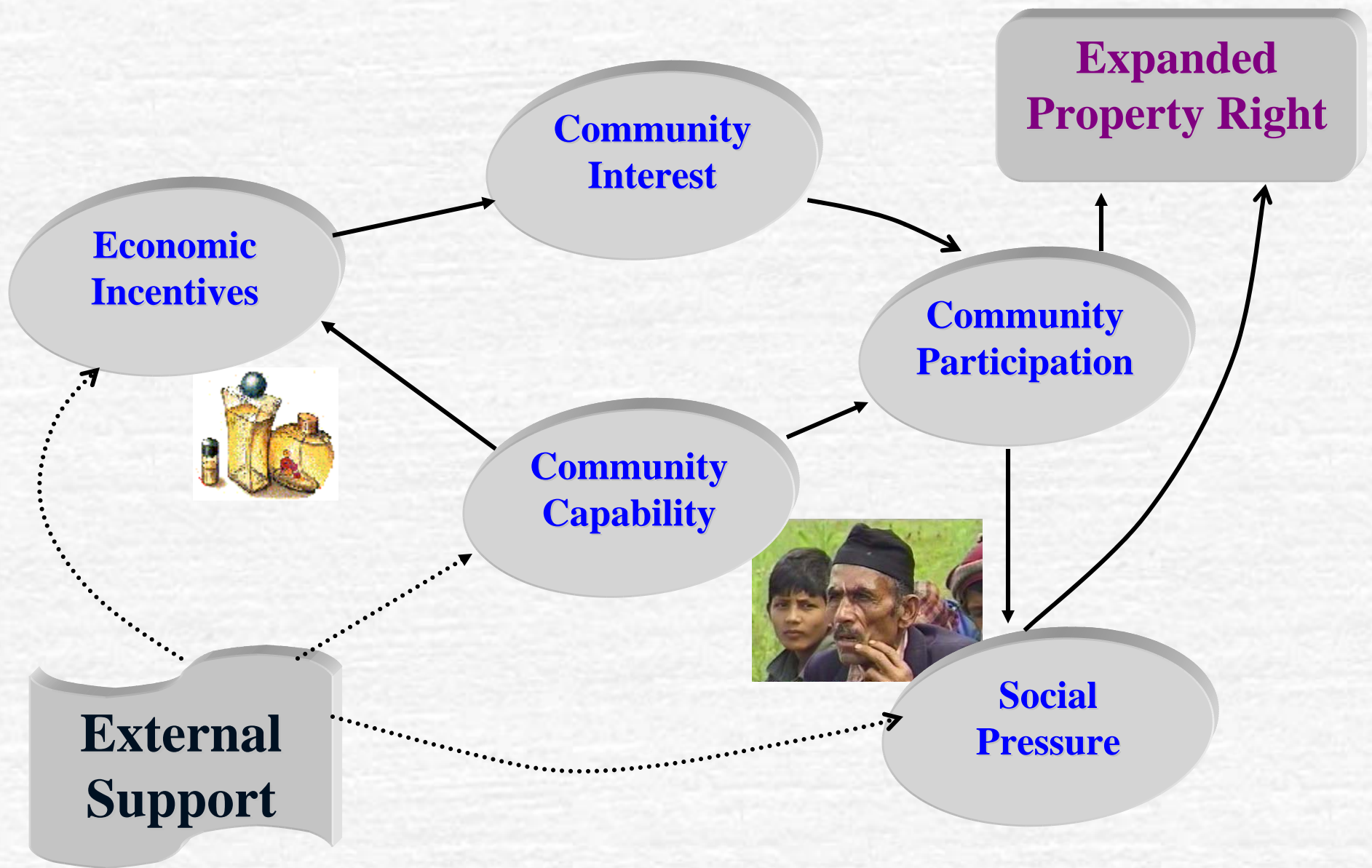


Fig1: ANSAB's strategic framework for expanded property rights to local community over forest resources



Strategies

- ☞ Community-Based Forest Enterprise as an Entry Point
- ☞ Community Empowerment
- ☞ Technical Support for Community Forestry Process
- ☞ FUG Networking and Federation Building
- ☞ Forum Organizing
- ☞ Improving Information Access



Community-Based Forest Enterprise

- ✓ Economic benefit are the entry points
 - See tangible value of biodiversity
 - Realize threats to local biodiversity
 - Interested to expand property rights
- ✓ Sub-sector analysis and methodology for CBFEs
- ✓ Linkages of multiple actors

Malika

HOPL

Choubas



Community Empowerment

- ✓ FUG formation
- ✓ Conflict management & negotiation skills
- ✓ Legal awareness
- ✓ Integrated conservation education
- ✓ Organizational strengthening



Technical Support for Community Forestry Process

- ☞ Identification of the forest area and users
- ☞ Formation of the forest user group (FUG)
- ☞ Forest identification and demarcation
- ☞ Forest management operational plan preparation
- ☞ Negotiation with forestry authority and handing over of community forest
- ☞ Implementation, monitoring and improvement of the plan



FUG Networking and Federation Building

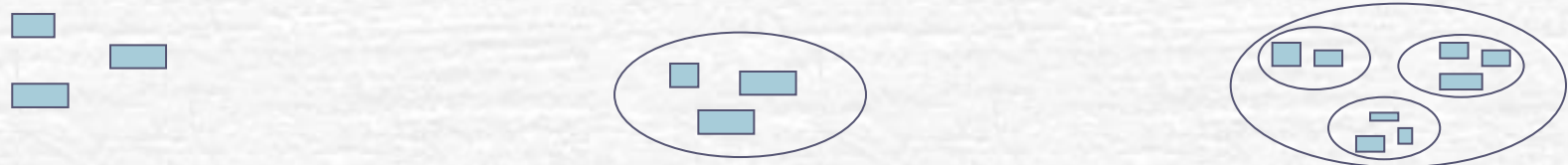
- Local networking of product specific FUGs
- District level federations building and strengthening for policy advocacy
- Providing needed strategic advice and support to national federation of FUG



Forum Organizing

- A common forum for different stakeholders – government agencies, field practitioners, researchers, trainers, CBFEs, NGOs ...
- Bringing the issues from grassroots for policy improvement
- Task forces to address emerging issues
- Scaling up through sharing

Individual FUGs → Federation at District Level → National and Regional Levels



NNN



Improving Information Access

- ☞ Marketing information services
- ☞ Documentation and dissemination
- ☞ Exchange visits, study tours
- ☞ Training of trainers for leader farmers



Outcome: Expanded Use Rights & Mgmt. Responsibility

- ☞ Type of land for community forest
- ☞ Size of community forest
- ☞ Range of products including NTFPs
- ☞ Commercial use



Outcome: Advances in Resource Use & Management

- Innovations towards more efficient resource use
- CBFEs
- Benefit sharing arrangements
- Adaptive management practices (biodiversity monitoring, experimentation, harvesting practices ...)



Humla oil

- A company owned by local community representatives had been producing essential oils using distillation from alpine medicinal and aromatic plants such as Jatamansi. The oil is exported via a Kathmandu based sales unit.



Malika handmade paper

- A FUG-owned company making paper from Lokta bark and selling products to Kathmandu based paper companies, employing local people in management and production.



Conclusion

- ✔ Successes materialized through pilot initiatives
- ✔ Challenges remained for up-scaling
- ✔ Local initiations to national impacts
- ✔ External support is crucial
- ✔ Appreciation of ANSAB's strategies & actions, but limited replication
- ✔ Broader strategic alliance for wider impact

