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

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Expanded Property Rights to Local Communities

- Context
- Issues
- Challenges
- ANSAB’s Approach
- Strategies
- Outcomes
- Conclusion
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
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
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 ...)

Outcome: Advances in Resource Use & Management
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