

## Compendia of Graduate Theses in forestry and allied subjects

The forests are of critical importance both for sustaining the increasing human and livestock populations, and the dwindling wildlife populations of Nepal. They are also of enormous importance for preventing catastrophic environmental degradation through soil erosion, landslides, flooding and loss of bio-diversity in the fragile ecosystems of the country.

The responsibilities of those charged with managing the forests, so that the society derives maximum benefit from their productive function without detriment to their functions of preservation and regulation, are complex and onerous. It needs to be discharged in the light of the widest possible knowledge of the research which has been conducted in recent decades. Nepali forestry professionals and those working in the related fields have done a number of research in the quest of solving Nepal's specific forestry related problems and have added a body of knowledge to science as a part of their academic degree. Many researchers outside this country have also contributed a lot in this regard.

Academic institutions which award doctoral and graduate degrees exclusively on the basis of the quality of research and thesis submitted, require candidates to fulfill in detail the background to the research topic, a review of the problem researched, a review of relevant literature and other research methods used, the results and discussion, indications towards further research, and any recommendations. No duplication of such research is ever allowed. Such a tight scrutiny

fetches a quality product in the form of theses which are of use to the researchers, students, and to policy makers. The cycle goes on and on for the ultimate benefit of society.

As significant amount of research work of candidates (mostly Nepali) for Ph D, M Sc and other degrees are 'buried' in their theses, having seldom been published and usually being available only from the authors or the institutions where they have been lodged.

Even the existence of such authors and their work is often unknown to people who could take its advantage, not only in forest management but also in research, teaching and other scholarly activities, and in government departments, national and international NGOs and aid agencies both in Nepal and abroad.

It was therefore, with a view to disseminate the information a list of these theses and a brief summary of the contents of each was compiled and published. These could be a valuable supplement to the published literature, and thus help furthering research and in developing management policies and systems which will ensure the utilisation of forest products and help not to further degrade the forests or reduce the wonderful diversity of flora and fauna which they still contain.

This compilation consists of compendia (i.e. brief summaries) of 35 doctorate and 131 masters degree theses written by Nepali postgraduate students in forestry and allied subjects or foreign students whose work relates

specifically to Nepal.

Most of the compendia include an abstract of the thesis and summaries of the research problem, methodology, findings, and suggestions for further research and recommendations for future action. However, where the work of a Nepali student does not relate specifically to Nepal, only an abstract has been provided. The compendia are presented in alphabetical order of the authors' surnames.

Every effort was made to collect theses so as to make the compilation as complete as possible. Theses deposited with various universities, libraries, government and non-government agencies in Nepal and elsewhere were sought. Advertisements were placed in national daily press and known holders of relevant postgraduate degrees were individually requested to make their theses available. These approaches were very successful in availing theses. However, there must be some still missing. This work is therefore only a beginning, and it is hoped that a later compilation can include further theses which may be discovered or submitted in future.

It is hoped, that the Institute of Forestry of Tribhuvan University in particular, will find this publication useful in developing its proposed provisions for postgraduate studies. It is further hoped that similar other institutions of higher learning in Nepal will also benefit from this compilation.

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Centre. This publication would become successful if it helps the concerned people in their endeavour. The International

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## Where is our Terai Community Forestry ?

Nepal's Community Forestry could be an exemplary policy to outsiders. "Nepal is way ahead, especially in the region in this growing area of concern". This is what has been written many times in many publications. Compliments are pouring in regarding Nepal's successful implementation of this policy. Visitors not only from the region but also from far away come frequently to learn and/or getting benefit from Nepal's experiences of forest management through peoples' participation. But, with the recent record of just 13% of the potential community forest so far handed over to the communities, is not it still premature to get overwhelmed with its success ?

The greatest achievements of the community forestry programme should be viewed in terms of having peoples active participation for forest management and other community development activities of Nepal. However, some success have been achieved especially in the midhills of Nepal in so far as reducing the state expenditure in forest management is concerned (one of my nearest friends was taking the other day that the great success of community forestry in Nepal is to refrain those other than the ordinary Nepali from taking undue benefit from forests. He is right, I believe.). But what about the terai ? The latter which corresponds to 13.6 percent of the total land of the country has 22 percent of the country's total forests which are commercially

important to the nation. But, these forests are shrinking day-by-day. And this is where the state needs to show its concern not only to halt encroachment but to increase the productivity of the terai forests. Community forestry, as in the midhills, could be one of its options. But the way the terai scenario is different than that of the midhills, the same model may not fit in here exactly. This is what our experiences so far gained from the terai community forestry have shown.

### Major issues

A study done by a group of experts (namely J. C. Baral, B. R. Poudyal, R. Kafle, P. Lamsal, A. K. KC, B. R. Adhikari and A. R. Poudel) of the Department of Forests, has outlined a number of issues existing in terai community forestry. According to them the basic concept of community forestry in Nepal which evolved from the hills through many past experiences gathered by a number of forestry projects working in the hills have failed to address the specific conditions of the terai. The existing legislative provisions of community forestry also seem to be formulated in view of hills and mountains. Similarly the operational guidelines prepared with a view to address the hill conditions do not suit the terai.

In terms of management interventions the forests of the terai are classified into three forms. They are: Production forests, Protection forest and Potential community forest. The former is the one which has high

economic significance for the state. And the others, especially the latter could only be handed over to community as community forests. In places where Operational Forest Management Plan has not been prepared, the terai forests are handed over to communities on *ad hoc* basis without considering the above classification. There are such forest areas which are basically the production forests, but handed over to the communities. Harvesting timber by Forest User Groups (FUGs) through private entrepreneur may lead to undue carelessness thereby becoming a source of conflict. The FUGs so far formed with whatever area of forest handed over to them, are also not empowered as they should have been. Moreover, identification of users, and providing basic forest products to those living far away from the forest areas have not been addressed. All these complexities have made the commencement of community forestry in the terai a difficult proposition.

### Suggestions

With these scenario, the study team suggests, for the time being, not to gear-up the existing pace of handing over forest area of the terai to the communities simply to fulfill the annual target of the district forest offices. It should be followed only on the basis of operational plans. Forests should also be reclassified into protection/potential community forests and production/community forest. The social