



Tropentag, October 6-8, 2009, Hamburg

“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

Does Community Forestry Contribute to Poverty Reduction? an Evidence from Nepal

SONY BARAL¹, HARALD VACIK², WALTER SEKOT³

¹*Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB), Nepal*

²*University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Department of Forest and Soil Sciences,*

³*University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Department of Economic and Social Sciences,*

Abstract

The Community Forestry programme in Nepal has dual mandates: the conservation of forest resources and poverty reduction. It is widely accepted that community forestry (CF) is successful in conserving forest resources; however, its poverty reduction approach is still a subject of discourse. In general, the community forestry programme is to be considered successful when it provides equitable benefit to all users and decreases income inequality in the community. To evaluate the community forestry programme for its economic contribution to the poor user, a study was carried out in two community forest users groups (CFUG) of Dolakha District of Nepal. Total households of each CFUG were stratified into four economic strata viz. very poor, poor, medium and rich by means of participatory well-being ranking. From each stratum 25% of the households were selected constituting a sample of 115 households. The following participatory methods were used to generate empirical data: free listing, household surveys, group interviews as well as key informant interviews. Lorenz curves and Gini-coefficients were calculated in order to characterise the distribution of the household income. Calculations with and without the contribution of community forestry to the households' income underpin the significance of income based on forest resources especially for the poor. The results show that in both CFUGs community forest is contributing to reducing the income inequalities among different economic classes. Hence, it is concluded from the study that community forestry is not only successful in forest conservation but can also help in abating poverty. Further studies investigating indirect benefits and multiplier effects of CF as well as respective impacts on rural livelihoods and poverty alleviation are suggested.

Keywords: Community forestry, economic contribution, income inequality, Nepal, poverty reduction