

Building Resilience to Climate Change at Local Level: A Case of Community Forests of Nepal

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Nepal is regarded as one of the most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change. Its impacts are evident and have threatened the livelihood of local communities. As the impacts are localized, building resilience of local community is the starting point to build resilience at the national level as well. In this paper, I try to explore the relationship between community forests (CF), and its potential contribution in building resilience to the impacts of climate change. Extensive review of the climate change related policies have been carried out to elicit policies about the climate resilience. Discussion was also carried out with the relevant governmental and non-governmental organization (NGOs) officials. Moreover, as a case study to find out the field level scenario, three community forests of Parbat district were also visited. Similarly, Climate change adaptation plans of these CF were reviewed, and discussion with the executive members, and observation of the implemented activities were also carried out in the field.

Nepal has formulated various policies and programs to support climate resilience at the local level. For instances, National Adaptation Program for Action (NAPA) 2010, Climate Change Policy 2011, and National Framework for Local Adaptation Plan for Action 2011 have emphasized the local level actions to build resilience to climate change. About twenty thousand community forests users groups are functional in Nepal primarily to conserve and manage the forest resources of Nepal. In the changing global and national environmental and political context, they are continually adapted to solve the emerging environmental as well as social problems. CFs have been carrying out activities categorizing in six impact categories viz. agriculture and food security, forest and biodiversity, water resources and energy, water induced disasters, human settlements and physical infrastructures and human health. Besides that community forests were also found to be carried out capacity building and awareness raising activities on climate change adaptation and resilience. However, it is found that local level financing is crucial for the successful implementation of climate change adaptation plans. Various local level adaptation plans are prepared in Nepal but low financing has resulted in weak implementation of those plans in the field. The same was found to have been applied in case of community forests in the study area as well. Likewise, the government and NGO sectors has provided inadequate amount of budget to implement the activities. On the other hand, discussion with the officials at the district and national level revealed that lack of mainstreaming of adaptation plans into the plans and programs of governmental line offices/agencies and NGOs resulted in the lack of adequate fund for the implementation of climate change adaptation/resilience related activities. Therefore, mainstreaming the climate change related activities of the community forests with the plan and program of the governmental and NGOs can improve the effectiveness of community actions to build the climate resiliency.