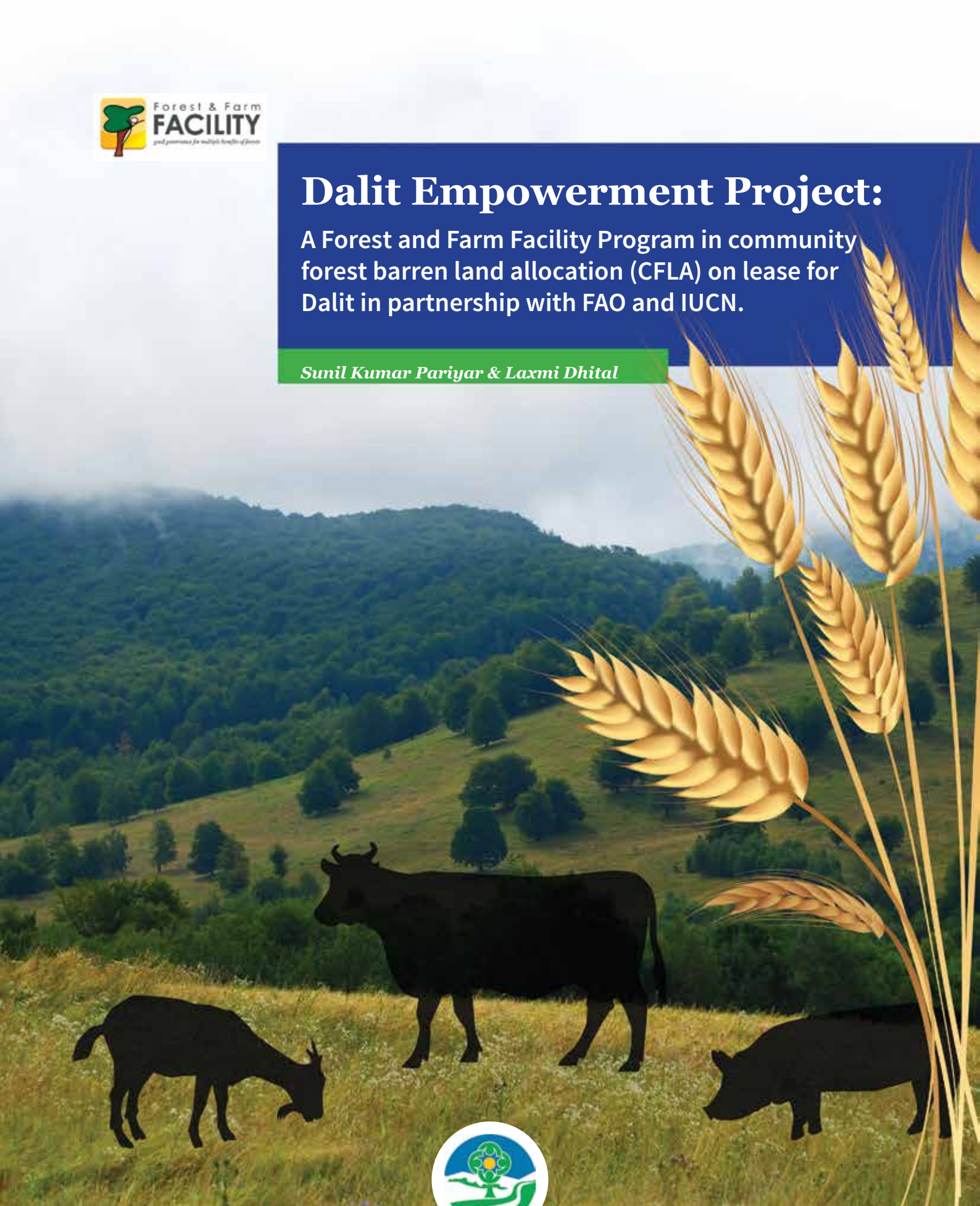




Dalit Empowerment Project:

A Forest and Farm Facility Program in community forest barren land allocation (CFLA) on lease for Dalit in partnership with FAO and IUCN.

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In Nepal, Community Forestry (CF) is known as a widely successful practice in terms of conservation. Also, CF is recognized as having far more potential benefits for the poor and disadvantaged throughout the world (IUCN, 2011; International Forestry Review, 2009). Forest Farm Facility (FFF) has emerged out of the former National Forest Program Facility (NFP-Facility) and Growing Forest Partnership (GFP) initiatives. So it is necessary to promote a system of forestry which can conserve forest trees as well as promote the livelihoods of farmers by increasing their farm based products to earn money. The concept of 'farm forestry' is therefore a viable solution for the agricultural country like Nepal. Hereby, to support smallholder producer organization through business incentives and policy voice for sustainable forest landscape, we brought the concept of Forest and Farm Facility.

Background

Community Forestry (CF) in Nepal has been acknowledged as the most successful, innovative and truly community oriented program for sustainable development. Community forests after 20 years in Nepal are well grown up, growing its crown cover and density.

According to the state report of Nepal, Forest occupies a total of 5.96 million ha which is 40.36% of the total area of the country. Other Wooded Land (OWL) covers 0.65 million ha (4.38%). Forest and OWL together represent 44.74% of the total area of the country. The total number of stems with Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) ≥ 10 cm estimated in the Forest of Nepal is 2,563.27 million (429.93/ha). The estimated total stem volume is 982.33million m³ (164.76 m³/ha).With the increasing forest, population is also increasing with the same rate so leading to the deforestation. Thus, reducing the dependency of forest is becoming very challenges. The poor, Dalits and women are forest dwellers too. Therefore, it was realized to improve Dalit leadership and economic condition through empowerment project.

In this regard, Dalit Alliance for Natural Resources (DANAR) Nepal has targeted to improve Dalit livelihoods and their leadership position in CBFM with the main objectives to empower livelihoods of Dalit on economic perspective through livelihood promotion activities and on the other hand developing their leadership capability for active participation in community forest management through Forest Farm Facility (FFF).



Plantation inauguration by chairperson Balrama Kandel of Amar Jyoti Community Forest.

Process

The main working base under which DANAR has completed the project is Community Forest Land Allocation for creation of jobs to poor, disadvantaged and socially excluded Dalits household. This has followed the good practices that have been initiated by the Forest and Farm facility(FFF).The allocated land was used for plantation purposes from which poor, disadvantaged and socially excluded Dalits household got support for the livestock promoting activities as well as other economic benefits from the forest product as per return for good management of the forest.

Objectives of the project and Baseline Study

The project aims at improving social and economic circumstances of Dalit members through forest and farm management.

The specific objectives of the baseline study is to document the social and economic status of locals within the CF, on-going CF related activities, participation of locals, document data on available FFF activities, roles of institution and find possibility and probability of conducting the project in relation to FFF mission.



Dalit and poor working on community forest baren land allocation for plantation.

Situation Analysis

Population distribution

From the baseline survey conducted with Amar Jyoti (CFUG member) and related stakeholders, socio-economic data was generated. The total number of households within the Amar Jyoti CF is 1,128.

Occupation and income

From the survey, it was observed that main occupation of the CF members was agriculture (100%) followed by wage labor (48.2%). As considered to have educational level due to their economic status, very few families reported to be engaged in services and business sectors. Regarding the source of primary income contributing to household income the respondents (Bishnu Nepali of Jhakre -4, Nawalparasi, Mohan Singh Sunar of Amarjyoti Community Forest, Devchuli-4, Jhakre, Nawalparai) reported agriculture (39.5%), services (3.1%) and business (1.6%) as main source of income for their livelihood. The average income was reported to be Rs.35,000 per year which clearly indicated the poor living of that respondent.

Livelihood Pattern and dependency on forest

It was observed that most of the respondents lack ownership of their own land. Average land holding of the respondent reported during the baseline survey (>75%) is less than 1 Ha. Now with the implementation of this project, 50% of Dalit households have involved in income generating activities through selling of broom grass, bamboo product like doko, etc to the members within CF.

Linkages and access with social network

Shree Amar Jyoti CFUG has maintained good relations with other social networks and organization like Municipality, District Forest Office, VDC, Municipality have been involved in conduction of Forest and Farm Facility and Capacity Building training to their members on Forest conservation and sustainable forest management. Their activities involves plantation program, seed distribution.

Willingness of involvement

From the survey, it was clearly identified the interest of the respondents to be part of this projects. >90% showed interest to be included in the producer group i.e Bamboo Producers, Vegetable and Goat Keeping Groups to be formed with a hope to improve their livelihood prospects.

Involvement of CFUG on forest farm based enterprises:

The Baseline showed that non forest-based economic activities have been conducted. A one day project brief sharing program was conducted in AmaSamuha in Shanti Danda, where the objectives and proposed program activities were disseminated among the CFUG members.

Proposed Producer group activities related to forest farm as per survey:

S.N.	Producer Group	Nature of support	Proposed activities and enterprise
1.	Producer Group 1	Group	Plantation of Broom grass and other grass species, forest farm supporting livestock system
2.	Producer Group 2	Group	Plantation of Bamboo + initiation of bamboo craft enterprises + forest farm
3.	Producer Group 3	Individual	Support forest based activities conducted in individual level

Access on forest resources

The Survey found that most Dalit members felt they were not fully represented on the CFUG committee. Only one member (Shanti BK) was associated as committee member which reported that there was lack of capacity and leadership skills around forest and their dissatisfaction on the resources utilization among dalits and non-dalits.

Methodology

The site selected for the project was Shree Amar Jyoti CFUG of Ward 1, 2, 4, 5 of Devchuli Municipality of Nawalparasi district. Total household within this community forestry is 1,128 and forest total hectare is 199. The site was selected as a good example to demonstrate the impact of social and economic empowerment of Dalit members through forest and farm management and evidence based policy advocacy.

Community Forest Land Allocation

Many Community Forests have plots of land without forest cover that are often unmanaged by the group members. In the original concept for Community Forestry, it was expected that members of the CFUGs would manage this land as plantations. In CF Land Allocation, the members of the CFUG agree to allocate a defined area of the Community Forest land for use by a specified group of the poorest community members. CF Land Allocation has been added to the CFUG Operational Plans as a means of poverty reduction. The purpose of the CF Land Allocation is to promote the effective management of barren land in the Community Forest and by increasing its productivity, improving the livelihoods of the poorest CFUG members, especially women and Dalits who live in poverty. The duration of the CF Land Allocation is usually limited to the duration of the CFUG Operational Plan, usually five or ten years. The shorter duration is also often because the CFUG members are often unwilling to offer the land for a long duration of more than a decade. Community Forest Land Allocation is program provision mentioned in the community forest guidelines 2065 page no. 35. following this concept CFLA program has been implemented in Amar Jyoti Community Forest in Nawalparashi district.



Forest Farm Facility (FFF)

Forest Farm Facility (FFF) has emerged out of the former National Forest Program Facility (NFP-Facility) and Growing Forest Partnership (GFP) initiatives. FFF mission is to support smallholder producer organization through business incentives and policy voice for sustainable forest landscape. FFF supports countries on mainly three working pillars: i) Strengthen smallholder, women, community, indigenous peoples' producer organization for business/livelihood and policy engagement, ii) Catalyze multi-sectoral stakeholder policy platforms with government at local and national level and iii) Link local voices and learning to the global level through genuine participatory process, communication and information sharing.

Therefore, Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) program is the best for the green job utilizing the public land, barren lands of Community forest and helps to develop the greenery on the barren land and on deforested land. The forest and farm Facility program has been implemented in community forest allocated land for poor, Dalit in the project site.

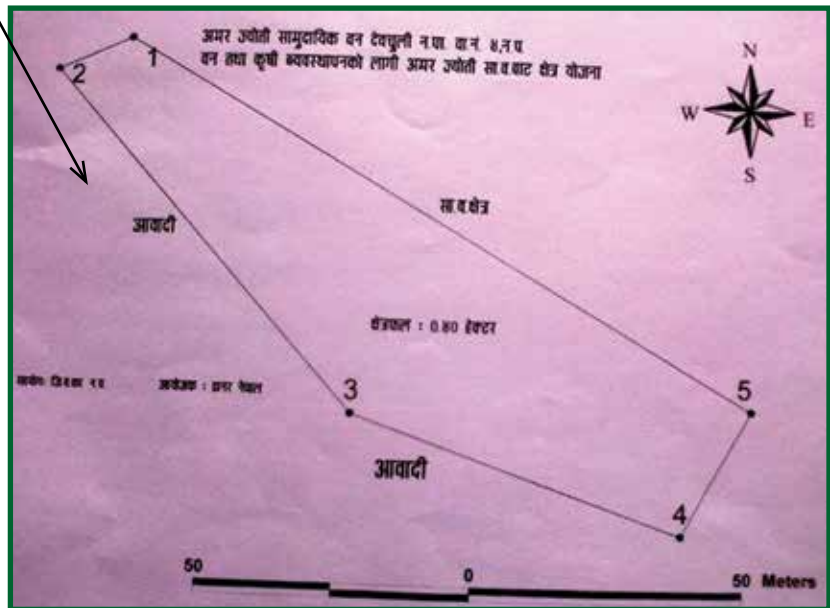
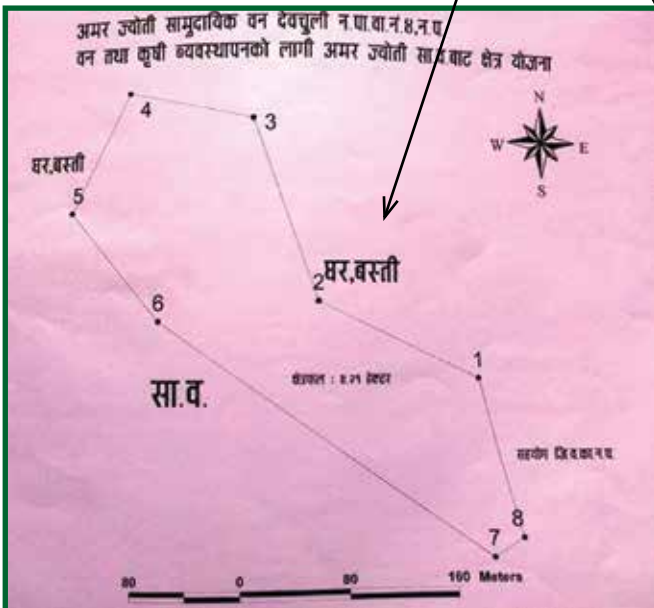


Table1: Population and forestry statistics of study district

Details		District:Nawalparasi
Region		Western development region
No. of VDC		74
Total Area		2162sq.km
Population	Total Population	643,508
	Percent of Male	47.19
	Percent of Female	52.81
	Total HHs	128,793
	Dalit population	72659
Community based Forestry Regimes	No of CFUG	85
	No of BZCF, CAMC	
Total CF HHs		45361
Total Area of CF		10712

Project Approaches and Methodologies

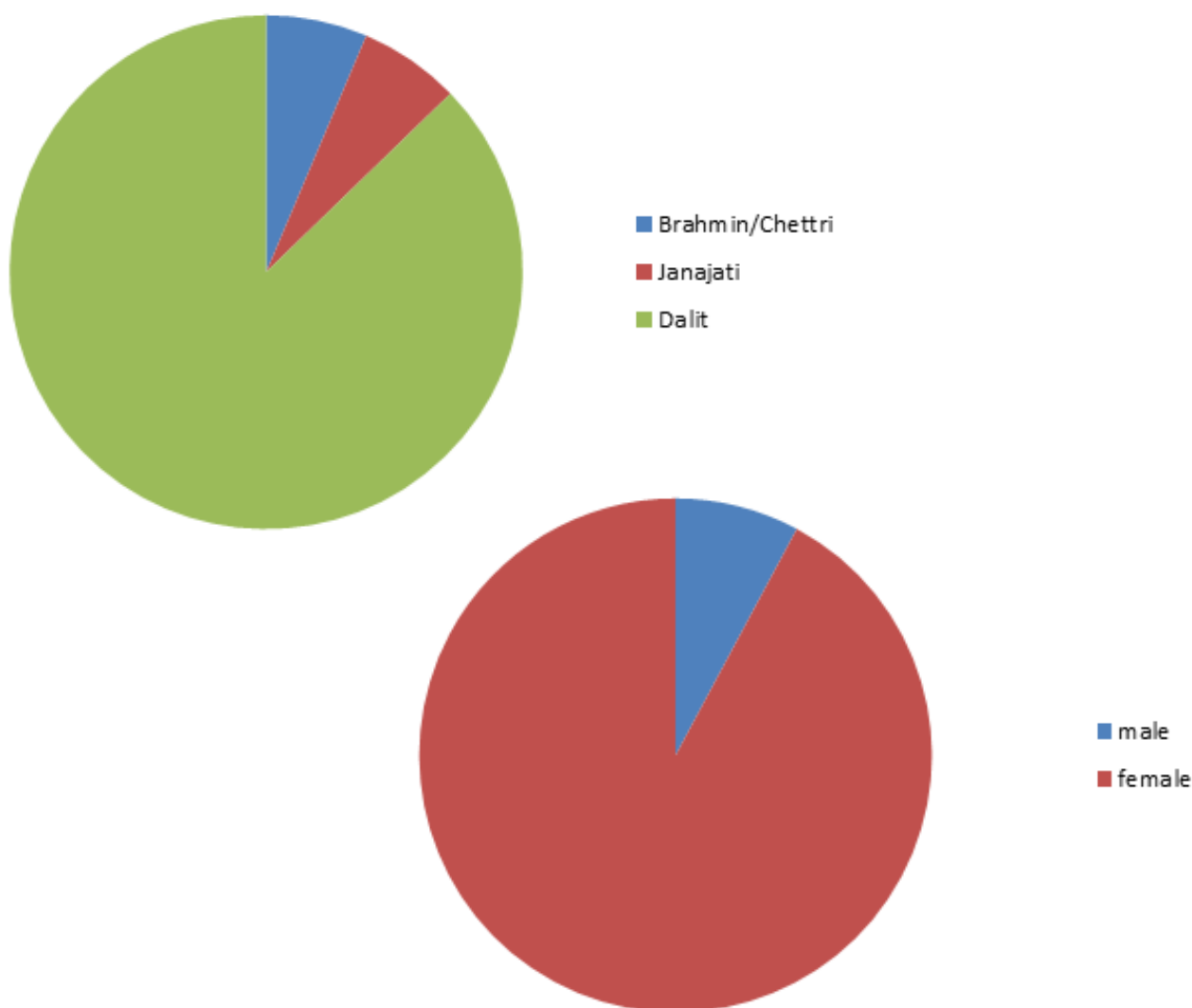
The following methodologies were chosen to demonstrate the impact of FFF in the chosen project site (Amar Jyoti CFUG, Nawalparasi)

Approaches	Methodologies
Partnership and Participatory Approach	Site selection
Leadership and Local Capacity Building	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
Leadership and Local Capacity Building	Key Informants Interview (KII)
	Observation and monitoring visits
	Support on livelihood(forest and farm based activities
Downward Planning	

Findings of the project:

Among the total households of Shree Amar Jyoti CFUG, Nawalparasi, the following result was found:

S.N	Ethnicity	Female	Male	Total
1	Brahmin/Chettri	3	1	4
2	Janajati	3	3	6
3	Dalit	41	0	41
4	Total	47	4	51



Lack of education and capacity is one of the main barrier hindering dalits from taking leadership role in CFUGs

Inadequate access to economic resources is one obstacle hindering the participation of Dalits in leadership role in CFUG as their involvement in CFUG means less time for work earning an income

Project Activities:

Table : Table showing project activities along with major input and outputs

Activities details	Major Inputs	Major Outputs	
		Quantitative outputs	Qualitative outputs
Project Advisory and monitoring committee	Meeting conducted that forwarded project advisory committee	Project advisory committee formed with following members Bhola Bhattarai Sunil Kumar Pariyar Sarswati Pariyar	1. Technical feedback and suggestion formulated to Implement the project.
Project site selection	Consultation with stakeholders, community social mobilizer	Shree Amar Jyoti CFUG of Ward 1, 2, 4, 5 of Devchuli, Nawalparasi for project implementation	1. Inclusive and poor CFUG members are selected
Identification of target group and leadership building training		35 household selected for economic promotion activities both Dalits and poor economic background. (see annex for list)	1. DAG household selected for income generating activities in barren land of community forestry.
Project launching and capacity building training	Program conduction in three phase	1. Conducted project launching workshop and capacity building training with 50 participants	1. Project objectives and methodology presented
			2. Multi stakeholder CBOs, local leaders and CFUG members gave feedback to further implement the program
Community forestry land allocation for livelihood.	Identified and suggested proper utilization of barren land within the community forest.	3 hectare barren land of Shree Amar Jyoti CFUG selected for livelihood promotion activities.	1. Started local level awareness campaign in selected household
			2. Allocated seed grant Rs 80000 from the funds to poor household
Economic Promotion Program	Selected 5 most needed DAG HH and provide with livestock	9 goats provided to each member of selected DAG HH along with 20 fruit sapling	Involved DAG HH in income generating activities for better livelihood
Plantation	Various plants species has been planted within the barren land of CF	Broom grass, bamboo and other tree species has been planted	Plantation conducted and monitoring responsibility handed to the CFUG producer group member

Program Achievements:

- * Completion of the project baseline and reporting as per the “Project Monitoring and Learning Framework”
- * Formation of 3 different producer groups which will be working on different forest based enterprise. Shanti Nepali, Shanti BK, Mohan Singh Sunar working on livestock raising, business on forest based enterprise respectively.
- * Allocation of 3 ha land within the premise of Amar jyoti CFUG for utilization by producer groups.
- * Leadership development training provided to 56 CFUG members through cultivation of grasses and trees on barren land.
- * Dalit participation on Community Forest (Committee representation and voice increased (They knew about the policy is mentioned in community forest guidelines about the provision of grant support).
- * Dalit and women agendas were (2) 3 % during the year 2014/2015 but now 50% agendas were discussed for Dalit and women and were decided 50% agendas were unanimously committed and decided by the executive Committee and annual assembly (Membership in Committee, Exclusion from community forest, revolving fund for Dalit and women group, income generation on forest and farm, timber and grass distribution were done for Dalit and women).
- * Three Producer groups, Bamboo Producers, vegetable and goat keeping groups formed 70 % women, Dalit inclusion on community resources from vegetable farming, bamboo producer group and goat keeping IGA.



Lessons Learned

- * Project would be possible through only multi stakeholder participation of local leaders and local community based organizations at local level.
- * There is also market in Kathmandu if the bamboo products are qualitative.
- * There is lack of appropriate institution/network/federation to raise the voices of bamboo workers to raise their voices on national level and policy influence.
- * Lack of proper guidelines for youth bamboo workers.
- * Project team found that it was challenging to implement only for Dalit so Collaboration of local bodies and co-operatives within the community will be more effective in organizing any incentives.

Conclusion

During the Survey and the review of secondary information, it was found that three Producer groups i.e. Bamboo Producers, Vegetable and Goat Keeping Groups were formed. Dalit inclusion on community resources from vegetable farming, bamboo producer group and goat keeping IGA. The forest sector in most countries including Nepal remains isolated and not involved in the national policy dialogues on poverty reduction, food security, climate change etc. in spite of its crucial contribution to those policies and to sustainable development in general. Dalit are primarily forest dependent in Nepal, using the available natural resources for subsistence practices. Such as collecting plants for use in the home, collecting and selling firewood for income generation. Forests are connected to religious practices, cultural heritage and livelihood. Although Dalits are forest dependent, they are usually excluded access to them. There is a serious question about why the foreign aid has been mobilized in forestry sector for the improvement of Dalit poor community without the wider consultation of forest dependent Dalit and marginalized communities. So, there is a need of Dalit friendly policy for social inclusion, income generation activities, good governance and for the improvement of Dalit communities that make up a significant proportion of the Nepalese population.



Recommendations

- * Concerned local authorities should conduct capacity building training for initiating alternative income sources.
- * Sufficient budgets should be allocated for supporting business related programs for locals.
- * 51 participants including 70% from poor and disadvantage group have been capacitated through economic empowerment and leadership development training.
- * Piloting 70% DAG HH is now involved in the income generating activities.

Program Achievements:



A case story of Bishnu Nepali:

Bishnu Nepali of Jhakre -4, Nawalparasi (age 32) shares her happiness for providing financial support of Rs.10,000 for Bamboo production and vegetable farming. Nepali is a single women with 6 children of category E(food sufficient for only 3 months by her farm) has the major occupation, labor was not ready to be part of community forest users group committee. After gaining knowledge about Community forestry and the associated project incentives for poor and excluded groups, like hers, she extends her hand to be part of this program. By being part of this programme, Bishnu Nepali earned Rs 20,000 of income this year through Bamboo enterprises.

A case story of Shanti BK:

Shanti BK a resident Amar Jyoti Community Forest, Devchuli Municipality-4, Jhakre, Nawalparashi is a single women of age 45. Though she was literate, her occupation was just a household and through labor she has raised her 2 children. As, being household with limited land, there was difficult to raise their livelihood. She express her happiness when she get the support from this project on kitchen gardening and goat raising. As a result of this programme, she is socially included in the committee of CFUGs as chairperson of women forest and farm groups and has earned Rs.20,000 by forest and farm by raising goat from this program.



A case story of Mohan Singh Sunar:

Mohan Singh Sunar of Amar jyoti Community Forest, Devchuli-4, Jhakre, Nawalparai of age 45 shares his happiness for providing Rs.10,000 for bamboo production. He owns private land, which only supports 4 months for their large family of 10 (8 children). After having knowledge on bamboo production, he now earns Rs 30,000 by selling the bamboo products and has given employment to other



Lesson Learned

- * While implementing the project activities in grass root level, the project team has following lesson learned:
- * Project team has experienced that revolving fund mobilization through cooperative was found effective as they empower group in financial management, business development service and credit mobilization.
- * Coordination and collaboration is the best tool to link with local community people.
- * Media engagement is a good way for disseminating the good practices of the project in a wider scale.
- * Project would be possible through only multi stakeholder participation of local leaders and local community based organizations at local level
- * As the project duration was short for evaluating the remarks of the activity conducted, the project with long time span with specialized activities should be forwarded.



Conclusion

Inclusion of Dalit and women on community forest committees and community natural resources is important, along with supporting bamboo producer groups for producing qualitative bamboo products. Likewise, supporting Dalit women through vegetable farming and bamboo production is an effective method for increasing their income, especially alongside livelihood and Business plan development. Supporting awareness raising and capacity building of poor and Dalit communities through FFF, while linking local voices and policy engagement is one of the best options for Dalit and marginalized community to improve their livelihoods.



Recommendations

- * Concerned local authorities should conduct capacity building training for initiating alternative income sources.
- * Collaboration of local bodies and co-operatives within the community is an effective way to organize any incentives.
- * Sufficient budgets should be allocated for supporting business related program for locals.
- * Inclusion of Dalits, poor excluded community and women should be priority of the participants in any program for its success in grass root level.



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