

# **Governance Vs Accountability: A case of Protected Area Management with People's Participation in Nepal**

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This paper discusses the changes in society after forest management with peoples' participation in Nepal. Ten years of success in community forestry has led to a shift in practices in the buffer zones of protected areas as well. Forest policy has had only one option to reduce the conflicts in resource utilization from the forest nearby, that is to introduce bottom-up planning in place of top-to-bottom driven practices. Changes are evident in the resource condition and in different community benefits not only in social transformation but in ecological services as well. The reason behind the success is the introduction of community governance practices that enabled natural resources benefits to be distributed wisely among the users. Many community forests are independent to make decisions for the resource management and utilization. Income from the tourism and selling non-timber forest product is benefiting communities and supporting the livelihoods of people. However, a lack of accountability among community members has impeded wise use of resources, thereby affecting sustainable forest management.

The paper argues that the accountability of community leadership does not address equity or organized benefit sharing in community forestry practices. Communities could have achieved greater income deriving through the ecotourism and non timber forest products marketing. Although the contribution from the forest is satisfactory, the state of governance in resource utilization of the community forests is questionable. This suggests that policy makers should be aware that resource utilization practices are exemplary, but they should seek long term support to achieve contributions and governance together. Extended autonomous power to access, collection and marketing of goods and services to the user groups may ultimately help to access the national markets and increase income to strengthen governance.

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