

**A Report on**  
**Province level Dialogue with Parliament Members and Province level**  
**Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest, and Environment**

**Submitted by**

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**Submitted to:**

Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)

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**Program Venue: Lainchaur, Kathmandu**

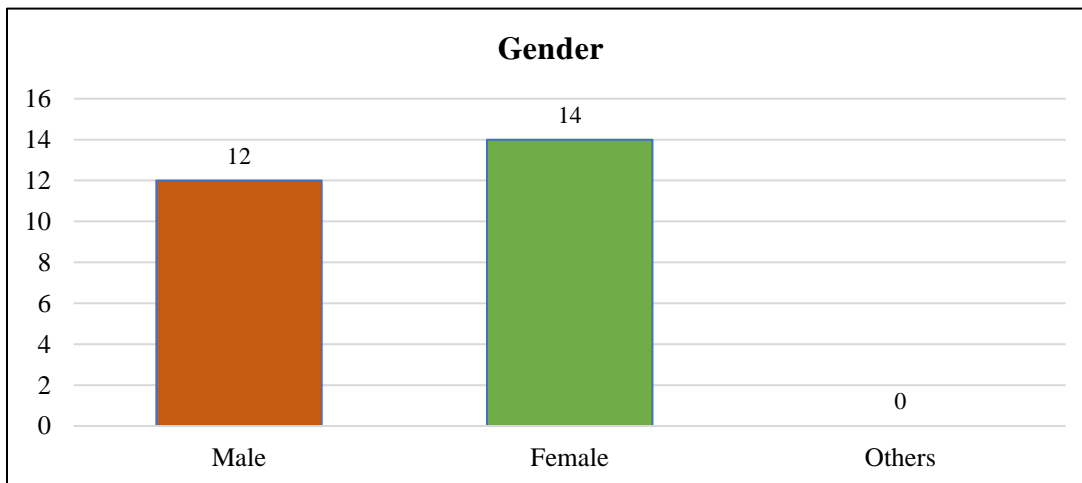
**Background:**

A one-day Province-Level Dialogue with Parliament Members and the Ministry of Industry, Tourism, Forest, and Environment (MoITFE), Bagmati Province was organized on 8 December 2025 at the Sub-Division Forest Office, Lainchaur, Kathmandu. The dialogue aimed to present findings from a baseline survey on women’s groups entrusted with community forest land for enterprise development and to facilitate policy-level

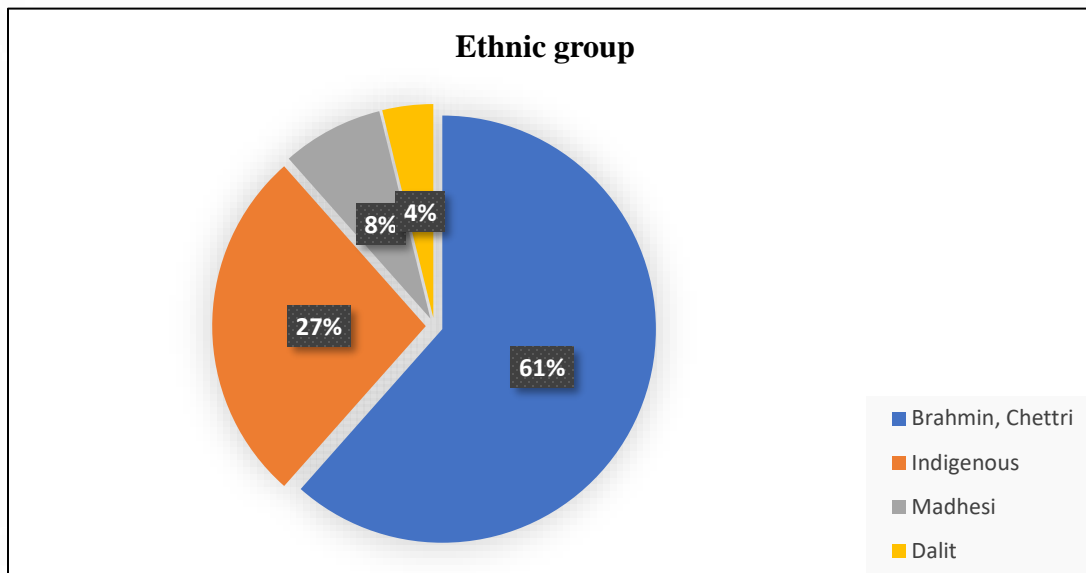


*Figure 1: Dialogue program with parliamentarians and MoITFE*

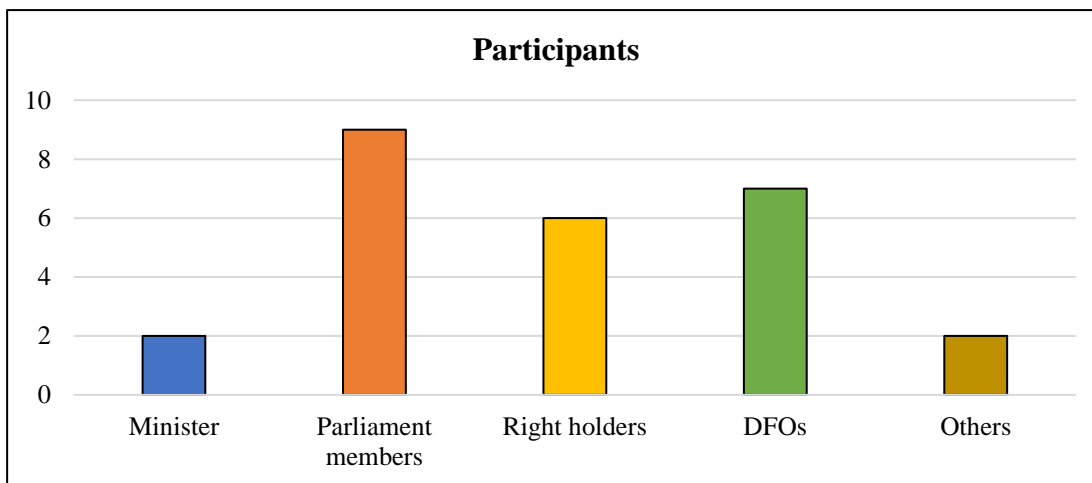
discussion on barriers affecting effective implementation. The baseline survey covered eight districts of Bagmati Province: Makwanpur, Rasuwa, Ramechhap, Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha, Nuwakot, Sindhuli, and Chitwan, representing the Mountain, Hill, and Terai regions of Nepal. The dialogue brought together 26 participants, including the Minister and Secretary of MoITFE, the Chairperson of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, Honorable Members of the Provincial Assembly, District Forest Officers and stakeholder. The session was moderated by Mr. Arbin Poudel. The Feasible information of participants shown in the below figure:



*Figure 2: Participation of male, female and others*



*Figure 3: Ethnic group of participants*



*Figure 4: Participants of dialogue program*

**Program Overview:**

The session opened with remarks from the moderator, who outlined the objectives of the dialogue and emphasized the need for evidence-based discussion on the current status, challenges, and opportunities of women-only community forests and women-led community forest user groups

(CFUGs). The opening remarks highlighted that while women's participation in community forestry has increased numerically, substantive leadership, institutional capacity, and enterprise development remain weak and require targeted policy and programmatic interventions.

### **Presentation of Baseline Survey Findings**

The baseline survey findings were presented by Ms. Binita Karki, Program Officer at the Women Rights and Resources Network (WRRN). She reported that the eight surveyed districts comprised a total of 2,709 community forests, with Sindhupalchowk recording the highest number (517 CFs) and Rasuwa the lowest. In terms of women-led community forests, Dolakha recorded the highest number, while Ramechhap and Sindhuli showed the lowest representation, with only 4 out of 425 CFs in Ramechhap and 3 out of 471 CFs in Sindhuli being women-led. She further noted that women-only executive committees were extremely limited, with only two CFs each in Makwanpur, Dolakha, and Nuwakot, and one in Chitwan. Similarly, women-led Kabuliati forests (Patches land handover community forest) were identified only in Makwanpur and Chitwan.

Ms. Karki highlighted several opportunities and potentials within community forests, including the scope for mobilizing forest resources for sustainable management, strong potential for income generation through women-led economic activities, and high enthusiasm among women-only and women-led groups. She emphasized the enabling provisions of the Forest Act 2019 (2076 BS), particularly the requirement that 50% of community forest income be allocated for the empowerment and income generation of poor and marginalized women, as well as provisions allowing portions of community forest land to be allocated for women's livelihoods. She also outlined key challenges, including limited investment in women's leadership development and enterprise-oriented programs, low awareness of forestry laws among women, weak implementation of women- and community-friendly legal provisions, and non-compliance with the mandatory 50% women's representation in executive committees. Based on these findings, she proposed future actions, including targeted capacity-building for women leaders, creation of an enabling investment environment for eco-tourism and forest-based enterprises, awareness-raising on legal



*Figure 5: Ms. Binita Karki presenting the findings of baseline survey*

and policy provisions, and initiatives to enhance production from community forest resources to improve women's economic status.

### **Discussion and Deliberations**

The discussion session was moderated by Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey, who initiated the deliberations by reflecting on the federal and provincial legal provisions mandating women's representation in CFUG executive committees and the persistent gaps in meaningful participation.

Mr. Anil Regmi, District Forest Officer, Dolakha, shared findings from a survey conducted by FECOFUN and partner organizations, noting that while women's participation in CFUGs in Dolakha had reached approximately 70%, many women lacked clarity regarding their roles, responsibilities, and financial management. He emphasized that women were often included to meet legal requirements rather than being substantively engaged in decision-making processes.

The District Forest Officer from Rasuwa highlighted a governance incident from Makwanpur, where approximately NPR 2.5 million was withdrawn from a CFUG account without clear accountability due to pre-existing signatures. He noted that such incidents reflect low awareness of financial governance and the seriousness of accountability mechanisms. While women were increasingly visible in leadership roles, he emphasized that experience, technical knowledge, and institutional capacity remained limited, underscoring the need to move beyond numerical participation toward comprehensive capacity-building.

Ms. Yankila Sherpa, Honorable Member of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, emphasized that financial stability is essential for women to assume leadership roles. She highlighted that economic insecurity often restricts women's ability to participate meaningfully in governance and stressed the need for structured training and capacity-building programs. She further emphasized that policies must be realistic and aligned with implementation capacities.

Ms. Thula Thami, Honorable Member of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, highlighted the diverse income-generating opportunities within community forests, particularly for marginalized groups. She cited examples such as organic manure production from forest litter, park development, and eco-tourism initiatives, emphasizing that effective forest management can transform challenges into economic opportunities.

Ms. Balkumari Bishwakarma, Honorable Member of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, pointed the need for legal and regulatory frameworks that explicitly support women's leadership. She emphasized plantation of diverse and high-value species as a pathway for income generation and highlighted the additional barriers faced by women from disadvantaged communities in accessing leadership and economic opportunities.

Ms. Bharati Pathak, Honorable Member of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, referred to data indicating that women's representation in CFUG executive committees currently stands at approximately 47%, falling short of the mandated 50%. She emphasized the importance of mandatory budget allocations for women-focused programs and sustained investment in capacity-building initiatives.

Mr. Kedar Baral, Secretary of MoITFE, Bagmati Province, highlighted emerging structural challenges, including declining interest in the forestry sector due to increasing attraction toward other sectors such as information technology. He noted that amendments to the Forest Act and Environment Act were under drafting and emphasized the need to prioritize fruit forestry, enterprise-based approaches, and improved utilization of community forest funds. He further stated that less than 35% of CFUG funds were currently being used for women's empowerment and proposed linking approval of Community Forest Operational Plans to compliance with women's



*Figure 6: Hon. Bharat Bahadur KC highlighting the importance of CF led by women*

representation requirements, as well as providing institutional support to financially weak community forests through District Forest Offices. Mr. Bharat Bahadur KC, Minister of MoITFE, Bagmati Province, emphasized that Nepal's community forestry model has historically prioritized conservation and must now transition toward sustainable utilization and enterprise development. He highlighted that forest laws and policies must be people-centric and grounded in grassroots realities. He further noted that despite progress in rights-based approaches, implementation remains weak, and highlighted the significant potential of community forestry to contribute to national GDP if effectively utilized.

Mr. Ananda Shrestha, Chairperson of the Bagmati Provincial Assembly, emphasized that policy formulation alone is insufficient without effective monitoring and tangible results. He stressed the

importance of prioritizing women's empowerment and capacity-building of disadvantaged groups to ensure equitable access to the benefits provided under existing legal frameworks.

## **Conclusion**

The dialogue concluded with closing remarks by Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey, who summarized the key discussion points and reaffirmed the shared commitment of provincial policymakers, government institutions, and civil society organizations to strengthen women's leadership, enhance institutional capacity, and unlock the economic potential of community forests in Bagmati Province. He emphasized that women-led community forests will be given priority for mainstreaming their livelihood, and that women's voices should be listened to by government and DFOs as they are at the forefront of natural resource management.



*Figure 7: Mr. Ghanshyam Pandey closing the session*

**Photo plates**

