

Report on Issue based discussion of community forest with CF Executive members of Chuchhekhola Community Forest User Group (CFUG)



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ABBREVIATIONS

CF	Community Forest
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal
RBA	Right Based Advocacy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WRRN	Women Rights and Resources Network



On 31st of August, 2024, the team of Women Rights and Resource Network (WRRN) with financial support of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducted an event in Chuchhekhola Community Forest User Group (CFUG). The major motive of gathering was to identify the issues of community forest with CF executive members.

PARTICIPATION

The team of WRRN included chairperson of organization Ms. Aarati Pathak, Program Officer Mrs. Kabita Gaire and Forestry Associate of WRRN Ms. Pratikshaya Bhandari were present in the program. The special guest of the program was the Honorable member of Bagmati Province Ms. Bharati Pathak.

From CFUG and WRRN team, there were 33 participants including Chairperson of Chuchhekhola CFUG Mrs. Laxman Katuwal, Vice Chairperson Mr. Umesh Adhikari, Finance Coordinator Mr. Jayram Ghimire, Treasurer of the CFUG Mrs. Kamal Dahal, Consultant/Advisor Mr. Bhairav Bahadur Rai and Former Chairperson of the group Mr. Hari Prasad Adhikari along with other members and advisors of the CFUG were present in the program.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The program officially started with a brief introduction from all participants. Following this, attendees were introduced to the initiatives of WRRN and UNDP, along with an overview of the project. Mrs. Kabita Gaire provided an in-depth explanation of the project's objectives and its focus areas within the Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs).

Prior to the visit, the CFUG members were provided with the information about the program and were encouraged to share any challenges that have been faced by the CFUGs regarding the effective operation of their groups. They were also given with the steps that have been taken to build up a Right Based Advocacy Plan (RBA Plan) of the CFUG and the importance of this discussion to form RBA plan in future. Consequently, participants discussed ongoing issues related to capacity building, existing laws and policies, and the management of community forests after being briefed on the purpose of the visit. This encouraged all members to voice their concerns regarding CFUGs. The key issues raised during the event are summarized below.

- Encroachment issue due to infrastructure development near forest boundary.
- Shortage of raw materials due to forest rules and acts.
- Issue regarding registration of saw mill.
- Lack of alternative source of income opportunities
- Lack of trainings for women empowerment for alternative source of income generating.
- Risk of forest fire and lack of safety equipment during disasters.
- Lack of training regarding proposal writing for fund raising.
- Problem of triple taxation system.
- Lack of proper and adequate knowledge about forest management.
- Human Wildlife Conflict
- Lack of proper disposal of waste materials inside forest area.
- Lack of training for record keeping of CFUG members.

After discussing various issues, Ms. Bharati Pathak expressed her happiness for the gradual success of the Chuchhekhola CFUG in implementing effective forest management techniques,

empowering women, and achieving financial stability. Along with the happiness, she expressed her sorrow for the encroachment of forest area due to infrastructural development. She also asked for the possible ideas either by securing forest boundary with the help of pillars or other security mechanisms for the protection of land area.

Ms. Aarati Pathak, who has been involved with Chuchhekhola CFUG from a long period of time, was visibly pleased with the ongoing improvements and praised all members of the CFUG and also provided assurance to help in the registration of saw mill process and minimize encroachment issue of the CF.

CONCLUSION

In this way, the event of issue-based discussion was successfully completed with the active participation of all group members and discussion about almost every issue that are prevalent in the CF since long period of time.

PHOTO PLATES

