Crop Raiding and Livestock Depredation in Rural Landscape: Understanding the feedback effect of Community Forestry in the Middle Mountains of Nepal

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Community forestry (CF) in Nepal, forest-human landscape, possess different kinds of interaction between human and natural systems and human-wildlife interaction is one of them. Human-wildlife conflict has been one of the emerging issues for local communities in rural hilly areas of Nepal, which has not been fully understood and highlighted by research in community forestry, due to the lag in time for such feedbacks to appear. Modelling the complex relationship between domesticated crops and crop-raiding animals is important to understand the human-wildlife scenario and to formulate mitigation measures. We hypothesize that community forestry has contributed in connecting previously fragmented forest patches which has made better habitat for wildlife and has contributed in increasing incidence of crop raiding and livestock depredation around the communities nearby forest. Several studies conclude that CF plays significant roles in biodiversity (wildlife) restoration, but no empirical studies have assessed the impacts of wildlife on crops/livestock and its ultimate impacts on rural livelihoods. In this paper, we adopted the coupled natural-human systems framework to examine the feedbacks to the human from natural systems. We used both bio-physical information of land parcel and socio-economic parameter of each household to model the factors contributing in crop raiding and livestock depredation. We also analyzed the economic cost incurred due to crop raiding and livestock depredation and social class that was most affected. This paper also reviewed policy documents and analyzed the mitigation measures adopted by the community to address increasing human-wildlife conflict in community forestry of Nepal. We draw our analysis from intensive survey data collected in 2018 from 215 households across seven CF in Kavrepalanchok, Nepal.