



Indigenous economies and sustainability in Nepal: Eco-cultural integration

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Abstract

The Earth can provide sufficient to meet the world's requirements if managed properly and sustainably. Without proper management, essential resources can be depleted. Common resources, essential to the livelihoods of many communities are assumed to be overused and depletion, as individuals lack personal incentives to conserve them and may exploit them before others do. Only in recent years have ecologists, sociologists, and economists acknowledged how the communities have historically managed resources sustainably. Analyzing the concepts, philosophies, and economics with the world view of indigenous communities towards resource use, the paper explores the interplay between indigenous economies, ecology, and socio-cultural integration in rural Nepal. Focusing on indigenous knowledge rooted in community practices, it highlights sustainable management of common resources. Applying a holistic approach, this paper explores the relationship between socio-cultural and environmental dynamics with a broader framework of sustainable economy and community-based resource management. Using Dohovan Municipality in Nepal's Palpa District as a case study, the paper investigates how subsistence economies integrate informal systems to manage conservation with use, reuse, and recycling practices effectively, which are aligned with principles of the circular, green, and sustainable economy, offering an alternative to traditional linear growth models. The findings underscore the potential of indigenous knowledge embedded in traditional practices to inform and advance policies for sustainable development. Though the tragedy of the commons is presented as real, the study concludes that communities can successfully prevent over-exploitation and can manage sustainable use of these resources.

Keywords: Community of Beings; Community Resource Dynamics; Dominion Over Nature; Economic Justice; Tragedy of The Commons

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1. Introduction

Human influences on natural systems have been portrayed both as preservative and destructive. Natural resources far from human intervention are often more protected than those nearby. Conversely, common natural resources with community stewardship tend to be managed more systematically than those farther away. Intervention without proper management, important resources on Earth can be depleted. Common property resources have been the subject of substantial academic examination, especially since Garrett Hardin's famous article "The Tragedy of the Commons" (Hardin, 1968) in *Science*. Common resources may be both natural as well as manmade and typically consist of a core resource, which defines the stock, and extractable peripheral units designate the flow variable. While the core resource is to be protected to allow for its sustainability, the outlying components can be collected or used up. Common property whether natural or manmade resources that belong to a community and are accessible to all members under certain restrictions, but no individual holds ownership rights. These resources have significant contributions to human livelihoods. The commons at the local level in Nepal include fuelwood, grazing, grass and timberland, land for beating and threshing, lands provisionally taken out of cultivation, sacred orchards, and river banks for swimming and fisheries, irrigation systems, water tanks, ponds, and recreation grounds. Historians in very past studied the commons and common resources, but by the 1980s these resources had become central issues for environmental scientists and natural resource specialists.

Common property resources, natural or non-natural are subjects, where one person's use deducts from another's use. It is a general term used to indicate shared resources in which each stakeholder has co-equal use rights and well-being. In most of the society, property rights to the local commons have been found most often to be based on traditional practices. They are usually not backed by the kind of arrangements that would pass inquiry in courts of law. Common resources, whether natural or human-made, are those where one individual's use reduces the convenience for others. This term normally refers to common resources in which each stakeholder has equal use privileges and interests. In most communities, property rights to local commons and their supervision are often based on practices handed down by ancestors and are typically not well looked after by formal legal provisions that would hold up in courts.

A large number of works can be found in this field dealing with common resources, however, there are some unclear issues -like who will look and manage these resources sustainably and keep an eye on equity distribution. What kind of mechanism existed for incoming and leaving members, and how about the interconnections of nature-culture and economy maintained? Are there any provisions made by the government for local commons to be managed collectively by the community people? Is the traditional practice they have similar to that of the recent concept of sustainable economic development? The focus of the study is to sketch the philosophy and works of literature, the theories, dilemmas, and politics behind them. It will also explore the homegrown practices on the utilization and management of these resources in rural Nepal. The paper will also investigate the underlying factors contributing to the successful integration of spirituality with ecological law that the community employs for environmental protection and well-being, especially within the ongoing discussions around Sustainable Development, the Circular Economy, and the Green Economy.

2. Methods and materials

This study is a qualitative one. Resources in common natural or socio-cultural, have a vital role in the sustainability of an economy and society for current and future generations. Following critical discourse analysis, the first part of this paper explores the concepts and definitions of common property resources and the different philosophical views behind them. People resource relations and their dynamics are presented with the help of the diagram which presents the indigenous economy with a holistic approach in a windows perspective. A holistic approach that has been employed examines interconnected and interrelated elements of a phenomenon by considering the broader context and all influencing factors. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the subject under study with deeper awareness and consciousness, aiming to achieve a holistic understanding of the socio-economic bio-physical, and cultural aspects in which a community operates. As Goffman(1986) explains the viewpoint is characterized by the belief that the parts of something are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole in Frame Analysis, the brilliant theorist writes about how people answer. Similarly, Harding (1986) critiques traditional scientific perspectives and advocates for a more reflexive approach, recognizing how different windows or standpoints (especially from marginalized groups) can offer a richer understanding of social phenomena.

Nepalese communities have developed their indigenous economics and institutional mechanisms for the sustainability of local economics by ensuring social equity. The paper then reviews indigenous practices of common resource economics and management, discusses how they can exist, and shows their relevance in a changing context. For this purpose, two FGDs consisting of community user groups for the forest, irrigation, drinking water, and management and conservation committees of historic, prehistoric, religious property, and other CPRs were conducted. The study area selected is Dobhan Municipality in Palpa, known for being the site of the prehistoric place of *Rama pithecus*. The objectives include assessing the access and availability of resources, understanding their usage and associated institutional practices, exploring the local theology and perceptions of biophysical elements, and examining how the community interacts with nature to promote common well-being. The research design emphasizes case analysis, a detailed discussion of process tracing, and the development of the concept of typological practices that a community has adopted. The logic behind applying this framework to the study of an indigenous economy can offer unique insights and help uncover various aspects of this complex subject. The institutional mechanisms they formed have been observed to ensure the validity of information about community practices.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. The philosophy of common dilemma

Economics defines four types of property - private, public, common, and club. If we have applied the term common or social goods to all situations for non-rival and non-excludable goods, the last three groups can be included. Common is not only possessions. It indicates a cooperative community form that is unlike the public. It doesn't substitute the public but transcends it. The tragedy of the commons is a type of social dilemma first discussed in Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons". This concept has been used to explain overutilization and miss utilization of common resources like fisheries, overgrazing, air and water pollution, and abuse of public

land. Originally, the term "commons" referred to pastureland that was managed as a shared resource and on which individual herders were allowed to let their cattle or sheep graze. The question at hand is "Should they cut back on their consumption rates, giving up some of their desires, or keep using the resources at the same rate, endangering the common pool?"

The two main ecosystem worldviews encompass all environmental systems and relationships, along with the components influencing human society. These are the Western classic views of control over nature and the oriental worldview of community beings which takes all natural things as members of a community. As cultural and physical regions evolve, so does the diversity in traditional ecological worldviews and practices. Diversity can be seen in traditional ecological world views and practices as cultural and geographical territories change. The use of resources varies greatly from region to region, but the representation of all things is a nested system that is interconnected and shaped like a bird's nest. The community of being worldviews of existence believes that the plants and animals in their immediate vicinity are members of that community, rather than attribute their sacred property to a series of landscape features. The world is recognized as a community of beings. Rivers, trees, birds, and animals that connect people in different ways are members of the community. Land and rivers are taken as mothers because they provide food and donate valuable water. Trees are seen as demons that need to be soothed by offerings to be rewarded for not harming humans. Major (1969) the worldview of the "community of being" can be characterized as the "I-you" relationship between humans and nature, and the worldview of dominance over nature is treated as an "I-it" relationship. Nature is considered a clockwork and is seen separately from humans. We can find out by breaking it down and asking systematic and testable questions. It is under control and can be made to bring human benefits. Economic growth is seen as a result of some form of possible liberation of these infinite resources. Therefore, production activities are considered a process of overcoming environmental constraints.

The Western capitalist approach to economics focuses only on two types of assets: public and private. Similarly, the socialist model often reduces everything to economic causes, overlooking the value-based emotional, socio-cultural, and institutional dimensions. State and private ownership represent dominion over nature's worldview and do not necessarily solve the issues of managing common property resources. Nepalese society has practiced the third dimension of property known as common property resource rights, which have been traditionally recognized that are playing a crucial role in people's survival and community development, particularly in rural Nepal (Bhusal, 2009). The issue of common resources is intertwined with people's living, lifestyle, and philosophy of Nepalese people (Topal et al., 1998). Common resources contribute to people's livelihood, income, employment, and asset accumulation in direct or indirect ways that are seldom recognized. Similarly common land, forest, lakeside, riverside, and others have a significant role in maintaining ecosystem and environment preservation, as well as the alternative sources of food supply during the dry season and temporary shelters during natural calamities which Nepalese people in rural areas have frequently experienced.

3.2. Political economics of CPR use

Malthus has focused his concern on making men aware of the fact that natural resources are finite and hence they can absorb the growth of population only to a limited extent (Malthus, 1930). Marx and Engels focused on the historical forces of social organization based on the outlines of control and use of productive resources (Marx and Engels, 1979). According to Hardin's principles, if the herdsmen plan to increase the number of their

animals, the herds on common land will surpass the natural capacity of the vegetation, leading to environmental degradation and soil erosion, with only sparse plants remaining. When the carrying capacity of the commons is fully reached, a herdsman might consider, "Should I add another animal to my herd?" Because the private gain would outweigh his share of the communal loss, a self-interested herdsman would likely decide to add another animal to his herd. His decision will lead to the loss of the community property and environment and ultimately losses for himself. Garrett Hardin shows a similar analysis of Karl Marx, Gandhi, and Plato's philosophy, especially for social, shared parts, and personal property and ownership dilemmas.

There are many explanations for the causes of the common dilemma. A selfish gene theory termed biosocial theory, (Dawkins, 2006) inspected that people aid only those who carry their genes. Thus, unless all the individuals are related, they will act selfishly. Platt (1973) in "Social Trap Theory" explains the law that the reinforcement for private reward for greedy behavior is immediate, whereas the reinforcement for public interest behavior is not. An individual is likely to choose the immediate reward. Though, the reward is positive in the short run and negative in the long run. Limited processing theory states that people have limited abilities to process information accurately, efficiently, and completely. The dilemma may be too complex, so one is not sure that behavior constitutes a defection (Gifford and Donald, 1997). People are also not able to judge the full consequences of their actions. The Three-Factor Theory (Messick, 1990) assumes that individuals' decisions are based on self-interest, a desire to act responsibly, and conformity. So, attitudes, expectations, attributions, and biases about self and others have significant effects on cooperation.

3.3. Historical dynamics of human and nature relations

Throughout history, the relationship between humans and nature has evolved, driven by human desires and the availability of resources. This relationship has not been static, changing alongside the production, consumption, distribution, resource use, and social organization systems. These shifts reflect different stages of human civilization, from primitive societies to feudal and capitalist systems. In primitive societies, characterized by nomadic lifestyles of hunters, gatherers, and herders, communities were organized into larger social units to facilitate resource use. Extended families played a central role in production and distribution, ensuring that all members had sufficient access to natural resources.

As societies evolved, kin-based solidarity within domestic groups gradually transformed into power structures. Centralized authority emerged, with tribal chiefs and rulers beginning to intervene in domestic affairs, particularly regarding resource ownership and control. Rulers asserted their claims over land and other resources, marking a significant shift in social organization and power dynamics. They imposed some dues from the mass population for their use of these resources. According to Hirst and Hindess (1979), this process led to a society of slavery, the worst form of the institution in history. They depict it as a being that its owners may treat as an object. Before the rise of industrial capitalism, feudal elites held titles to all productive resources and land. This led to significant injustice in the distribution of common property, primarily affecting how resources were allocated. Human society has not yet experienced the problem of degradation. The profit-seeking tendency of industrial capitalism and its different types of intervention in nature and common resources cause damage. The struggle for access to and use of productive natural resources has become a worldwide and crucial survival issue in history to date. Now there is growing human concern about the community rights and obligation to use and protect the commons worldwide.

3.3.1. The community and resource dynamics

Human influence on the environment can be seen in three main ways: exerting control, using resources, and recycling and repositories of waste. Like other organisms, humans rely on their surroundings for survival. The natural environment provides living space, resources for various activities, and a place to absorb waste from production and consumption. However, humans are unique in that culture shapes how they interact with their environment. Cultural factors influence perceptions, behaviors, and institutional practices, which in turn affect how humans use and impact their surroundings. The state and stage of resource availability, the perception, and the culture help to sharpen its theology and philosophy, and then enlarge the form of its organizational mechanism, institutions, rules, and regulations.

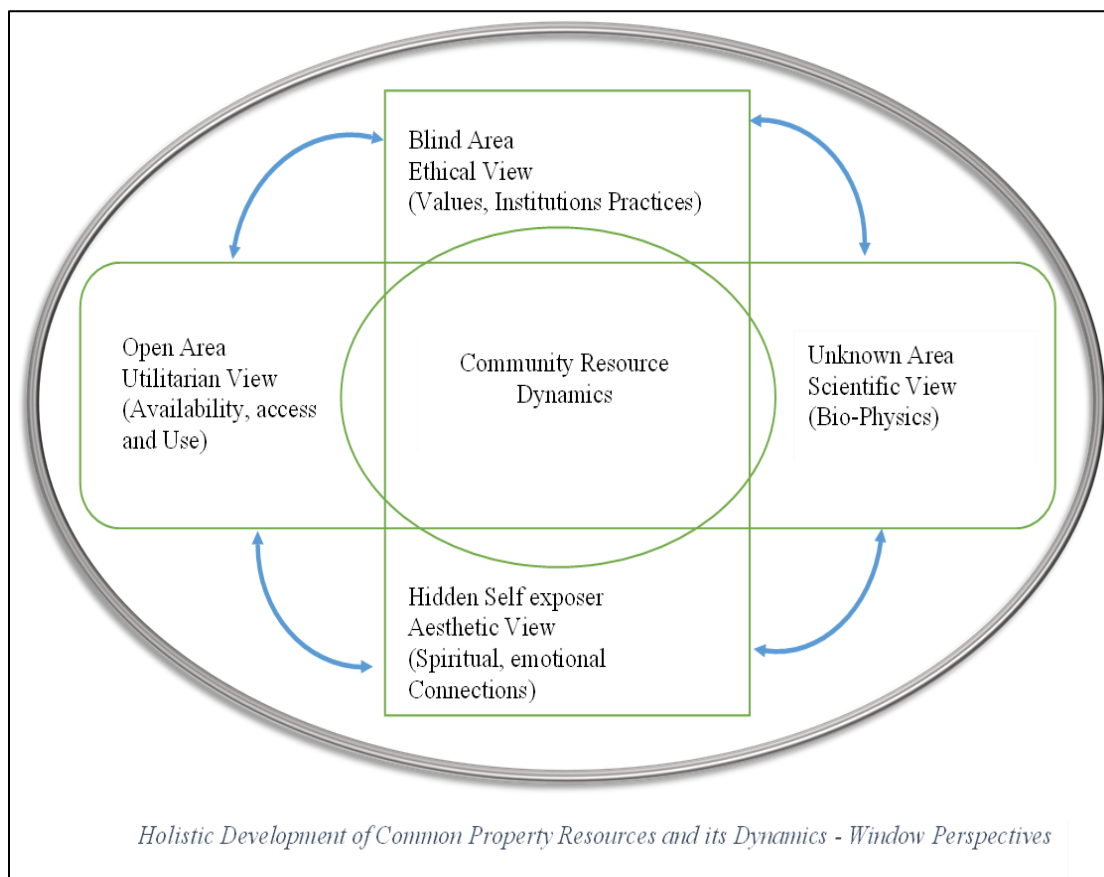


Fig. 1. The community and Resource Dynamics

The diagram (Figure 1) Holistic Development and Community Resource Dynamics presents window perspectives with four lenses and their dynamics, offers a comprehensive understanding of the subsistence economy, identifying open, blind, and hidden areas and areas for improvement for sustainable development while considering the economic aspect of access and utilization, the socio-cultural and emotional aspects, the institutional aspect as self-realization and practices and the bio-physical and environmental aspect which is to be known.

3.3.1.1. Access and utilization

Starting with shared knowledge about the Indigenous economy, it encompasses the visible aspects such as traditional economic practices, commonly known resources, and public policies impacting the economy. It visualizes the holistic development and management of commons through the utilitarian aspect that analyzes the way the community has utilized its available resources for survival, development, and economic benefit. The study area is a typical municipality that represents the most evolving rural area towards urban. The access, utilization, and management practices are also reflective of other rural areas' transition to urban. There are a total of 16 types of common resources comprising 50 items serving the substance economy. The scientific view depicts the man-nature relation and the ecosystem and there is something in collective action that allows them to pursue individual or common goals more effectively. For the strengthening of collective management capabilities, the actual or potential users of community resources will necessarily agree on how those resources should be managed which is usually called a Community-Based Resource Management System (CBRM). CBRM is conceived as a process by which the people themselves are given the opportunity and responsibility to manage their resources, define their needs, goals, and aspirations, and make decisions affecting their well-being (Bhusal, 2009). Informal systems are found in practice for the use and reuse, storage or extraction, and waste management of the available resources they have. This bottom-up approach has developed institutional mechanisms for efficiently using, reusing, and recycling the resources they have. Most of the families have small pieces of the farm with associates. Activities like maintaining greenery, bio-diversity, and ecosystems are necessary for their survival. Production, reuse, and recycling are common to them. Community people use their homegrown seeds for further cropping and raise livestock that supplies milk, meat, and dung for food, fertilizer, and biogas. Wood crafting, weaving, and ceramics are identical patterns. Water sources are preserved as sacred places, and an overflow of drinking water is used for sanitation and irrigation. They have their knowledge and skills handed by their ancestors in all these activities. The overall approach they practiced for hundreds of years is similar to the recent concepts of circular economy that align with concepts like Green and Sustainable Economies, offering a top-down alternative to linear growth. Like circular economy (Taron et al., 2021), it supports achieving SDG targets such as food security and sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), water recycling and ecosystem health (SDG 6), renewable energy adoption (SDG 7), waste reduction through recycling and reuse (SDG 12), and soil restoration (SDG 15), either directly or indirectly.

3.3.1.2. Biophysical elements

The relationship between humans and nature remains uncertain, as it has continually evolved with changes in production, consumption, distribution, resource use, and social organization. These shifts may continue to occur as time progresses. Identifying the economic practices, resources, or strategies known within Indigenous communities, the discussion further explores how the community is developing the institutions learning from the Good Practices. Similarly, the ethical and aesthetic views are trying to analyze the community's perceptions of their responsibility towards environmental protection. How they are aware of the impact of human actions on the wellbeing of the planet. How they develop the spiritual, cultural, and emotional connections to the preservation of the resources they have.

Similar to other beings in the natural world, members of a community adhere to a "community of being worldview," which guides them in conserving and utilizing their resources while viewing the environment as a vital source for their survival and the fulfillment of various material needs. They are aware of the power of

the sacred qualities to the diverse foundations, plants, and animal species in their immediate surroundings. They perceive the world as a community of beings, where rocks, water sources, flora, fauna, birds, and animals are interconnected with humans in various ways and all are considered community members. Land and rivers are viewed as mothers who selflessly provide food and water. While trees are seen as essential, yet challenging elements of nature. Community members apologize for any harm or disturbance they cause to the natural environment. All these aspects of cultural work are in the process of human use of the environment.

Communities are managed to adjust traditional systems with time and keep the commons productive and ecologically sound. Since the levels of resources available to the community, awareness, and cultural compassion help sharpen theology and philosophy that help to enlarge the forms of organizational mechanisms, institutions, rules, and regulations, each of these themes includes the operation of a wide range of social institutions and processes.

3.3.1.3. Spiritual, emotional, and cultural connections

The people in the study area have long followed the worldviews of Nepalese civilization, embracing the Community of Beings perspective. Central to this view is the idea of being in harmony with both nature and society. This holistic perspective has fostered a deep reverence for all aspects of nature, with humans seeing their relationship with the natural world as akin to that of a mother and her child.

Humans must learn to coexist peacefully with the environment and recognize the significant role that other living thing, such as plants and animals, play in the cosmic world. Human beings must learn to live in harmony with the environment and most acknowledge that plants, animals, and other living beings play an important role in the cosmic play. However, the dynamics of these systems interchange in several ways, including population growth and immigration, and the incorporation of new resources and sectors into the economy. The process of socioeconomic change can affect traditional management systems in many ways, and these systems may adapt to new situations. limited information is available in dynamic response to the internal and external conditions of the traditional community-level system. The other is the development of an informal management system in addition to those created internally or created by external agents and agencies.

During FGD, participants commonly expressed their views about their common production, reuse, and recycling activities, emphasizing how ancestral knowledge and skills are orally and practically transmitted to new generations. One participant remarked and explained,

"Every time, we engage with nature in the production, reuse, or recycling process, sociocultural activities, or religious rituals. Nature is at the core of each activity during ceremonies, relationships with family and neighbors, and public gatherings. It helps to transfer knowledge skills and frame our worldview."

Another group of participants agrees with this perspective and further opinions that

"Our generation should utilize every available resource -like land, trees, water, mineral resources, and various living and nonliving things without hindering the ecosystem."

This perspective shows that the spirituality of community people manifests itself in conceptions of and relations with nature in their practice and the impression that it is essential for future generations too and the

sentiment underlines the community's assurance of sustainable practices that respect community, culture, and cosmic balance.

3.3.1.4. Values and institutional practices

This perspective encourages each person to embrace and uphold the traditions, customs, and culture of their community while also working to preserve, expand, and enrich them. Though numerous religious-cultural practices exist equally, Nepalese societies are nature-venerating societies that deeply respect, honor and worship the natural world. Community people see themselves as a part of nature rather than separate from it. They value and respect the natural cycles and ecosystems as sacred and essential to their existence. From the beginning, conventional religious thoughts and practices have existed on common resource utilization and sustainable management for the proper well-being of the community and the individual in particular as reported by participants that

"Overall members concluded that "sustainable utilization of available resources without hampering the ecosystem is our right, and our responsibility is to conserve the cohesion between human-nature relations and the rights of the coming generation that our traditions, culture, and institutions guide us."

These views from FGD members support the findings of Dudley et al (2010) and Fisher,(1989) that the spiritual values and taboos associated with sacred natural sites can assist in preserving biodiversity, which has been overlooked by researchers and planners in Nepal. Common playgrounds, protected forests around water sources, ponds or streams, recreation places, and grass and grazing land are normally found in each settlement. Community forestry is most accurately and wisely understood as a collective term for a wide range of activities that relate rural people to forests, trees, and the products and benefits they produce. The evidence from the study area supports Gilmour (1987) and (Fisher, 1989) based on their study explains community forestry as the common resources managed by rural communities as an integral part of the agricultural system, especially for domestic purposes.

3.3.2. Institutional practices

3.3.2.1. Integrated community farming

A community-based farming and control system, where farming, grazing, hunting, and fishing territories are shared among different groups through reciprocal access arrangements. This is due to the interconnected nature of the resources in a given area, fostering a community built on mutual exchange and shared responsibilities. The overall picture is one of an ecosystem in which different human groups assumed specialized but interconnected 'niches', interconnected not only functionally but also culturally through time-honored practices and reciprocal obligations (Gadgil and Malhotra, 1983).

3.3.2.2. Farmer-managed irrigation

Before 1951, the country had only three state or agency irrigation systems (Ansari, 1995). Farmer-managed irrigation systems were built, operated, and maintained by the farmers themselves with little or no support from government or external agencies are frequently found in mountain, hill, and Terai areas and have always

played a major role in irrigation systems. The development of irrigation technology necessitated the creation of community property agencies for collective action, as the maintenance and safety of food production relied on stakeholder cooperation. This led to collective decision-making and resource management methods. In Nepal, shared irrigation systems exemplify the modern ecological approach of integrating land and water management.

3.3.2.3. Embankment of water Sources

Conservation and protection of water sources are common in rural villages in Nepal. Plantation and conservation of trees on the embankments of village ponds to enhance and protect them from erosion are common practices to control bank erosion along streams and rivers. In instances where water sources are sacred, the protection of their catchment forests is more readily assured.

3.3.2.4. Religious forest and sacred orchards

In rural Nepal, communities traditionally found preserved small forest areas as "sacred groves" for local spirits and gods, prohibiting hunting and removal of products. With increasing deforestation, these groves have become some of the last natural forests. Over time, the collection of medicinal plants, leaves, and dead wood has been accepted, but cutting live wood remains prohibited. These forests are managed according to local religious beliefs and reserved for future socio-religious needs. Each element of nature places significance in their cultural and religious ceremony. Common spaces are separated for specific cultural purposes, such as *Sannisarpan*, *Bhumethan*, *Cotghar*, *Dewali ghar*, etc., and sacred rest areas, which are common in villages. There are some other understandings about the use and regulation of common resources when the regular systems are felt insufficient; community members practice activities like *Sramdan*, *Jhara*, *Parma*, *Mela*, etc., for Community construction and waste management, and cooperative institutions like *Guthi*, *Bhakari*, *Mustidan*, etc., for charity contribution.

3.3.2.5. Traditional volunteer systems and communal charity initiatives

Another typical traditional volunteer system of common working and charity, where a member of each family comes together to construct, maintain, and protect the community property like Schools, temples, roads, gardens, water tapes, ponds, and common rest places for pedestrians. In the past days, the construction of resting places for pedestrians (*Thanti/Pati/Pauwas*, *Chautaras*) and drinking water (*pokharies / wells*) were common, which are still found but these practices are losing their strength these days.

3.4. Resilience and governance

For governance, we often focus on political and economic institutions and structures, however, the worldviews, traditions, and social institutions they follow serve as de facto governance systems that organize members of the communities, guide decision-making, and resolve disputes in these communities. While a subsistence economy alone may no longer fulfill all the needs of a community, it remains a vital economic, social, and cultural component for the communities. The resilience of these economies coexists with the capitalist market economy. The case is found same for the study community as in the present-day. Indigenous economies often follow mixed-type economies, where subsistence production still plays a significant role. Subsistence is the intrinsic value of the Indigenous economy, identified both as an economic and a social system, encompassing

various spheres of life that often are inseparable from one another (Gladun et al., 2021). They are at the heart of cultural and social identity (Kuokkanen, 2011).

Being a small country with significant geophysical and socio-cultural diversity, Nepal boasts unique strengths in ecosystem biodiversity, socio-cultural variety, and abundant natural resources. Common property issues, poverty reduction, agriculture, and sustainable rural livelihoods are crucial for people's lives. However, political instability, lack of education, and unmet basic needs have led to persistent poverty and reliance on foreign aid. Amid the challenges like food insufficiency, poor governance, and educational deficits that threaten Nepal's socio-economic, cultural, environmental, and biological progress, these Indigenous communities have historically created and maintained institutions managing common properties to promote social fairness and sustainable resource use.

In recent days, the government policy has aimed to increase the commercialization of agriculture. The shift in land use patterns reflects a transitional change from historical practices. Urbanization is occurring rapidly, with forests and croplands being replaced by construction and small agro-farms. Households are developing livelihood options linked to global capitalism, creating new opportunities for business and labor. However, the geophysical, socio-cultural, and economic factors such as extreme topographic variation, small land holdings, limited transportation, growing out-migration, ongoing tenure system challenges, and slow adoption of agricultural technology are likely to continue slowing the pace of capitalization and preserving the Indigenous economy, their identity, and self-reliance with the environment in rural Nepal. However, the resilience of a system in the face of climate change refers to the capacity of interconnected social, economic, and ecological systems to cope with hazardous events, trends, or disturbances, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure (Fan et al., 2022).

4. Conclusions

Each community in rural Nepal enjoys historical arrangements and practices collectively developed for the sustainable management of resources they have. These systems should not be considered static, but they evolve as they adapt to changes in sociocultural, political economic, and environmental conditions, without proper management, these resources risk becoming depleted or unavailable. Indigenous practices in Nepalese society align well with the concept of the relationship between humans and nature. The role of common resources in human survival, as illustrated through four window perspectives shows that nature is less damaged with the stewardship of local and Indigenous people's territories, thus it is crucial to preserve nature and culture, and that provides solutions to challenges like inequality and climate change. Their knowledge and stewardship are essential for addressing these issues. The issue of common resources is intertwined with people's living, lifestyle, and philosophy of society. These nature and culture-positive ideas and practices are similar to the basic indication of the circular economy concept that human beings are a part of the natural environment rather than its rulers' so we should not hurt nature, but restore the services provided by the ecosystem and foster collaboration among various agents.

Common resources have contributed to people's livelihood, income, employment, and asset accumulation in direct or indirect ways that are rarely recognized. Similarly, common lands, forests, lakesides, riversides, and other natural areas are crucial in maintaining ecosystems and preserving the environment. They also serve as alternative food sources during the dry season and provide temporary shelters during natural calamities,

which occur frequently for people in rural areas of Nepal. A subsistence economy holds intrinsic value through the continuity of tradition and the sustained growth of its sociocultural system, encompassing various interconnected spheres of community life. However, this type of economy is seen as a threat to capital accumulation because it operates independently of capitalist logic and goals, symbolizing independence, self-sufficiency, and self-reliance. In contrast, a market economy necessitates the dismantling of traditional social structures. It is crucial to rethink indigenous economics and practices to enhance environmental sustainability and address user needs while preserving traditional practices and their diversity. The rural community needs to express their perspectives on developments that impact them. Engaging with these communities, and understanding their viewpoints is significant to admitting their realities and priorities in policies for meaningful development. This paper has highlighted alternative areas for investigation to explore the interplay between indigenous knowledge and the Sustainable Development Goals.

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