

The Effect of Promotion of *Toona ciliata* on Income and Environment Sustainability in Western Hills of Nepal

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Abstract

Subsistence agriculture with a strong link to forestry is the main basis of livelihoods in the hills of Nepal. The farming systems heavily rely on forest and trees for their sustainability. Hence, farmers in the hills have a tradition of maintaining a number of trees on their farms to meet their demand for tree products. However, traditional tree management and use pattern favoring some tree species resulted on extreme pressure while others were underutilized by not realizing their potential. The paper is based on three villages from western hill, Nepal and argued that initiation of community forestry in late 70's and associated regulatory framework along with population growth and urbanization influenced the dynamics of traditional tree species use pattern. The protection oriented forest management approach in community forestry combined with ban imposed by the government on green felling of seven major tree species condensed utilization of major species. The situation demanded to explore previously underutilized species to fulfill the forest products demands. The situation was responded by exploring the use of one of the under-utilized species- Tooni (*Toona ciliata*). The additional factors responsible were ease of regeneration and maintenance, fast growing, low investment requirements, growing markets due to development activities and enabling policy framework. The research found that the main benefit of the species was increased income and employment to the farmer which was not realized as a motivating factor for farm tree plantation by earlier studies. In addition, the species (natural to area) contributed for environmental conservation by rehabilitating marginal lands, shifting pressure from major forest species, growing use in house constructions (culturally previously not adopted for house constructions), conservation of biodiversity. Further, users are benefited through easy products availability in economical prices.