

Tashi Wangchuk 2011: Analyzing Governance of Community Forestry in Bhutan: A Case Study of Punakha *Dzongkhag* (District). Master of Science (Tropical Forestry), Major Field: Tropical Forestry, Interdisciplinary Graduate Program. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Khwanchai Duangsathaporn, Ph.D. 208 pages.

The aims of this research were to analyze the current status of governance of community forestry in Bhutan using a case study in Punakha *dzongkhag* (district), and to investigate the “stumbling blocks” and “building blocks” in community forestry program focusing on its establishment and management aspects. Three components of good governance were considered as the conceptual basis of this research. These are: 1) laws and other norms, 2) institutions and 3) processes. Four associated principles were also considered: 1) accountability, 2) transparency, 3) participation and 4) rule of law. Data were collected through the application of a pre-tested set of questionnaires, from focused group discussion and a stakeholder workshop. Secondary information was collected from records maintained in different offices. Data were analyzed using statistical packages.

The results indicated that community forestry in Bhutan was characterized by the application of good governance principles. The ‘laws and other norms’ indicated that Bhutan has enabling conditions for community forestry. The ‘institutions’ involved in community forestry program provided more “building blocks”. ‘Processes’ in establishing community forests were considered as “stumbling blocks” due to many bureaucratic steps. From among the four principles of good governance, all stakeholders involved in the community forestry program were found accountable with presence of ‘watchdog bodies’. Transparency was rated low due to lack of internal auditors and mechanism to lodge complaints. Community forest management group members were actively participating in decision making and its activities. All stakeholders involved also followed the ‘rule of law’.

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Thesis Advisor’s signature