

Submitted Abstract

ID IMC22-FSAbstr- 837

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Country	Australia
Region	Oceania
Title	Perceived Benefits And Costs Of Mountain Protected Area: An Icdp Approach To Protected Area Management.
Keywords	Benefits, Costs, Himalayas, Integrated Conservation And Development, Nepal, Protected Area Management
Type	List Of Focus Session
Focus Session ID	42

Abstract

Protected areas (PAs) are an important tool for biodiversity conservation. Although they were originally conceived for the conservation of biodiversity, landscape and wildlife, PAs are now expected to meet different set of conservation objectives along with meeting socio-economic development objectives. Protected areas bring both positive and negative impacts for the environment and society. However, in some cases, positive impacts are likely to exceed negative impacts. Strategies linking biodiversity conservation with development and poverty alleviation has evolved with various concept such as community-based conservation and integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs).

Similarly, Nepal's protected area management system has moved over several phases, from strict fortress and fine approach to the landscape level conservation. Its success in protected area establishment with the areal coverage of 23.39 % of country's total area, however, has been challenged by protected area-people conflict and lack of funding, among others. Adoption of buffer zone regulation (1996) and buffer zone guideline (1999) has formally institutionalized the benefit and cost sharing mechanism of protected area management with local people in Nepal through the ICDPs concept.

This study fills the research gap of whether the benefits and costs from mountain protected area (national park) and their distribution varies by location of settlements from the park headquarter and tourism activities (and destination). The aims of this research are 1) to identity the types of perceived benefits and costs (personal/HH and community level) from mountain national park 2) to explore the spatial distribution (from park headquarter) of the perceived benefits and costs of mountain national park and 3) to determine the factors influencing the perceived benefits and costs of protected areas. Finally, this will summarize if the national park management meets the ICDP criteria as imagined nationally and internationally.