DHIRAJ BHATTA

Research Assistant
Institute of Forestry, Office of the Dean
Kathmandu, Nepal
bhattadhiraj234@gmail.com / +977-9868550238

Education

Master of Science in Community Forestry | Tribhuvan University **2022–2025**
Advisor: Prof. Dr. Bir Bahadur Khanal Chhetri
Thesis: Effect of Backlog Operational Plan on Community Forest Management and Resource Use in Mid-hills of Nepal

Bachelor of Science in Forestry | Tribhuvan University. **2017–2021**
Advisor: Asst. Prof. Shailendra Kumar Yadav
Thesis: Status and Distribution of Grassland Management in Karnali Floodplains of Bardiya National Park
Presented at the 4th International Conference on Global Efforts on Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Food Security (GAFEF) - 2022

Research Experience

Research Assistant, Institute of Forestry **Dec 16, 2025 – Current**
Project: Evidence Informed Policy Making in Environment in Nepal (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK)
Supervisor: Dr. Nibedita Mukherjee

- Thematic analysis, document analysis, and manuscript preparation

Research Intern, Policy Research Institute **March 2025 – Dec 15, 2025**
Supervisor: Dr. Hari Sharma Neupane

- Prepared policy brief on ride-sharing in Nepal
- Thematic analysis of SEE policy research
- Reviewed and edited a chapter on infrastructure in federal Nepal

Research Assistant, Institute of Forestry **July 2025 – November 2025**
Project 1: Land use land cover analysis, soil sample collection, forest inventory, report preparation on the topic 'Forest Health Assessment' in Laljhadi-Mohana and Gindri Watershed (WWF Funded); Supervisor: Dr. Bishnu Prasad Devkota

Project 2: Mapping and Spatial analysis of lakes, and report preparation on the topic 'Induction of Lake Cluster within Shuklaphanta National Park as a Ramsar Site'. (WWF Funded); Supervisor: Dr. Bishnu Prasad Devkota

Visiting Scholar, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill **May–Oct 2024**
Project: NSF Funded BCS-DISES: Influence of Community Forestry on the Dynamics of Integrated Socio-Environmental Systems. PI & Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Conghe Song

- Examined the community forest operational plan backlogs (expiration) and analyzed the underlying causes of backlogs causing hinderance in the governance and proper utilization of the community forestry in the mid-hills of Nepal

Field Assistant, The Rufford Foundation **Feb–April 2022**

- Household survey on perception and status of hog deer within buffer zone community forest
- Conducted training and awareness programs for buffer zone communities on human-wildlife conflict and hog deer

Intern, Bardiya National Park and Biome Health Project **Feb–June 2021**

- Household surveys in buffer zones (People's perception towards the national park)
- Grassland surveys (for prescribing management prospects)
- Camera trap and audio-moth monitoring

Forest Technician, Divisional Forest Office Dhangadhi and Makwanpur **2019**

- Forest inventory, soil analysis, operational plan preparation

Publication

Bhatta, D.*, Song, C., Poudel, S., Khanal Chhetri, B. B., Devkota, B. P. (2026) Operational Plan Backlogs and Community Forestry Governance: Impacts on Participation and Decision-making in Nepal. *Under Review - World Development*

Training, Workshops, and Conference

- Organized public policy dialogues on 'Ride Sharing in Nepal' and 'University Governance' at Policy Research Institute
- BCS-DISES Dissemination Events organized at Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University: shared research findings from the project, participated in expert discussions, and engaged with policy makers and institutional partners of the project
- Co-facilitated BCS-DISES Community Workshops in Salyan and Pyuthan, Nepal; Presented research findings on community forest operational plans backlog and its effect on resource governance
- Trained undergraduate students at Institute of Forestry on camera trap and scientific writing organized by SWOREC: Society for Wildlife Research and Conservation (3 - day training)
- Presented B.Sc. Thesis at GAFEF Conference
- Attended a week ERASMUS+ workshop on atmospheric and climatic modelling
- Training on Arc GIS, Google Earth Engine, and scientific writing organized by Nepal Geography Student Society, Tribhuvan University

Skills

- Technical: STATA, QGIS, Arc GIS, SPSS, NVIVO, VOS Viewer, MS Excel, R Studio
- Spatial analysis, data visualization, technical report preparation
- Proposal writing, research design, data analysis, article writing
- Forest inventory and camera trapping

References

Prof. Conghe Song (PhD)
Co-advisor and Supervisor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Email: csong@email.unc.edu

Prof. Bir Bahadur Khanal Chhetri (PhD)
Advisor, Institute of Forestry, Tribhuvan University
Email: bbkchhetri@iofpc.edu.np

Prof. Nibedita Mukherjee (PhD)
Project Supervisor, Brunel University
Email: nibedita.mukherjee@brunel.ac.uk