Barriers and Facilitators for Successful Community Forestry: *Lessons Learned and Practical Applications From Case Studies in India and Guatemala*

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ABSTRACT Internationally, numerous examples have been of efforts to promote community-based forest management (CBFM) through forest decentralization programs that promote forest conservation and livelihood improvements. Although there are successful examples, those efforts have been met with mixed success. This article proposes an analytical framework for evaluating the case studies of CBFM, highlighting the interconnection between community capital, land tenure, and markets. The analytical framework is used to analyze factors contributing to community forestry success focusing on two case studies in central India and northern Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve. We evaluate how the interplay of community capitals (i.e., community skills and resources), tenure, and markets is crucial for the successful replication of community forestry efforts. Specifically, we demonstrate that community capital factors such as social (bonding and linking), human, natural, and political; tenure factors such as a legal basis for rights, implementation of rights policy, community engagement in decision-making related to rights, withdrawal rights; and market factors such as market availability for the product, market accessibility for the producers, and profitability are the most important for facilitating and replicating community forestry efforts. Our framework can be used by nonprofits and policymakers to engage with community forestry planning as well as for monitoring and evaluation. KEYWORDS community forest rights, forest decentralization, community capital, tenure, Guatemala, India, Forest Rights Act, community-based forest management (CBFM), forest tenure, forest product markets, conservation

KEY MESSAGE

- Strong legislation and local-scale enforcement and implementation are essential for the success of community-based forest management.
- Markets are essential as a motivation for, and key to providing the livelihood benefits associated with, community-based forest management.
- Social capital, either preexisting or acquired through training, is required for cohesive community participation, the ability to manage community enterprises, and successfully implement community-based forest management.

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, community[1]-based forest management (CBFM) through forest decentralization programs has gained popularity as a means of promoting forest

1. Community: Here, community is used in a general sense referring to a group of socially related people living close to each other as a collective. It informally also means ancient settlement such as a hamlet, village, town, or city. In this article, for India, a Village acts as a representation of a community. Village is a small community or group of houses in a rural area, larger than a hamlet and usually smaller than a town, and sometimes (as in parts of the United States) incorporated as a municipality. Village is also a unit of a grassroot-level governance system, a unit of Gram Panchayat under the 73rd constitutional amendment of 1993 of the Indian Constitution.

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protection while addressing rural poverty (Arts, 2013; Bray et al., 2008; Gilmour, 2016; Secco et al., 2014; Tuan, 2006). In community forestry, local communities collaboratively manage forest resources for subsistence and/or income generation (Barismantov et al., 2011). Communities engaging in community forestry manage timber and nontimber forest products, produce ecosystem services, and engage in community-based tourism on community-managed land. Subsistence and income-generation benefits generated by community forestry support sustainable livelihoods and incentivize forest protection (Salafsky et al., 2001). Today, approximately 65% of the world's forests are under some form of community management and at least 62 countries have adopted forest decentralization policies (Gilmour, 2016). Indigenous and community land tenure is increasingly recognized as an important step in promoting forest conservation (Fa et al., 2020) and addressing global environmental challenges such as climate change (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022).

However, while there are successful CBFM case studies throughout the world, forest decentralization often faces scalability challenges (Antinori & Bray, 2005; Barsimantov et al., 2011; Radachowsky et al., 2012). There have even been examples of community groups unable to access forest rights in countries that have implemented national-scale forest decentralization policies (Gilmour, 2016; Schlager & Ostrom, 1992). This article focuses on case studies from two such countries—central India and northern Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve. This article contributes to a growing body of literature focusing on understanding factors that facilitate or constrain the replication and success of CBFM.

This article discusses factors that need to be considered to help guarantee the success of CBFM. Understanding the factors leading to success would help various actors engaged in implementing community forestry replicate it widely. We identify these factors by focusing on two case studies located in central India and in northern Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR). We review specific villages from central India; regions and organizations from northern Guatemala where community forest rights have been claimed and either fully awarded or not awarded. By focusing on understanding the barriers and facilitators that contributed to the successful community forestry cases, we contribute to a growing body of knowledge on the factors contributing to the success (and failures) of—not only—community forestry, but more generally community-based resource management.

CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

For context, we provide the basic background of forest administration and community forest laws in the two case study countries.

Background for the Case Study in India

India is home to the largest number of forest-dependent people in the world with more than 275 million people mostly from marginalized sections of society (Lynch, 1992, as quoted in Saxena, 1997); 21.71% of India's land is categorized as forest and is governed by the Forest Department at the provincial (state) level (Forest Survey of India, 2021). India's Forest Department, through acts such as the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 (Kumar et al., 2015), has always maintained control over forest management practices. The National Forest Policy of 1988 introduced the concept of Joint Forest Management (JFM). Although JFM ensured some participation of communities, it has served in many cases to further entrench and extend the Forest Departments' power (Reddy et al., 2007; Sarin, 2003; Sarin et al., 2003; Sundar, 2000). The central India case study is characterized by community forestry claims made by community collectives in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh states, which are shown in figure 1 as Study Area.

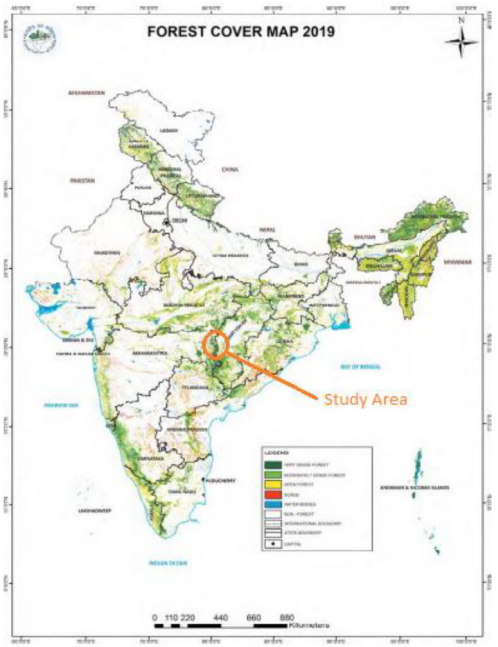

FIGURE 1. Forest cover in India from Indian State Forest Report 2019. Also marked with a circle is the study area for this article.

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A combination of a grassroots movement and a supportive political environment led to the enactment of the "Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006" (henceforth, the FRA; Kumar & Kerr, 2012). In recognition of the historical injustice done to forest dwellers during the creation of India's legal forests, the objective of FRA is to strengthen their rights to forests (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2014). The law applies to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes (ST) and other traditional forest dwellers (other than ST communities, which in rural India predominantly include, Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Class communities). Some of the salient provisions of the FRA include rights over forest land occupied for cultivation and habitation; community rights of ownership and the right to access, collect, use, and dispose of minor forest products (see the next paragraph for further explanation); and the right to protect, conserve, and manage forest resources (Kumar et al., 2015). The FRA further allows individual access over the forest land subject to meeting certain criteria. The focus of this study, however, was on assessing success under conditions of community (rather than individual) forest rights.

The Indian Forest Act of 1927 allows forest-dwelling communities to collect Minor Forest Produce (MFP) from forests. MFPs are products that are either found in or brought from forests and include all nontimber forest products of plant origin, such as bamboo (*Bambusoideae*), brushwood, stumps, honey, waxes, lac (a resin secreted from *Kerria Lacca*), medicinal plants, roots, and tubers. In a significant change that allowed communities greater freedom in commercializing bamboo, FRA 2006 recognizes bamboo as a grass. Prior to 2006, it has been considered a tree species by the Forest Department, which limited the ability of communities to profit from it.

In August 2009, under the FRA, Mendha Lekha village in Maharashtra became the first village in the country to obtain legal rights and responsibilities to use, manage, and conserve 1,800 hectares of forest located within its customary boundary. This was a milestone in the history of forest governance in India (Broome et al., 2018) allowing Mendha Lekha village council to legally supply *Bamboo* to the nearby paper and pulp industry and, as such, generate revenue for the community that had previously been claimed by the Forest Department (Devaji Tofa, Personal Communication, 11/05/2015). Despite Mendha Lekha's success, the replication of its experience across India is still very low. Recognition of community forest rights has been limited to a few pockets of the country, where civil society organizations and local district administration have collaborated to establish community rights under FRA. These include Gadchiroli and Nandurbar districts in Maharashtra, Kandhamal and Mayurbhanj districts in Odisha, and Narmada district in Gujarat (Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015). As such, even though theoretically argued and empirically proven as an important means to promote forest conservation and income generation for communities, community forestry has had few successful cases across India. A complex interplay of several factors that are suspected to contribute to low uptake in India are discussed further in this article.

Background for the Case Study in Guatemala

The Guatemala case study focuses on community forest concessions located in the MBR in northern Guatemala as shown in figure 2. The region is home to the largest tract of remaining rainforest in central America. The MBR represents 83% of Guatemala's protected area and contains Mayan sites, such as Tikal, El Mirador, and Yaxha. It is also incredible rich in biodiversity hosting more than 14,000 species of plants and 450 species of animals. In the Reserve, forested land is allocated to communities through renewable 25-year legal agreements

Figure 2. Location of Maya Biosphere Reserve within Guatemala. Source: Rainforest Alliance (2014). Originally published in Hodgdon et al. (2015).

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known as concessions (Rodas et al., 2014). Community concessions are established between the State and the concessionaire and provide the concessionaire with exclusive rights to engage in tourism and extract forest resources such as timber and nontimber forest products in a designated area in exchange for fees and protection responsibilities (Gomez & Mendez, 2007). Each concession is allocated to a legally recognized group that represents either an entire community or a subset of a community. In Guatemala, these concessionaires refer to themselves as community forest enterprises (CFEs; Nittler & Tschinkel, 2005).

The most commonly harvested timber species in the reserve include big-leaf mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), Guatemalan cherry (Manchiche, *Lonchocarpus castilloi*), Santa Maria (*Calophyllum brasiliense*), Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), and tropical walnut (*Bucida buceras*). CFEs harvest nontimber forest products, such as xate palm (*Chamaedorea oblongata and ernesti-augusti*), natural chewing gum (*Manilkara zapota*), allspice (*Pimenta dioica*), guano palm (*Sabal mauritiiformis*), Ramon nut (*Brosimum alicastrum*), and honey. Tourism typically focuses on the major Mayan sites within the Reserve, such as Uaxactun, Tikal, Yaxha, and Mirador National Park. The community concessions system provides CFEs with the opportunity to engage in ecotourism and community-based tourism around these Mayan sites.

Existing community forest concessions in the MBR are internationally recognized for both the ecological and social benefits that they have achieved. For example, land under the management of community concessions is less deforested compared to land found in nearby national parks (Blackman, 2015). Concessions also provide jobs and income to local community members and invest in community health, education, and infrastructure projects (Stoian et al., 2018). However, despite the demonstrated success in the MBR, it has taken over a decade to incorporate additional community groups into the concession model. Most of the groups that formed in the late 1990s and early 2000s to solicit concessions have since disintegrated after unsuccessful attempts to access forest rights. Two groups (*Amigos del Bosque* and *Selva Maya*) have remained organized, however, and continue to pursue these rights (Anonymous Community Member, Personal Communication, 01/2019).

Table 1 shows details about the case study areas in India and Guatemala and the latest status of the community forestry rights/concession awards.

METHODOLOGY

We applied an analytical framework that has been developed by the authors and which was designed to facilitate the development of community forestry case studies (Butler et al., in press). The framework incorporates factors related to community-scale resources, land tenure, and access to markets to provide an understanding of the local context in which community forestry groups operate. In our analysis, the community capital assessment provides a way to determine how prepared *communities* are to respond to a change in forest tenure rights. Land tenure determines how communities can *access* natural capital for conservation and development. Markets are important because they allow communities to generate *economic benefits* and associated livelihood improvements from their land-tenure arrangements. In this study, we used the framework to identify and understand factors that facilitate and/or constrain the successful replication of community forestry efforts.

Three authors of this article used the collective case study method to analyze the barriers and facilitators for the successful replication of community forestry efforts. The collective case study approach is appropriate for situations, where multiple case analyses are desired and can handle the analysis of rare phenomena while also evaluating or critiquing theory (Padgett, 2017; Stake,1995). In the collective case study method, we made use of the collaborative autoethnography approach. It is a form of qualitative research, in which an author uses self-reflection and writing to explore anecdotal and personal experience and connect this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings (Chang et al., 2012; Ellis, 2004). It engages two or more autoethnographers in a research team to pool their lived experiences on selected sociocultural phenomena and collaboratively analyze and interpret them for commonalities and differences (Chang et al., 2012). During this process, the three authors of this article reflected on their experiences in regions of central India and northern Guatemala to rate the factors in terms of their importance in promoting successful community forestry experiences. In the next section, we describe successful and unsuccessful community forestry case studies and how we rated them in terms of importance.

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TABLE 1. Over-Riding Legal Framework and Basic Information About the Case Study Sites.

India		
Legal framework—The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006		
Village	State	Rights/Concession Awarded or Not
Mendha Lekha	Maharashtra	First village to have been awarded Community Forest Rights on 1,809 Ha in 2009
Shahkatta	Chhattisgarh	The claim is submitted, but there is no decision yet (updates as of August 2022)
Parvi	Chhattisgarh	Awarded 1,293 Ha in 2021
Kanakpur	Chhattisgarh	The claim is submitted, but there is no decision yet (updates as of August 2022)
Guatemala		
Legal framework—Community Forest Concession System of the Maya Biosphere Reserve		
Region/Organization	Location	Rights/Concession Awarded or Not
Sociedad Civil Custodios de la Selva	Melchor de Mencos, Peten Guatemala	Awarded 21,176 Ha in 2000
Sociedad Civil para el Desarrollo Árbol Verde	Nine communities located on the outskirts of Maya Biosphere Reserve	Awarded 64,793 Ha in 1999
Sociedad Civil Organización Manejo y Conservación Comunidad Uaxactún	Uaxactun, Flores Guatemala	Awarded 83,558 in 1999
Cooperativa Integral de Comercialización Carmelita R.L.	Carmelita, San Andres Guatemala	Awarded 53,797 Ha in 1997
Asociación Integral Forestal de San Andrés	San Andres, San Andres Guatemala	Awarded 51,939 Ha in 1999
Asociación de Productores de San Miguel	San Miguel La Palotada, San Andres Guatemala	Awarded 7,039 Ha in 1994 but suspended in 2009
Amigos del Bosque	Melchor de Mencos, Peten Guatemala	Not awarded
Selva Maya	Communities of San Andres and San Jose, Peten Guatemala	Not awarded

We analyzed successful and unsuccessful cases of community forestry from Guatemala and India using the parameters outlined in the framework: community capital, land tenure, and markets. In the study, we consider successful cases, where the claim was made and community forestry was awarded (Mendha Lekha, Parvi in India; and Sociedad Civil Custodios de la Selva, Asociación Integral Forestal de San Andrés in Guatemala), and unsuccessful cases are which where the decision is still pending (Shahkatta, Kanakpur in India), not awarded (Amigos del Bosque, Selva Maya in Guatemala), and awarded but suspended (Asociación de Productores de San Miguel in Guatemala).

In India, the data were obtained from numerous informal conversations that authors have had with villagers, nonprofit workers, and government staff to understand their vision, challenges, and experiences as regards community forest rights between 2013 and 2018. In Guatemala, the data were based on our experience working with communities in the reserve since 2003, qualitative dissertation research conducted with communities in the reserve between 2017 and 2019, and interviews were undertaken in 2018 with community groups who were in the process of soliciting forest concessions. For both study sites, we also reviewed legal and policy documents, government reports and websites, and village-level documentation related to community forest rights, such as legal texts, national and state policy guidelines, local government and project reports, marketing plans, and tenure rights.

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TABLE 2. Summary of the Relative Importance of Factors Associated With the Successful Replication of Community Forestry Efforts to Obtain Forest Rights in Central India and Northern Guatemala Case Studies.

Parameter/ Factors	Most Important Factors	Somewhat Important Factors	Least Important Factors
Community capitals	Social (bonding, linking), human, natural, and political	Social (bridging), cultural, and financial	Physical
Tenure	Legal basis for rights, implementation of rights policy, community engagement in decision-making related to rights, and withdrawal rights	Rights time frame, enforcement of rights, access rights, exclusion rights, and management rights	Alienation rights
Market	Is there a market? Is the market accessible? Profitability	Diversification, nonincome benefits, and subsistence production	—

The collaborative autoethnography approach was used to study, identify, and highlight factors as per their importance for successful replication of community forestry. To this end, we drew from our collective past experiences of community forest rights in the two case study countries by meeting regularly to discuss the cases and converge on factors for success. Between January–May 2019 and January–May 2020, we met fortnightly for 1.5-hour work sessions for a total of approximately 30 hours. During these sessions, we arrived at our findings through discussions of our previous work (nonprofit work, field interviews, and market and governance research) identifying and classifying factors of success into "most important," "somewhat important," and "least important." Factors "most important" for the successful replication of community forestry efforts were considered as those present in successful villages/organizations but which were absent in unsuccessful organizations. Without incorporating the most important factors, it is near to impossible to successfully replicate community forestry efforts. Factors that are "somewhat important" increase the probability of successful replication but that can be done away with if all the "most important" factors are ensured. Factors that are "least important" are not necessary for the successful replication of community forestry. There are also some factors whose importance is different for India and Guatemala. In those cases, the lowest score between the two countries was taken.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors associated with the successful replication of community forestry efforts are summarized in table 2. Our analysis found the most important community capitals were social capital (particularly bonding and linking social capital), human capital, natural capital, and political capital. While financial capital was seen as important in Guatemala, it was less important in the Indian case study. In both cases, the least important capital was physical capital. Strong social capital was observed in successful Indian and Guatemala community forestry cases. In Guatemala, local community groups organized and maintained their social organization over time. Some groups have remained organized for 17 years petitioning for land-use rights. Other groups disintegrated after not being able to obtain a concession or maintain their social organization.

In India, villagers usually meet in the monthly gram sabhas[2] (village council meetings). These are statutory meetings conducted by the respective village council, which all adults attend. In several villages, women and youth meet through their savings and credit group meetings and youth clubs, respectively. We observed that successful communities are associated with having well-organized community institutions. In India, Adivasi ("tribal") communities also have a spiritual connection with the forest, as their deities reside there. Due to this, there is a strong sense of cultural identity and association among the Adivasi communities.

We depict our analysis from table 2 in the radar diagram through figures 3–5 for community capital, tenure, and market, respectively.

Community Capitals

In both cases, community groups also demonstrated bridging social capital. Bridging social capital involves

2. Gram sabha is the collective of all the electorates in a village in India. Residents of the village use the forum of the gram sabha to discuss local governance and development and make need-based plans for the village.

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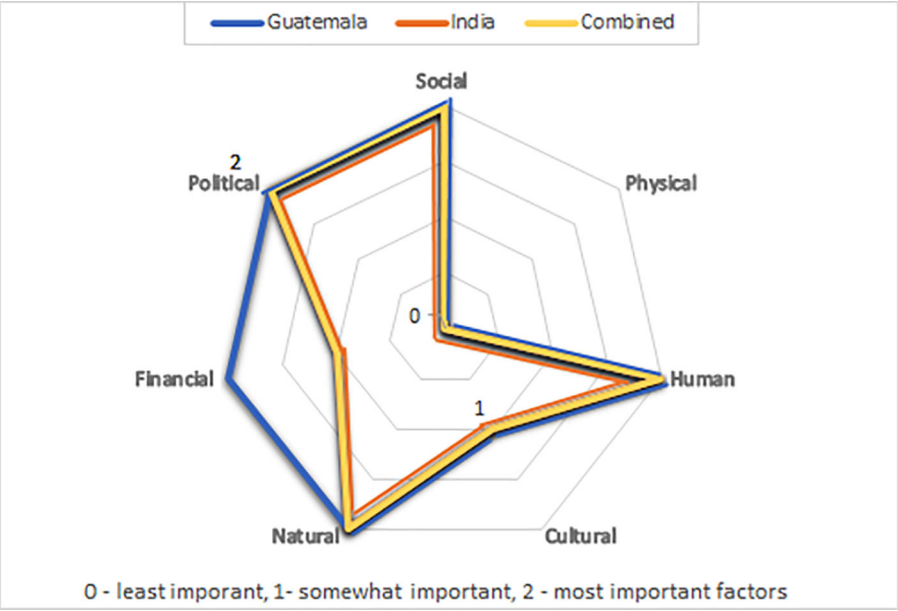

FIGURE 3. Relative importance of community capital factors for the successful replication of community forestry for Guatemala, India, and combined.

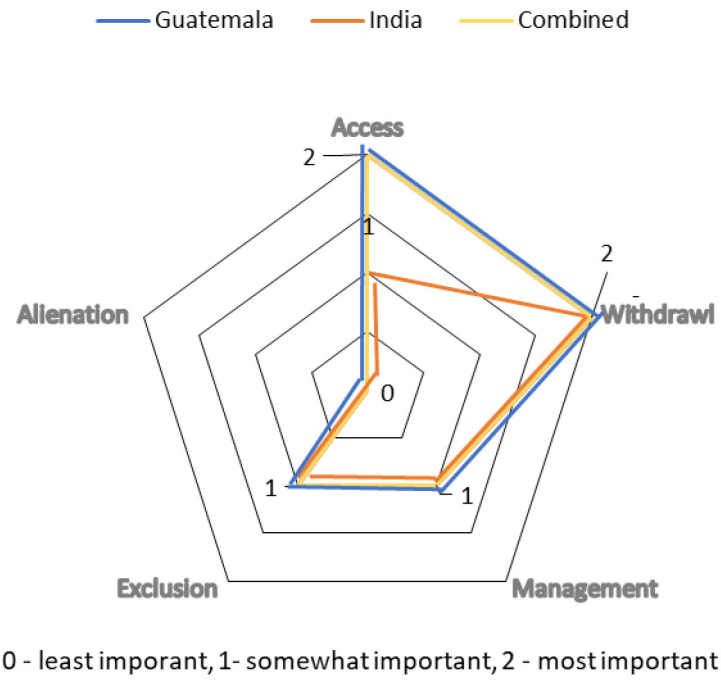

FIGURE 4. Relative importance of land tenure factors for the successful replication of community forestry for Guatemala, India, and combined.

relationships between groups that might not otherwise interact. In Guatemala, community groups are organized into second-tier organizations such as the Association of Forest Communities of the Petén (ACOFOP). In India, bridging across different neighboring villages happened through block-level government meetings as well as inter-village meetings organized by Adivasi communities. Groups also demonstrated linking social capital. Linking social capital involves relationships between community groups and individuals with power or authority. Linking

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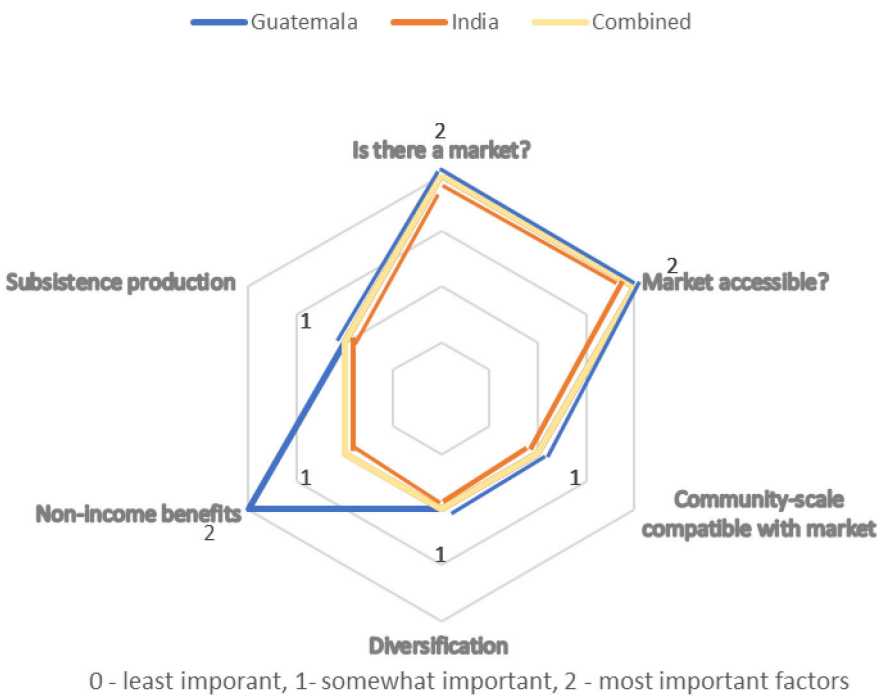

FIGURE 5. The relative importance of market-related factors for the successful replication of community forestry for Guatemala, India, and combined.

social capital seems to be the most important for establishing relationships with various external organizations, such as nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, and bureaucrats.

Along with linking the capital, political capital (access to public officials and political power) was also seen as most important for similar reasons. Astute political awareness within the community was found to be most important in both India and Guatemala. In Guatemala, the community's ability to organize and influence government decisions to allocate forest rights was a very important factor in obtaining forest rights. The ability to influence political representatives and work with international donors and second-tier organizations (such as ACOFOP) was cultivated by successful groups over many years. In the Indian case, continued negotiation with the Indian forest was also crucial for success.

Successful cases are testimonies of enhanced human capital (community members' skills and knowledge). Successful community groups actively invested in education and leveraged relationships with external partners to build their human capital through technical and organizational training. In India, certain individuals from the villages provided remarkable leadership starting from building community collectives to negotiating with government bureaucracies. Natural capital (the natural resources that the community manages) was also most important in both Indian and Guatemalan cases. In both countries, successful cases had access to rich forest and nontimber forest resources. In Guatemala, this included mahogany and other high-value timber products. In India, communities had access to bamboo plantations and nontimber forest products. Physical capital (infrastructure) was seen as being less important in both cases. Both in India and Guatemala, all community groups had limited access to physical capital initially. This did not seem to be a limiting factor in the long term. Groups were able to invest in physical capital and overcome this barrier over time.

Tenure

We found that the most important factors associated with successful community forestry efforts were the existence of a legal basis for giving communities land use rights, especially the community's access rights (the right to physically access a piece of land), and withdrawal rights (right to harvest products; figure 5). Other factors that were somewhat important included management rights (the rights to make management decisions), exclusion rights (the right to restrict access), and the time frame of rights.

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Alienation rights (the right to sell/lease rights to others) were observed to be less important.

In both cases, withdrawal rights are most important to ensure that forest management can produce benefits for local communities. In the MBR, community groups obtain access, management, withdrawal, and exclusion rights through 25-year concession contracts. As these 25-year contracts were coming to an end, community groups faced uncertainty regarding whether they would be renewed. Documentation of the social and environmental impacts of community concessions has led to the concessions recently being renewed for another 25 years. Other community groups are allowed to access and protect the forest but have not yet been given management or withdrawal rights. The time frame for which the forest rights are accessible for the community collectives of the rights in Guatemala is relatively short (25 years) compared to India where it is 99 years. In India, FRA 2006 which gives withdrawal rights to certain species of plant and NTFPs (see Section "Background for the Case Study in India") while forest access in India has always been guaranteed for villagers withdrawal rights were discretionary and decided upon by the forest bureaucracy.

In both cases, implementation and enforcement of tenure allotment have been bottlenecks impeding access to land use rights for communities who have not yet received tenure rights. For example, in Guatemala, several groups have been attempting to obtain forestry concessions for over 15 years. Interviews with these community groups and members of ACOFOP revealed that the major barrier has been snags in the bureaucratic process and high turnover rates between bureaucratic officials. In India, the gramsabha's (village council meeting) approval is necessary for allocating the community forest rights. However, there are two more levels above the village-level councils (subdivisional and district levels) comprising of politicians and administrative officers who have discretionary powers to decide on the award of community forest rights.

Market

We found that in both cases, the most important factors contributing to success were the existence and accessibility of markets. Both Guatemalan and Indian communities were interested in harvesting forest products for subsistence use and income generation. In Guatemala, community groups sold timber and NTFPs in local and international markets and engaged in community-based tourism. In India, village organizations sold bamboo harvested from forest concessions to the local paper and pulp industry. Prior to the community forestry system, the profit accrued from the sale of bamboo was kept by the Indian Forest Department and forest-dwelling villagers worked for daily wages. Cultivating produce that has a market demand was a crucial motivating factor to work toward community forestry. There are several examples not only in central India but across several Indian states, where the existence and accessibility of the market have contributed remarkably to the success and replication of community forestry. Some examples are as follows. Several villages in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra state in central India have been trading in bamboo with nearby paper and pulp industries and the village council has been earning income from the sale. Similarly, over 20 villages in Narmada district, Gujarat state, have harvested and sold bamboo to paper mills, generating incomes in tens of lakhs of rupees for the village councils. In Andhra Pradesh, Sirsanapalli village sold US$35,000 worth of bamboo after receiving community forest rights and decided to spend half of their income on improving the forests and their village; 14 villages in Maharashtra's Gondia and Amravati districts have been managing tendu leaf harvesting and trade in their forests for the last 3 years, providing livelihood support to hundreds of families (Rights and Resources Initiatives, 2015).

While analyzing the successes and failures of the community forestry efforts in India and Guatemala, it was observed that when it comes to access to markets, governments and international organizations have often adopted an "if you build it, they will come" attitude toward markets. This has resulted in the faulty assumption that if a community forestry operation is able to physically harvest products, there will be an accessible market for those products. We want to highlight the importance of paying attention to access to markets as a missing link for the successful replication of community forestry efforts. Markets are important motivators for forest management and have led to livelihood improvements in the communities managing forests.

CONCLUSION

This article addresses a paradox that despite increasing legislation on community forestry—by which community collectives could get access to forests—across the world,

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the actual implementation is abysmally slow. Authors have used their own experiences drawing from the case studies from the two countries Guatemala and India using a framework introduced in their paper (Butler et al., in press) on the barriers and facilitators for successful community forestry efforts. We compared successful and unsuccessful cases of community forestry to come up with factors as per their importance for the successful replication of the community forestry efforts. We used three parameters community capital, tenure, and market to evaluate case studies.

The case studies highlighted the importance of several community capitals. Social capital has allowed groups to be organized for over a decade as they petition for land use rights in Guatemala and India. Binding social capital in the form of affinity among the members of the community is crucial to withstand the long and arduous application process. Groups without community capitals disbanded after setbacks. On the contrary, groups that persevered were able to leverage relationships with external groups that subsequently assist them in obtaining forest rights. Leveraging support from nonprofits and other allies to push for community rights was crucial in the case of Guatemala, where international nonprofits supported community collectives and local nonprofits.

To amplify interest in forest management and conservation, communities need to obtain a direct benefit from managing forests (Salafsky et al., 2001). Our article highlights the importance of the benefit accrued from harvesting and selling timber and nontimber forest products. Nonprofit organizations engaged in planning the process of claiming community rights to forests oftentimes underestimate the important step of identifying market linkages. Through case studies, we demonstrated how envisioning the possibility of a good market linkage of one or more forest products for enhancing local livelihoods is an important motivator for community organizations to pursue their objectives of becoming owners and managers of forests.

In terms of tenure, a conducive policy environment that is accommodating of devolving right to forest management and/or ownership to communities is necessary. If no such devolutions system exists, the long-term success of any community forestry operations is threatened and serves as a barrier to replication. Even where policies exist and are accompanied by strong legislation that supports community forestry, these can be insufficient if local-state enforcement and implementation mechanisms are weak. The incapacity to locally enforce and implement national-scale policies is a key factor for successful replication. As case studies from both India and Guatemala show, even though laws exist to provide communities with access to forests, the implementation rate is quite low due to weak enforcement mechanisms and fear/concern within government agencies for losing control of forest activities and losing access to benefits from forest resources.

ACTION POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Our intention has been to make our analytical framework practice-oriented. After introducing the framework and discussing the results, we would like to propose the following action points for the practitioners and policymakers.

1. Efforts should be made to sustain the long-term engagement of community members given the response time required for community forestry applications and tenure awards. Both cases covered in this study have pointed out that the process of obtaining community forestry rights can take several years.
2. Mobilizing strong political and bureaucratic support is crucial for reducing the response time for community forestry awards. In Guatemala, creating second-tier organizations and harnessing relationships with international organizations and universities has been an effective means of increasing local communities' political capital and ability to succeed.
3. Addressing several bureaucratic bottlenecks is crucial in taking community forestry implementation to a larger scale. Specifically, there needs standard procedure of submitting the paperwork. The timeline in which the outcome of the allotment of community forestry is expected should be clearly specified. The appellate mechanism in case of issues with the community forestry allotment should be ensured, implemented, and followed. Last but not least, the attitude of the forest department's toward forest dwelling communities as encroachers need to change.
4. Efforts should be made to improve community capacity to research, understand, and access markets for their products.

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CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

a. Do you think that allocating forest areas to community organizations rather than to national or lower-level forest departments leads to better forest conservation outcomes? In what way does it or doesn't it?
b. We've identified community capital, tenure, and markets as three important factors in the framework. Each of these factors has additional aspects to consider.
    i. Which of the factors do you find most convincing? Why is that?
    ii. Do you think that this analytical framework is missing crucial elements? Which are those and how do they improve the overall framework?

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that no competing interests exist in the publication of this paper.

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