

**Forest Policies for Sustainable
Development and Poverty Alleviation
in Pakistan:
Issues and Options, a case study of
NWFP**

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by

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Local livelihoods and state policies have a dual interface. One, policy changes impact rural livelihood practices, on informal local institutions and on people's coping strategies. Two, these changes do impact resource use sustainability for local livelihoods are embedded in the local resource base. Financial constraints, land, and alternative means of livelihood are critical factors forcing many people into unsustainable patterns of natural resource use. Paucity of choices force the poor to adopt short-term survival strategies. People without any hope for the future have little incentive to manage natural resources well. Until recently, forests were the sole objective of forest policy and people were taken as enemies of the forest. However, now there has been a realization that forestry should be an instrument of the policy rather than its objective, thus leading towards sustainable livelihoods and reducing pressure on the fast dwindling forests. This article focusing mainly on case study conducted in NWFP (where 40% of Pakistan's natural forests are present) emphasises that legal, institutional, and policy reforms alone are not sufficient to achieve sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Good laws and policies are useless without political and administrative will to change. Otherwise the poor would remain mired in poverty pushing us into a spiral of over exploitation in the wake of all forest policy failures.

1. Introduction

1.1 Human environment interaction

Environment and human life are co-related and hence influence each other. The population explosion pollutes environment against the need for a cleaner environment, which is critical to their lives. There are three ways with which the human beings interact with environment: They depend on the environment for life, they modify environment, and they adapt to environment. These activities, if not carried out in a way to meet key aspect of sustainability — as well as in high population growth, which is partly an outcome of this process — can lead to environmental degradation (Khan and Naqvi, 2000).

The concerns over the balance between human life and the environment assumed international dimension only during the 1950s and the policies articulated in documents such as the *Stockholm Declaration and Programme of Action*, the *World Conservation Strategy*, *Our Common Future*, the *Rio Declaration and Agenda 21*, have driven the environmental agenda so far (UNEP, 2002). Environment is one of the four pillars of sustainable development (Box-1). All four pillars- social, economic, institutional, and environmental- are mutually supportive and are essential for achieving sustainable

development. However, the experience of last 30 years¹ (1972-2002) reveals that in practice it becomes difficult to maintain a balance among them. Maintaining this balance becomes even difficult when there is a strong pressure of human activities on natural resources to secure livelihood.

Box-1: Four pillars of sustainable development.

- Environmental sustainability is achieved when the productivity of life-supporting natural resources is conserved or enhanced for use by future generations.
- Economic sustainability is achieved when a given level of expenditures can be maintained over time.
- Social sustainability is achieved through minimising social exclusion and maximising social equity.
- Whereas institutional sustainability is achieved when prevailing structures and processes have the capacity to continue to perform their functions over the time.

1.2 *Livelihood strategies – state policy interface*

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (material and social resources) and activities required as for a means of living. Understanding the interface between local livelihood and state policies is of vital importance for developing sustainable local natural resource management. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (Chamber and Conway, 1992). State policies and regional and international institutions² — which are exposed to and embedded in national economies, market forces and processes of globalisation/global changes — have an impact on local people's sustainable livelihood practices and strategies as well as on local institutions developed by the people themselves (informal institutions). On the other hand these institutionally shaped livelihood strategies have an impact on the sustainability of resource use. Taken together, policies and institutions form the context within which the individuals and households construct and adapt livelihood strategies. In effect, they determine the freedom with which the people have to transform their assets into livelihood outcomes. Policies and institutions determine, among other things:

- People's access to various assets (such as land or labour);

1 30 years have passed since the international community laid the foundation in 1972 for collective global action to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment through United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden.

2 Institutions or rules of the game are defined as the rules, norms and values that shape our behaviour. These institutions can be both formal (e.g., land tenure laws) and informal (e.g., social customs and conventions); created (e.g., as a result of deliberate political decisions) or may evolve over time (DFID, 2000).

- the benefit people are able to derive from different types of capital (through markets);
- the environment for private sector investment;
- the extent to which people are able to engage in decision-making process; and
- individual and civil society rights.

In most of the developing countries including Pakistan, policies and institutions generally tend to discriminate against those with few assets (social as well as economic) and disadvantageous poor people, especially marginalized communities living in fragile areas such as Hindu Kush Himalayas region.

Forest policies and laws enacted from time to time to implement these policies are not an exception to this general rule. Such discriminatory policies and institutions not only exclude the marginalized groups such as women and children, but also lead to unsustainable natural resources management. Due to few choices available, the poor are forced to adopt short-term survival strategies and unsustainable natural resources management practices.

1.3 Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) in Pakistan; an introduction

In Pakistan HKH spreads over parts of NWFP province (Swat, Kohistan, Chitral, Dir, Swabi, Hazara, Mansehra, districts), Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), Northern Areas, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and 12 districts of Balochistan. In Pakistan, total HKH area comprises of 489, 988 sq km (more than 50% of the total area of Pakistan), with a population of 31.13 million (ICIMOD, 1998). Most of the forest area of Pakistan is concentrated in HKH (40% in NWFP, 15.7% in the Northern Areas, and 6.5% in AJK) (Hasan, 2001). The Hindu Kush rises South West of Pamirs. It is considered to extend from Wakhjir pass at the junction of the Pamirs and Karakoram to Khawak pass North of Kabul. Its first regions extend from Wakhjir pass separating Hunza from Wakhan and up to Dorah pass (320 kms in length). Its second region lies beyond Dorah pass in Afghanistan. The third region, which runs for 240 kms, lies in Pakistan and extends into Swat and Kohistan. On the East it is separated from Karakoram by Indus River. Highest of Hindukush is Tirich Mir (7708). The Western Himalayas is situated between Kashmir valley in the East to Indus River in the North and West, and is dominated by Nanga Parbat massif with highest peak rising at 8125 metres. The range comprises the regions of Kashmir, Kaghan, Kohistan, Deosai and Chilas. The range is also dominated by Deosai plains situated at the height of about 4500 metre (Mountains of Pakistan, ESP).

1.4 *Livelihood strategies of farmers living in HKH region of Pakistan*

Local communities subsist on the agro-pastoral economy to a considerable extent. The majority of the population are subsistence farmers meeting only the barest needs of food, fodder and fibre for the household. The average landholding per household rarely exceeds one hectare. Cropping pattern varies with altitude. The most widely cultivated crop is maize followed by wheat, millet, barley, buckwheat and rice. Alfalfa is the main fodder crop, while the area under potato crop is increasing every year. The growing of fruit trees, establishment of orchards is also a common practice. Livestock farming has traditionally been more important than farming, with the high pastures playing a central role in resource use pattern (Munir, 2002). As northern areas of Pakistan, northern parts of NWFP, and Himalayan parts of Kashmir make up 62.2% of the area under forests in Pakistan so forests play an important role in shaping the livelihood strategies of the local communities. Owing to presence of major portion of natural forests in NWFP, this paper focuses on a case study conducted there.

1.5 *Forest Policies in Pakistan*

Pakistan's forest policies are tied to its British colonial past. At the time of independence, the policies, procedures, and structures that administered the new nation's forests were largely left intact (Poffenberger, 2000). The first forest policy of Pakistan was announced in 1955; it was revised and updated in 1962, 1975, 1980, and in 1988 as well as in 1991 as part of the National Agricultural Policy. At provincial level³, in NWFP (where 40% of Pakistan's natural forests exist) a new forest policy was introduced in 1999, whereas at federal level a national forest policy is under preparation. According to Ahmed and Mahmood (1998), "Most forest policies, until recently, have viewed people as the prime threat to the forests, and have attempted to exclude groups other than the government from decision making". This approach did not only affect the sustainability of the livelihood strategies of the local people, but also increased the vulnerability of the marginalized sections of the communities. It ultimately led to unsustainable management of natural resources and forest depletion.

It is a proven fact that none of the policy initiative, or the policy in itself can be successful and effective without a legal cover. For decades, the only reference point for dealing with new problems was the 1927 Forest Act, despite all the new or modified legislation enacted since then -- and the list is long, as can be seen in Annex-1. It is pertinent to mention here that so far the existing laws (including the draft NWFP Forest

3 Forestry is a provincial subject according to the constitution of Pakistan.

Ordinance) are punitive in nature, and while providing penalties for contravention in /of their provisions, do not contain incentives for compliance, which are recommended in the National Conservation Strategy, Forestry Sector Master Plan, and forest policies of the Punjab and NWFP.

1.6 *New trends in shaping forest policies*

On a global level, importance of forests in poverty reduction and providing livelihood to local communities is being recognized. Forests resources directly contribute to the livelihood of 90 percent of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty and indirectly support the natural environment that nourishes agriculture and the food supplies of nearly half the population of the developing world (World Bank, 2001). In order to utilize the potential of forests in poverty alleviation, forest policies of many countries as well as the international lending institutes are being revised to be more of a "policy on forestry for rural development and poverty alleviation". Hence, forestry becomes an instrument of policy rather than an object of the policy. This new trend in shaping forest policies not only has a potential to maintain a balance among four pillars of sustainable development, but also to secure sustainable livelihood. Pakistan is also attempting to adopt this trend with the financial assistance of some international development agencies as well as with a loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB). These efforts are continuing for the last six years now. Thus forestry sector in Pakistan makes an interesting case study to assess the role of environmental policies in fostering sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

2. **Forestry sector in Pakistan**

2.1 *Forestry Sector in Pakistan and its role*

There is considerable debate over the precise area under forests in Pakistan (UNCED, 1992). Partly, the problem is a definitional one, represented by a less than perfect correspondence between legally demarcated forest under the administrative control of the provincial forest departments (FD) and the situation on the ground, as it relates to both tree cover and its condition. In other words, officially designated "forest areas" may be devoid of trees, while substantial tree cover may be found on lands classified differently.

Partly, forest statistics differ. Land use data including forest areas reported by the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) Project, 1993, with the help of satellite imagery and covering the whole of Pakistan, shows that Pakistan has 4.2 million ha covered by forests and trees, which represents 4.8 percent of the of the total land area. The Pakistan Forest Resource Institute (PFRI, 2000) questions this figure on methodological

grounds. GOP figures show forest area increasing over time, from 3.46 million ha in 1990 to 3.66 million ha in 1999. In contrast, according to the recently released FAO report, *State of Forests, 2001*,⁴ the total forest area of Pakistan (sum of natural forests plus forest plantation) decreased from 2.75 million ha in 1990 to 2.36 million ha in 2000. This translates into an annual rate of deforestation of 1.5% over the last ten years. Similarly, the Asian Development Bank claims that forest cover dropped from 3.6% of the total land in 1990 to 3.2% of the total land in 1999.

The forests in Pakistan have three important functions including protection of natural environment, regulation of atmospheric conditions, and production of goods. In this context, we have to maintain a balance between sustainable production and sustainable consumption of the forests. However, we are unable to strike the right balance, and forest depletion has emerged as one of the most serious environmental issues for Pakistan that is accompanied with many other environmental effects such as landslide, soil erosion, floods, soil degradation, and displacement of people. An even more overriding concern is the condition of the remaining forests in Pakistan. The PFRI (2000) study, covering four divisions and 21 Districts of the NWFP, assesses the state of productive forests in the NWFP⁴. It indicates that only a relatively small area of 21 percent has adequate crown coverage of more than 50 percent. Further, only 28 percent (191,672 ha) of the total PFRI forest area is located on sites below the 2000m-altitude level, of which only 18 percent (36,135 ha) is in a fairly good condition. The forests are subject to a continuous process of degradation. The percentage of areas with deep soil is decreasing with declining crown coverage. Simultaneously, the proportion of areas where only rocks are found are increasing. Most of the mature trees, with large diameters and timber volumes tended to be found in higher altitudes (over 2000m). Conservation of the quantity and quality of the forest resources is not only important to protect other resources such as water, soil, flora and fauna, but also to ensure a sustainable livelihood of people, living in HKH region who are directly or indirectly dependent on it for fuel, fodder and food also. through agriculture, animal husbandry, and logging (people living in HKH regions).

2.2 *Review of past forest policies*

Before independence, the first set of forest legislation was promulgated in 1878 to control logging. The Indian Forest Act of 1878 put the major part of forests under state management and gave limited rights to local people. The spirit of that act continued in Indian Forest Policy of 1894. On attaining independence in 1947, Pakistan inherited

4 Of the country's four provinces, NWFP has the largest area of productive forests.

the Indian Forest Policy of 1894, which it continued to follow till 1955. This policy contained guidelines for forest conservancy but noted the importance of meeting "the reasonable forest requirements of the neighbourhood" in which the forest is situated. While providing for government ownership of forest lands and, thereby, creating a small area of public forests under the Forest Department, the policy gave vast discretionary powers to the officials of forest departments in determining what they deemed "reasonable forest requirement". Thus in practice only the requirements of elites and notables were fulfilled.

The 1955 policy coincided with the formulation of the first five-year National Development Plan and focused very much on the role of forestry on economic development. It sought to increase the area under forests, through irrigated and linear plantations, and on unused government lands.

The 1962 policy contained some radical proposals including shifting of populations out of the hills, acquisition of rights of tree removal and grazing in public forests, and compulsory growing of minimum number of trees on private lands. While some suggestions were implemented, others such as the shifting of populations were found to be impractical, as it would have adversely affected the livelihood of local communities.

In 1972, a National Forestry Committee was constituted to review the post 1971 war situation. The committee's recommendations formed the basis of 1975 policy. The policy extinguished "rights" of local people, focused to stop deforestation of the wooded areas, and transferred plantations to forest department.

The National Policy on Forestry and Wildlife 1980 formed a part of the National Agricultural Policy 1980. While recommending plantation of fast-growing species, raising of fuelwood trees outside public forests and involvement of people in tree plantation and nature conservation schemes, the policy lacked concrete initiatives for achieving its objectives.

National Forest Policy of 1991 emerged after a consultative workshop of various stakeholders. It called for multiple uses and the consideration of social and (particularly) environmental objectives, although it remained vague about the means for achieving those objectives (Ahmed and Mahmood, 1998).

In 1992, there were severe floods in NWFP, which were largely attributed to the indiscriminate timber logging. The federal government opted a policy of imposing a moratorium on commercial timber harvesting. That ban got lifted after nine years in 2001. However,

timber mafia (comprising influential people involved in illegal timber harvesting) always remained active during the ban period and timber harvesting continued unabated (Geiser, 2001).

Analysing the consequences of forest policies adopted till 1992, the FSMP found that while the policing powers of the Forest Departments, exercised through restrictions on the use of forests, helped to conserve them, public apathy towards forests also developed as a consequence. People's participation in plantation and management of forests was not given sufficient attention and social and cultural aspects of forest management were ignored (GOP, 1993). In fact it was indirectly admitted in this analysis that policy initiatives cannot achieve their objectives unless and until the sustainable livelihood of stakeholders is not taken care of.

3. Forest policy and change in managing resources

3.1 *Latest policy initiatives*

As discussed in the previous section that most of the policy initiatives, until recently, were to conserve the forests and ignored the livelihood provisions of the local communities. However, even the conservation aspect of those policies never got implemented in true spirit. Consequently, in practice, forest resources were made inaccessible for the poor and marginalized sections of the communities, whereas the influential along with members of the timber mafia consumed these resources at their own sweet will (Geiser, 2001). This dichotomy created the feelings of lack of ownership among the marginalized sections not only adding to their miseries but also encouraged them to adapt unfair means to meet their fair requirements of forest resources.

Among the recent policy initiatives, the National Conservation Strategy and the Provincial Conservation Strategies (as strategic contexts for policy and institutional development) and the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) and Provincial Forest Resource Inventory (PFRI) are the most significant. These policy initiatives introduced the new concept of forest management giving it an environmental dimension. They also influenced the subsequent interventions in forestry sector.

The Pakistan National Conservation Strategy (NCS), approved in 1992, recognizes the need for the Provincial Forest Departments to associate local people in protection and management of forests. Indeed, community participation is a vital element of NCS implementation in all the three core programme areas relating to the forest sector □ supporting forestry and plantations; protecting watersheds; and restoring rangelands and improving livestock quality.

The Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy (SPCS) and the Balochistan Conservation Strategy (BCS) also recommend community-based management of forests (GONWFP, 1996).

The 25-year Forestry Sector Master Plan (1992 – 2017) calls for a greater participation of local people at every level of planning, as well as an extended role for the private sector. It also recommends that the existing Forest Act 1927 be updated and revised to make it less prohibitive and punitive, and more participatory. It suggests that new provincial legislation be enacted to encourage people's participation in policy formulation and management of forest rangelands and watersheds (GOP, 1993).

The Perspective Plan 2001-2011 adopts community participation through decentralization as one of the overriding principles governing the proposed strategy to tackle problems of deforestation and the damaged ecosystems. The plan reaffirms Government's commitment to the continued implementation of the FSMP, and mentions forests as one of the areas on which conservation efforts will be focused. The National Environmental Action Plan, approved by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Council in 2001 also provides for participation of the private sector, NGOs and citizen groups in execution of projects at local level.

After the floods of 1992, PFRI study was conducted in northern NWFP to provide maps and basic data on the distribution and condition of the forest resources in NWFP (PFRI, 2000). This study challenged the statistics of FSMP and insisted that forest resources were being depleted at much intensive level and faster rate than estimated in earlier studies.

The Punjab Forest Policy Statement 1999 states the Provincial Government's intention to involve stakeholders in management of forests and watersheds and to encourage private sector investment in forests through joint forest management, joint ventures, long-term leases and suitable incentives.

The NWFP Forest Policy 2001 includes the participation of local communities and promotion of private sector investment among its cardinal principles. The policy also recommends revision of forestry legislation to provide for joint forest management.

The draft National Forest Policy 2001, mentions the sustainable development of renewable natural resources (RNR) of Pakistan, for the maintenance and rehabilitation of its environment and the enhancement of the sustainable livelihoods of its rural masses especially women, children and other deprived groups as its

fundamental goal. The policy calls for involvement of local communities in implementation of projects, management of forests and protected areas, protection and sustainable management of mangrove and riverine forests, and implementation of social forestry programmes. In order to reduce the impact of socio-economic causes of renewable natural resources (RNR) depletion, the policy proposes implementation of appropriate population planning programmes in critical ecosystems; providing substitutes to firewood in the wooded mountains; and reducing poverty through integrated land use projects with participation of organized local communities; programmes for health and education improvement, particularly of women and children, and promoting revenue generation through timber harvesting, fuelwood collection and utilization of non-wood forest products, again with involvement of local communities.

However, it is pertinent to mention that legislation measures taken so far to implement the policies from time to time including the proposed Forest Ordinance of NWFP (Forestry is a provincial subject, and provinces has to make their own laws) contradict the spirit of different policy measures. They are punitive in nature and tend to increase the policing role of forest departments. For instance, the proposed NWFP forest ordinance designates forest department staff a uniform force bearing arms and also enhances their police powers, which go against the intent of the forest policy that enshrines the principles of participatory social forestry. Similarly, the discretionary powers of forest officers to revoke a community-based organization (CBO) /Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) agreement as suggested in this ordinance would result in uncertainty and insecurity among different JFMCs/CBOs.

3.2 *NWFP Forest Sector Project (NWFP FSP) and institutional reforms*

Different policy and community initiatives and planning documents mentioned in the previous section evolved new dimensions in the concept of forestry management and opened up the doors to forestry reforms. Based on FSMP a feasibility study was carried out with the assistance of ADB, which ultimately led to the formulation of the NWFP forestry sector project. The FSP was commenced in 1996 with the help of a loan from ADB (US\$ 26.95 million) while the Government of Netherlands provided a grant for consultancy, capacity building and farm forestry. Various FSP components have to address the institutional capacity of the DFFW, legal reforms for social forestry, resource mapping and management planning, physical development work including afforestation/reforestation, rehabilitation of rangelands,

and farm forestry. It also aims to provide/upgrade physical office facilities and community infrastructure schemes (ADB, 1995).

To ensure the effectiveness of the participatory and sustainable natural resource management process, in NWFP FSP, the field interventions were to be supported by institutional reforms in provincial forest department (FD). Initially the progress in institutional reforms was slow, which upheld the release of capacity-building funds by donors until the mid-term review (MTR) of the project. In the course of 1999, the FSP made some moves with institutional reforms (Hussain and Khan, 2000)⁵. The FSP, together with the Institutional Transformation Cell (ITC), a joint Dutch-Swiss-assisted project, devised a set-up to improve decision making and ownership of the institutional reforms in DFFW, making use of existing experiences and proposals generated by other projects. Thematic working groups were established which developed a number of proposals between March and June 1999. The proposals were submitted to an internal department Support Group, chaired by the Secretary of DFFW. Decisions surpassing the competence of DFFW were referred to the Steering Committee chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary. The four thematic working groups dealt with the reorganization of the department, capacity building, role of civil society, and institutionalisation of positions and role of women in the forestry sector. At the same time, a new forest policy was prepared and promulgated in 1999. Moreover, a new forest ordinance was drafted, a forum the Provincial Forestry Round Table was set up, and recently members of the Forest Commission were nominated.

4. Impacts of institutional reforms on poverty/poor and women

The ongoing institutional reform process in NWFP forest department, which is meant to cater the enabling environments for enhanced participation and project implementation, is being criticised by various stakeholders. In 1995 "GTZ study" of the forest sector recommended the creation of the Forest Commission. The Commission was to be supported by the Forestry Round Table. To kick off the process, the Government of NWFP constituted a high level Forestry Steering Committee that came up with the first Action Plan in February 1996. Contrary to the primary objective of creating effective platforms for the interface between the key stakeholders including Forest Commission and Forestry Round Table, the FSP transferred the control of the process into the folds of the forest department on the pretext of ownership. This move took the process away from its key objectives and it is due to the above-mentioned reason that many stakeholders are

5 This paragraph is aimed to record the sequence of events as they occurred and did not discuss the merits and de-merits of these institutional reforms. The impacts of institutional reforms on poverty/poor and women would be discussed in the next section.

critical to the procedures adopted and the working of these institutions. As a result, the Forest Policy, though sounding progressive, remains a piece of paper with the Forest Department that continues to enjoy power and control over the forestry resources.

Moreover, the FD avoided forging an effective linkage between the devolution of power plan and the sectoral reform process that was underway much before inception of the devolution plan of the incumbent government. One was expecting that FD would take a lead to bring the lessons it learnt from the reform process into the devolution plan itself. Rather than being proactive, unfortunately, the FD by choice remained reactive to date for obvious reasons to protect their power base to the maximum possible extent. They have been successful in remaining at the provincial level and decentralizing the most important functions to the district level. Thus they have missed a chance to achieve sustainable natural resources management that was possible through enhanced participation and inclusion of marginalized sections of the society, which could have been the ultimate result of decentralisation of powers. Specific impacts of institutional reforms in forestry sector in NWFP on poverty, poor and women may be observed through a case study of selected villages where FSP was implemented. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) conducted this study in 2001⁶ (ADB, 2002).

4.1 *Case study of selected villages where FSP was implemented: Issues and Options*

4.1.1 Background

The objectives of FSP, as stated in the project documents are to steer the forest department towards true spirit of social forestry. It aims at a joint forest management, gender sensitised policies, and enhanced participation. It is to do so by developing and applying an integrated, participatory natural resource-management methodology to foster socio-economic and environmental well-being of the people. In order to ensure participation of communities according to social forestry principles in the planning and implementation process, NWFP is divided into different units and subunits. Resource Management Subunit comprising many villages is the planning unit for project interventions, while village land use plan (VLUP) at each village level serves as a tool for participatory planning and the organization of the village community and natural resource management. Village community is responsible to implement the VLUP through Village Development Committees (VDC) and Women's Organizations (WO) (FSP-revised PC1).

6 Details of the study are available at Asian Development Bank website http://www.adb.org/projects/forestpolicies/case_studies.asp

As has been mentioned in the previous section, different institutional reforms in NWFP forest department were initiated to cater the enabling environment for project implementation. It was in this context that SDPI conducted an empirical study to assess the impacts of various reform processes initiated through FSP in selected villages of civil divisions (An administrative unit comprising two or more districts) of Hazara, Mardan, Sawat and Malakand in NWFP. Community mapping, focus-group discussions, and individual interviews were used as tools to collect data for this study. A checklist of topics (Box 2) was prepared for fieldwork to assess the impacts of FSP on pro-poor growth, social development, and good governance.

Box 2: Issues and topics explored during fieldwork in project villages

Governance

- A. Level and extent of public participation and involvement in:
- VDC/VO preparation
 - VDC/VO decision making
 - Resource contribution [to investment and community infrastructure (CIS) Development]
 - Implementation, administration, and coordination
 - Benefits (actual and perceived)
 - Level and extent of FSP/FD staff participation and involvement in implementation of The project activities.

Social Development

- A. Human capital development and physical well-being:
- Level of knowledge and awareness of existing Natural Resource Management (NRM) practices Land tenure and how it is affecting the implementation of the project
 - Existing income-generation and livelihood measures
 - Coping mechanism in case of any financial difficulty
- B. Services:
- Level of existing social services in the community, such as drinking water health, and education
 - Level of existing infrastructure for the social services available
 - CIS development plans of the VDC/VO What sort of interventions the community was expecting from the project?
- C. Social capital and social inclusion:
- Status of nonrightholders/non-landowners
 - Status differential
 - Social organization in the village and their main functions
 - Coping mechanism in case of any financial difficulty
- D. Rural energy (commonly-used fuels, any impact of project interventions)
- E. Gender and equity development:
- Status of women in rural societies
 - The say of women in decision making and other household matters
 - Role of women in NRM
 - Workload distribution (Is FSP causing any extra burden on women?)
 - Effectiveness of Wos

4.1.2 Summary of findings

It was observed that the project implementation process, including formation of village land use plan, VDCs, and WOs, was not pro-poor. The VDCs and WOs were neither representative, nor functioning in a democratic way. Village notables and elites had dominated the VDCs and WOs. The benefits of project interventions tend to accrue to village influential. The poor and landless could get benefited only either from village infrastructure investment that benefit all, or/and from increased labour or sharecropping opportunities. It was also noted that the interventions that supported the livelihood strategies of the individual community members (such as plantation of fruit trees in private farms or house yards) were more successful than those without a direct positive impact on local livelihood (such as plantation in the communal areas or along the road sides).

The project interventions were not gender oriented. According to the project documents, the recommendations of WOs for village infrastructure development schemes were to be given priority over the recommendations of VDCs. However, in practice, most of the WOs were non functional and VDC members were proposing the infrastructure development programmes without consulting the WOs. Thus VDCs were asking for construction of metalled road to the village whereas the women informed the research team that provision of drinking water and that of trained birth attendants were their main demands. It was also observed that project interventions ignored the livelihood strategies of women and some of the project interventions such as putting a ban on grazing in the local pastures, or putting a ban on firewood collection from the local forest increased the hardships of women, children and landless shepherds who were using these sites either to graze their livestock or to collect firewood.

It was learnt from the case study findings that empowerment of communities is still not up to the mark and in many instances the "pro-poor dimensions" of the project interventions are masked largely due to poor governance, a desire to maintain status quo, and/or due to lack of capacity at the executing end. The study concluded that it would be a combination of improved governance and pro-poor development, focused on local livelihood strategies that would lead to poverty alleviation and gender empowerment.

5. Conclusions

The dilemma with most of the natural resources management policies in the recent past was the absence of human dimension and a focus on "pro-conservation" approach even at the cost of local livelihoods. This approach had a drastic effect both on the livelihood strategies of

people living in HKH regions as well as on the natural resources of this region. Part of the problem stemmed from non-participatory culture that prevailed (mainly) in most of the developing countries. However, the trends are changing now and today the world is no more involved in the "conservation" versus "development" debate. Rather a new approach "conservation as well as development" has now emerged. The proponents of this approach including many governments, international donors and international lending agencies are revisiting their "vision and mission statements" to articulate themselves in a scenario that leads to development without distorting the conservation of natural resources.

On the face of it, the above-mentioned trend seems very good and in this context the journey of forest policies in Pakistan that started from The Indian Forest Act of 1878 to the Draft National Forest Policy of 2001 (at federal) and NWFP Forest Policy 2001 (at the provincial level) is a giant leap. However, for any development effort to be the pro-poor, good governance is a must. Unfortunately, we (like other developing countries) lack good governance as well as the political will to change the status quo. Although during the formulation of new policies, the consultation with a group of experts has become a common practice during recent past, yet the consultation process (if any) remains confined to the folds of professional circles. Thus, the policies become stronger on technical consideration but lacking the required flexibility to make them work in real life situation, presenting multiple sets of actors and factors.

Consequently, the stakeholders often find themselves in a situation where state policies either do not support or have harmful affects on their livelihood strategies. It is in this scenario that policies do not meet the expectations of people who in turn are forced to utilise the natural resources unsustainably to secure their livelihoods. Consequently neither the developmental nor the conservational objectives are met with. Forestry Sector Project in NWFP is an example of one of these situations. The project is about to finish by the end of year 2002 (1996-2002) and despite its ambitious aims and radical goals, there is no let up either in the miseries of the stakeholders, or in the depleting forest stocks. The people are still suffering of poverty and are forced to exploit natural resources as last resort.

There is a sheer need to put people at the centre of development. This focus on people is equally important at higher levels (when thinking about the achievement of objectives such as poverty reduction, economic reform or sustainable development) as it is at the micro or community level. At a practical level, this means before formulating and implementing a policy, the policy makers should:

- start with an analysis of the people's livelihood and how these have been changing over time.
- involve people and respect their views.
- focus on the impact of the proposed policy and institutional arrangements upon people/households and the dimensions of poverty they define.
- have enough flexibility in their proposed interventions to promote the agenda of the poor (a key step is political participation by poor people themselves).
- work to support people to achieve their own livelihood goals (though taking into account considerations regarding sustainability).

Sustainable livelihood would be secured only if policies work with people in a way that they congruent with their current livelihood strategies, social environment and ability to adapt. "People – rather than the resources they use or governments that serve them – are the priority concern". Adhering to this principle would not only ensure provision of sustainable livelihood but would also enhance involvement of all sections of society in sustainable natural resources management. In this context, it should be realized that generation of income and employment is as important as generating government revenue alone; and forestry should be an instrument of sustainable forest management policy rather than its objectives, otherwise, the marginalized people living in HKH region would remain mired in poverty pushing us into a spiral of over exploitation in the wake of all forest policy failures.

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Forestry Sector Legislations

a) Statutes⁷

1. Balochistan Forest Regulation 1890
2. Balochistan Wildlife Protection Act 1974
3. Cattle Trespass Act 1871
4. Cutting of Trees (Prohibition) Act 1975
5. Forest Act 1927
6. Islamabad (Preservation of Landscape) Ordinance 1966
7. Kohat Mazri Control Act 1953
8. Land Reforms Act 1977
9. Land Revenue Act 1967
10. NWFP (Conservation and Exploitation of Certain Forests in Hazara Division) Ordinance 1980
11. NWFP (Sale and Sawing of Timber) Act 1996
12. NWFP Forest Development Corporation Ordinance 1980
13. NWFP Forestry Commission Act 1999
14. NWFP Hazara Forest Act 1936
15. NWFP Protection of Trees and Brushwood Act 1949
16. NWFP Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act 1975
17. Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997
18. (Provincial) Local Government Ordinances 2001
19. Provisional Constitution Order 1999
20. Punjab Development of Damaged Areas Act 1952
21. Punjab Forest (Sale of Timber) Act 1913
22. Punjab Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) Act 1974
23. Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1972
24. Transfer of Property Act 1882
25. West Pakistan Firewood and Charcoal (Restriction) Act 1964
26. West Pakistan Goats (Restriction) Ordinance 1959
27. Draft NWFP Forest Ordinance
28. Draft Punjab Forest Act
29. Draft Balochistan Forest Act
30. Draft Azad Jammu and Kashmir Forestry Act

7 Statutes: A law expressly enacted by Federal Government.

b) Rules⁸

1. Hazara Management of Waste-lands (Guzara) Rules 1950
2. Hazara Protected Forests (Community Participation) Rules 1996
3. Hazara Reserved Forests (Community Participation) Rules 1997
4. NWFP Forest Produce River Transport Rules
5. NWFP Forest Produce Transport Rules 1975
6. Draft NWFP Forests Management (Community Participation) Rules
7. Draft NWFP Protected Forests Management Rules
8. Draft NWFP Management of Wasteland (Guzara) Rules
9. Draft NWFP Forest Produce Transport Rules
10. Draft NWFP Forest Produce River Transport Rules.

8 Under the provision of an act/ordinance, rules are made for the elaboration of that specific act/ordinance.

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