

WHY DOES EXCLUSION CONTINUE?

Aid, Knowledge and Power in Nepal's Community Forestry Policy Process

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Manohara Khadka

(Nepal)

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Reading Committee

Promotor:

Professor dr B.N.F. White
International Institute of Social Studies

Co-promotors:

Dr M. Buchy
Langport, United Kingdom

Dr K. Komives
International Institute of Social Studies

Other members:

Emeritus Professor dr N. Röling
Wageningen University and Research Centre

Professor dr G.A. Persoon
Leiden University

Dr M. Hobley
Thorncombe, United Kingdom

Professor dr M.A.R.M. Salih
International Institute of Social Studies

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Dedication

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“You [me] study”

“You [my elder sister] take care of your younger sisters”



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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BOGs	Basic Operating Guidelines
CA	Constitutional Assembly
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBOs	Community Based Organisation(s)
CF	Community Forestry
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPN (M)	Communist Party (Maoist)
CPN/UML	Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Office/District Forest Officer
DG	Director General
DoF	Department of Forests
DPCCs	District Project Coordination Committee(s)
EEC	European Economic Community
FACD	Foreign Aid Coordination Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal
FINIDA	Finish International Development Agency
FSCC	Forestry Sector Coordination Committee
FUGs	Forest User Group (s)

GO	Government Organisation
GoN	Government of Nepal
GTZ	German Technical Assistance
HDR	Human Development Report
HIMAWANTI	Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association
HDI	Human Development Index
HRM	Human Resource Management
IAM	Indian Aid Mission
IGA	Income Generating Activity
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation(s)
IoF	Institute of Forestry, Nepal
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Development Cooperation
JMDP	Jiri Multiple Development Project
JTRC	Joint Technical Review Committee
LFP	Livelihoods and Forestry Program
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEST	Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology
MFSC	Ministry of Forests & Soil Conservation
MPFS	Master Plan for Forestry Sector
MPs	Member of Parliament (s)
NACRMLP	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management and Livelihoods Project
NARMSAP	Natural Resource Management Sector Assistance Program
NEFUG	Nepalese Federation of Forest Resources User Groups
NFA	Nepal Foresters' Association of Nepal
NGO	Non-Government Organisation(s)
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRs	Nepalese Rupees

NSCFP	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product(s)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RAN	Rangers' Association of Nepal
SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV)
TCN	Timber Cooperation of Nepal
TFAP	Tropical Forestry Action Plan(s)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WB	World Bank
WCS	World Conservation Strategy
WEP	Women's Empowerment Programme



Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate why the exclusion of the poor, women, *dalits* and other disadvantaged groups continues in community forestry (CF) in Nepal despite increasing attention to people and poverty within the official CF discourse. Various CF studies highlighted the problems of exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, disadvantaged groups and women in benefit sharing and decision-making within local forest institutions. The focus of the critique has been on local socio-cultural, economic, institutional and political factors that contribute to exclusion. These studies see inequalities at the community level and inadequacies of community-based forest user groups as the main causes of exclusion. This study argues that focusing on these factors to explain persistent exclusion provides an incomplete picture of the problem. This case study of Nepali CF argues that policy processes at the macro level also contribute to exclusionary outcomes.

The study shows that CF policy, the policymaking process and operational mechanisms contribute to exclusion, yet key actors in the policy process have not tried to rectify this problem. Through a detailed investigation of the policy process, this study shows how perceptions, knowledge systems, power relations and networks keep a serious examination of how CF policy contributes to keep exclusion off the policy agenda. An eco-centric view of forestry and an instrumental view of participation dominate policy discussions. Donors express concern about the need to reduce poverty through CF, but the study shows that aid contributed to developing and maintaining ideas that work against attempts to address the root causes of exclusion.

Keywords: community forestry, exclusion, aid, policy, power, knowledge, Nepal



Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek richt zich vooral op de vraag waarom armen, vrouwen, *dalits* en andere achtergestelde groepen nog steeds buitengesloten worden bij de gemeenschapsbosbouw (*community forestry*) in Nepal, hoewel er officieel steeds meer aandacht is voor mensen en armoede als het over gemeenschapsbosbouw gaat. Verschillende onderzoeken naar gemeenschapsbosbouw wijzen op de problemen die ontstaan doordat armen, *dalits*, achtergestelde groepen en vrouwen niet kunnen delen in de opbrengsten van lokale bosbouworganisaties en niet worden betrokken bij de besluitvorming in deze organisaties. Volgens deze studies dragen vooral lokale sociaal-culturele, economische, institutionele en politieke factoren bij aan de uitsluiting. Sociale verschillen binnen gemeenschappen en tekortkomingen van lokale groepen die het bos gebruiken worden als de hoofdoorzaken van uitsluiting beschouwd. In dit onderzoek komt naar voren dat deze factoren niet volledig verklaren dat bepaalde groepen nog steeds buitengesloten worden. In deze casestudy van de gemeenschapsbosbouw in Nepal wordt betoogd dat beleidsprocessen op macroniveau ook bijdragen aan uitsluiting.

Uit dit onderzoek blijkt dat het beleid op het gebied van gemeenschapsbosbouw, het proces van beleidsvorming en operationele mechanismen bijdragen aan uitsluiting, maar dat de sleutelfiguren binnen de beleidsvorming niet hebben geprobeerd om dit probleem op te lossen. Een diepgaand onderzoek naar de beleidsvorming laat zien dat percepties, kennis-systemen, machtsrelaties en netwerken verhinderen dat er serieus onderzocht wordt hoe gemeenschapsbosbouwbeleid bijdraagt aan uitsluiting. In beleidsdiscussies voert een ecocentrisch beeld van bosbouw en een instrumentele kijk op participatie de boventoon. Donoren geven aan dat gemeenschapsbosbouw gebruikt moet worden om armoede te bestrijden. Uit dit onderzoek blijkt echter dat de ontwikkelingshulp heeft bijgedragen aan het ontstaan en in stand houden van ideeën die belemmeren dat de hoofdoorzaken van uitsluiting worden aangepakt.

Trefwoorden: gemeenschapsbosbouw, uitsluiting, ontwikkelingshulp, beleid, macht, kennis, Nepal

Why Does Exclusion Continue? Theoretical and Methodological Issues

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the relationship between policy processes and exclusionary outcomes in internationally-supported community forestry (CF) in Nepal. The goal is clearer understanding of why exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, ethnic minorities and women continues, despite awareness and discussion of the problems among donors and forestry sector officials.

CF is a forest management policy based on partnership between the government and local communities (Hobley and Malla 1996). CF has origins in Nepal (Hobley et al. 1993). Evolving from the pre-existing indigenous forest management systems, CF policy is now recognised by international donors and national governments as an important tool for poverty reduction and sustainable natural resource management. A survey by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1999 on forest policies shows that governments in more than 50 countries are engaged in CF (FAO 1999: 29). International donors spend more than US\$ 1.5 billion annually on forest-related programmes (Douglas 1999 in Hobley 2008: 1). By the 1990s, they were committing in excess of US\$200 million to CF alone (Brown 1999: 1). International interest in CF continued in the 21st century because it is a development strategy consistent with the global climate change agenda.

Alongside this widespread support for CF in Nepal and internationally, however, is growing literature that demonstrates the continued exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, women and other socially disadvantaged groups from CF processes and benefits (Rai Paudyal 2008; Agarwal 2001; Lama and Buchy 2002; Dev et al. 2003). These problems were first identified in the 1980s (see Fisher and Malla 1987; Griffin 1988; Inserra 1988), and persist in CF today.

Most studies of the issue of exclusion come from a local institutional perspective. From this perspective, the main culprits of exclusion are local level institutions, social perception, social values/norms and economic hardship of the poor. This thesis argues that locating the cause of exclusion from a local, micro perspective is insufficient. More than the local context and weak implementation of CF policies shape social outcomes. The relationships between global interventions and national institutions (Görg and Rauschmayer 2009; Lafferty 2004) and between policy and institutional actions, processes and values (Mahanty 2000; Rap 2004) shape social outcomes. Particularly in those sectors that are highly aid dependent (as is Nepali CF and the forest department), the role of the policy process is important. Studies of aid in other contexts found that the capacity, value, relationships, thinking and policies of intervening actors affect outcomes (De Jong et al. 2008; Eyben 2006; Hancock 1989; Molenaers and Renard 2006).

Participatory NRM operates in a complex system in which local and global actors with specific social, cultural and institutional values and ideologies interact (Mahanty 2000). Thus, whether poverty reduction can be achieved through forestry is linked to decision-making and actions of multiple actors from grassroots to national and global levels (Hobley 2008; Uphoff 1998). Without sufficient understanding of the multiple dimensions and complexities of these relationships and of the policy-making process, it is impossible to address the problem of inequity and exclusion and interventions could increase inequality (Dev et al. 2003; Dhakal 2006; Reddy et al. 2007).

1.2 Research Problem

There is a lot in the literature about changes taking place in Nepal because of CF. Moreover, forest conditions improved in community-managed forests (Gautam and Shivakoti 2005: 10; Gautam et al. 2004: 143; Karna et al. 2004: 118). CF has enhanced the capacity of government staff and civil society (Pokharel and Niraula 2004). Civil society organisations are engaged in policy deliberation (Britt 2002; Ojha and Timsina 2008). Changes in forest management systems created opportunities for livelihood improvement for the poor at the local level (Hobley 2008). FUGs have been able to generate funds from the sale of forest products and these funds are used for forest conservation and community development (Koirala 2007; Shrestha and Khadka 2004).

Despite these successes, CF literature also reported common problems of social inequity and exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, women, ethnic minorities (e.g. *majhi*), landless pastoralist, indigenous people (e.g. *raute*, *chepang*) and other disadvantaged groups from access to, and control over, common property resources and economic benefits (Bhatta 2002; Chhetri and Nurse 1992; Koirala 2007; Lama and Buchy 2002; Rai Paudyal 2008; Sharma 1991). By some accounts, access to forest resources by the poor and the low castes decreased since the CF programme began (Adhikari 2005; Adhikari et al. 2004; Aryal 2005; Dhakal et al. 2005; Winrock 2002). Some groups of poor lost their access to forest resources, and accompanying income, with the policy change (Koirala 2007; Rai Paudyal 2008). Other scholars have shown that poor households benefited less than wealthier households did from the switch to CF (Adhikari 2005; Bhattarai and Ojha 2000; Maharjan 1998; Malla et al. 2003; Thapa 2001), and that the costs of participation for the poor may exceed the benefits. The analysis of distributive outcomes of CF at the community level shows exclusion in FUG membership, participation and access to resources and benefits (Rai Paudel 2008). For example, almost half the FUGs studied excluded blacksmiths from charcoal collection (Dhakal 2006: 28).

The focus of these critiques of CF has been on local-level socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors, which this study refers to as 'micro-level' factors. Chapter 2 discusses the findings of this literature. This study argues that these micro-level or local-level factors are insufficient to explain selective exclusion in CF; institutions and institutional processes at a national and international level can also contribute to persistent exclusion (De Haan 1998, 2007; Percy-Smith 2000: 15-6; Silver 2007). The effect of national and international institutions and policy processes (here called 'macro-level factors') on exclusion has not been widely studied in the natural resource management in general and has never been analysed in the case of CF in Nepal. This study fills the gap.

Other scholars argued for a deeper analysis of policies, policy processes, actors and institutions in natural resource management (NRM). Forsyth (2004: 436) argues that it is important to look critically at how certain policy discourses emerged and whether they attempted to solve environmental problems in an inclusive way. Watts (1993) recognised the need for understanding human-environment interaction from the perspective of knowledge and power. He argues that research looking at the

state's role in environment management focused on the political economy of the state, but the political economy of ideas within state institutions is ignored (Watts 1993 in Gauld 2000: 231). Scholars of CF (Dove 1992, 1995; Gauld 2000) argued that, while social science research in community-based forestry tended to focus on understanding the perceptions and experience of rural communities, it neglects detailed analysis of the perceptions of those who govern them. CF literature also suffers from a lack of systematic research on state institutional performance, as most energy and funding are devoted to understanding local communities' behaviour (Lindayati 2000: 40). While a sociological approach in forestry intervention largely focuses on generating resources, it has not paid attention to the institutional barriers to proper resource use (Dove 1995: 315).

One explanation for the shortage of knowledge about macro (i.e. national and international) institutional processes is how the participatory NRM literature frames CF. The literature frames the participation processes in NRM mainly in terms of 'local', 'insiders', or 'community' (see Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Maskey et al. 2006; Ostrom 1990; Poteete and Ostrom 2004; Varughese and Ostrom 2001). The study of social issues in CF thus focuses on grassroots politics surrounding access to and control over resources rather than the interaction of multiple actors who are prime movers of CF operations and policy design.

The key actors in Nepali CF are not only national figures. CF in Nepal is largely financed with foreign aid (Blaikie and Springate-Baginski 2007: 80; Hausler 1993: 86-7; Nightingale 2005: 583) and, donors are important actors as well. A stated purpose of development aid is to address context specific exclusion and inequality (Eyben 2006). Yet, whether the policy processes catalysed by aid actually improve social outcomes in CF has yet to be analysed in Nepal. The link between donors and exclusion is also under-studied in the natural resource management literature in general. This study looks explicitly at how aid, aid-funded activities, donor staff and consultants contribute to the CF policy process in Nepal and thus to addressing or maintaining exclusion in CF.

1.3 Study Focus, Objective, Questions and Approach

The goal of this study is to increase understanding about the relationship between natural resource management policy and exclusion by examining the political economy of a particular policy process—the CF policy

process in Nepal. The study aims to investigate the dynamic relationship between aid, knowledge, power and policy at the macro level and the effects of these relationships on existing exclusions.

The principal research question is why exclusion of the poor, women, *dalits* and other social disadvantaged groups continues in CF, despite the greater attention to people and development in the discourse.

To answer the research question, the study analyses the external and internal forces that influence policy processes. In this study, the analysis of internal forces includes structure, roles, identity, policy, institutions, capacity and values in the forestry sector. The external forces include the influence of aid on the emergence and institutionalisation of CF and the shaping of environmental governance. Donors' interactions with the government and non-state actors in policy planning and operation processes are also central to this analysis.

The study uses 'political economy of policy processes' as an analytical approach to explain the way policymaking and outcomes in NRM tackle persistent exclusions.

1. 4 Conceptual Framework for the Study

Five important concepts are central to this study: community, exclusion, poverty, participation and policy. This section describes how the development literature in general and the CF literature specifically define and perceive these concepts. It also defines these concepts in terms of this study.

1.4.1 Understanding community

The term 'community' in 'CF' and other 'community-based natural resource management' (CBNRM) policy has been poorly defined. In general, the term community in CF implies the existence of relationships between local and forest resources. A dominant belief is that management of forests by local communities leads to sustainable development and use of the forests. A community has been seen as the site where the government transfers power over forests to all the actual users of the local forest (Gronow and Shrestha 1990 in Bhattarai 1990: 53).

Agrawal and Gibson (1999: 630-33) discuss the perception on community that CBNRM literature hold. They discuss the weakness of the dominant view of 'community' as a small spatial unit, as a homogenous social structure and as a set of shared norms, which are essential to man-

age natural resources sustainably and equitably. Agarwal and Gibson however consider this vision of community inadequate to achieve social and environmental objectives of CBNRM approach. Because the vision views community as a unified, organic whole, this vision fails to attend to differences within communities, and ignores how these differences affect resource management outcomes, local politics, and strategic interactions within communities, as well as the possibility of layered alliances that can span multiple levels of politics (ibid: 633). They argue that ‘community’ must be examined in the context of development and conservation by focusing on the multiple interests and actors within communities, on how these actors influence decision-making, and on the internal and external institutions that shape the decision-making process. They suggest a more political approach focusing on institutions rather than community.

In anthropology, the word ‘community’ stands as part of the social system. The social system can be defined as ‘a set of social relations which are regularly actualised and thus reproduced as a system through interaction’ (Eriksen 1995: 65). The social system operates at three levels: the interpersonal level, the household and the village or local community level (ibid). Change in livelihood of the poor and excluded groups is shaped by their interactions at these levels. Local communities or villages are neither homogenous in structures and concerns nor harmonious in social relations (Guijt and Shah 1998: 8). A community is internally differentiated by wealth, culture, power, religion, gender, caste/ethnicity and language. The webs of power relations and culture shape the nature of a community. An individual’s social relations within a community determine her/his agency. This in turn affects how people gain access and determines access to resources. These dynamics are important to understand the effect of CF institutions like FUGs on the poor and other social groups of a society or community.

In this study, the idea of community in CF is conceptualised from a socio-anthropological view in which individuals’ social relations vary based on gender, caste/ethnicity, class, geography, culture, opportunities, and networks and its effect on access of different social groups to and influence over forests and policymaking process. The understanding of CF actors on community shapes their approaches to poverty reduction, which may not necessarily be supportive for the excluded groups and people living in chronic and extreme poverty.

1.4.2 Exclusion/inclusion

Exact definitions of exclusion/inclusion are context specific (De Haan 2007; Silver 2007), and yet some elements of a definition are common across contexts. Definitions of exclusion can focus on a single aspect of exclusion (for example, exclusion from material benefits) or take a multi-dimensional view. Likewise, one can define exclusion as an outcome or a process. The definition and understanding of exclusion is important because it shapes the policy responses to the problem.

Social scientists generally talk about social exclusion in terms of complex processes, encompassing multiple dimensions along which people are disadvantaged, as individuals, households, residents of a particular place or social group (De Haan 2007; Kabeer 2000; Percy-Smith 2000; Silver 1994, 2007). These scholars defined social exclusion as broader than poverty. They argue that exclusion goes beyond the distribution of resources to individuals or households in need; they maintain the imperative of viewing exclusion/inclusion from a 'social justice', 'relational' and 'rights' point of view. For Percy-Smith (2000), for example, policies to address poverty are concerned with the distribution of a range of goods and services to disadvantaged individuals, groups or communities, while social exclusion, being a relational concept, allows for policy responses that seek to change institutions and institutional processes. De Haan defines social exclusion as exclusion in the economic, social and political spheres, and sees exclusion as the processes and the mechanism by which people are excluded (De Haan 1998: 13, 17). De Haan emphasises that institutions are the cause of exclusion. Percy-Smith (2000) agrees that exclusion can be a consequence of processes in wider global, national and local contexts.

Silver (2007) discusses the relationship between the excluded and excluder in the exclusion process and argues that policy processes at a macro level are a cause for exclusion. The problem, according to Silver, is that policy processes do not recognise power relationships between the excluded and excluders or the capacity/agency and social rights of the excluded. Excluders are actors who use specific mechanisms to push others out and deny them access to resources and relations (Silver 2007: 2). Exclusion is thus an active process, not a passive outcome.

From some scholars' perspective (De Haan 2007; Silver 2007; Eyben 2007), one cannot accomplish addressing exclusion or creating inclusionary outcomes by providing only resources to the excluded or only includ-

ing them in political processes. Other dimensions of well-being such as social security, power relationships and perception affect social outcomes. They argue that focusing on attributes of the poor rather than on their social relationships, agency and the mechanisms that keep them poor does little to help improve outcomes, even if there is an honest attempt to reach the poor. These scholars view 'exclusion/inclusion' as institutional processes rather than as outcomes. They emphasise two interconnected dimensions of exclusion: structural dimensions such as power relationships between people, gender, caste/ethnicity, class, and institutional dimensions such as the policy process through which actors' intervene to address structural dimensions.

In contrast to these views, contemporary CF literature tends to define the issue of exclusion and equity in terms of access to and control over forests, forest resources and forest income (Adhikari 2005, 2008; Adhikari et al. 2004; Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Agrawal and Gupta 2005; Gibson and Becker 2000; Graner 1997; Jodha 1990; Ribot 1995). To explain material exclusion, these scholars emphasised problems with the institutional arrangement between the state, the community, local socio-economic and institutional factors that lead to exclusion.

Agarwal (2001) and Rai Paudyal (2008) examined exclusion/inclusion as both a process and outcome of formal and informal institutions operated at the grassroots CF. Other scholars focus on class and societal structure as barriers to access to and control over forests by the poor, by women and to their participation in CF generally (Graner 1997; Hobbey 1990). Adhikari (2005, 2008), Yadav et al. (2008) and Dhakal (2005), focused on household characteristics (wealth, caste, income) as factors affecting access to resources and decision-making capacity by members of FUGs. In short, although the CF literature discusses exclusion and its causes extensively, the focus has mostly been on exclusion from benefits, with some attention to exclusion from participatory processes. While a number of CF scholars studied exclusion as a process, the focus has been on local institutional dynamics, rather than the broader policy processes.

Given the way exclusion has been defined, it is no surprise that scholars argued for the need to improve CF interventions, to empower *dalits*, women, or the poor and to strengthen local institutions in dealing with poverty and exclusion (see Adhikari 2005; Adhikari 2008; Rai Paudyal 2008; Yadav et al. 2008).

This study expands the definition of exclusion as used in previous studies of CF. On exclusionary outcomes the thesis considers both exclusion from resources and benefits and exclusion from influence and decision-making. More specifically, exclusion in Nepali CF manifests through outcomes such as reduced and inequitable access to common resources, benefits of forest production and development opportunities and the lack of decision-making rights by socially disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups, artisans (*dalits*), the poor, pastoralists, indigenous people and women who depend on natural resources for their livelihood. Achieving inclusion in the Nepali context would mean achieving access to resources and decision-making power by these groups.

Second, in studying exclusion as a *process*, this thesis considers the structural and institutional dimensions of exclusion addressed by De Haan, Silver and Eyben. This implies studying power relationships between people, genders and different castes, ethnicities and classes, as well as the policy process where actors engage each other. This approach is appropriate for studying exclusion in CF because the management and use of environmental resources are politically contested issues (Salih 1999). In addition, as the causes of exclusion identified by earlier research relate to social and institutional complexities at the local level, there is a need to address these local structural and political issues at the national policy level. A central idea behind this study is that changes at the community level alone cannot achieve inclusion, but will ultimately also require attention to and changes in policymaking processes and institutional dynamics.

1.4.3 Understanding poverty

The definition of what constitutes poverty is contextual and shaped by culture and professional disciplines. Likewise, the definition of 'the poor' would vary between and within communities of donors and domestic actors (Hobley 2007: 9). Development literature defines poverty from a multi-dimensional view encompassing exclusion, power inequalities, economic, social relations and structure, deprivation of human rights and security, capability to have voice and influence and access to resources. The standard economic definition is income and consumption based. There is also time dimension of poverty. Hulme and Shepherd (2003: 405) define chronic poverty as 'occurring when an individual experiences significant capability deprivations for a period of five years or more'.

Chronic poverty thus focuses on the durational aspect of poverty, experienced both at individual and household levels. Even in non-poor households, certain individuals may suffer chronic poverty because of social orders such as class or caste/ethnicity and gender relationships. Green and Hulme (2005) define the chronic poor as those people ‘who remain poor for much of their life course, who may “pass on” their poverty to their children, and who may die of easily preventable deaths because of the poverty they experience’ (Green and Hulme 2005 in Silver 2007: 3). Chronically poor people are those most at risk (CPRC 2009: vii-viii). People experience chronic poverty mainly for five reasons: insecurity, limited citizenship, spatial disadvantaged, social discrimination and limited work opportunities. The chronic poor thus may include people with disabilities, long-term illness and morbidity, the elderly, orphans, widows in patrilineal societies, migrants, and members of ethnic, religious, indigenous, nomadic and caste groups (CPRC 2009; Hobley 2007).

Hobley (2008) argues that understanding the poor and poverty is necessary if forestry is to capitalise on its potential to reduce poverty. She recognises three dimensions of vulnerability that make people poor: spatial, temporal and structural (ibid: 7-9). People in remote rural areas whose livelihoods depend on forests may suffer from the lack of or difficult access to forest resources. Likewise, some people throughout the geographical regions suffer temporal vulnerability, for example when forests and tree products may provide seasonal and/or life cycle safety net. By contrast, specific social groups in society, often indigenous groups, excluded groups (because of caste or ethnicity or class), or within communities (because of gender, caste or life cycle positioning) experience structural vulnerability. Hobley suggests that dealing with poverty requires tackling these three vulnerabilities, using a variety of approaches ranging from people-focused policy processes, understanding local poverty, political process and inter-sectoral policy actions (e.g. integration of land reform issue when a national forest programme is developed) (Hobley 2008). A similar view is held by some donors: influence in three areas of change—(a) voice, influence, agency, (b) policy and (c) assets and services—is necessary to effect change in the livelihoods of socio-economically disadvantaged groups (DFID and World Bank 2006).

One of the major issues about any “pro-poor” forest policy is the problem of identifying and targeting the poor (Hobley 2008: 8). Hobley argues that this is rarely done for pragmatic (it is very difficult) and po-

litical (it is not usually desired by elites) reasons. Based on poverty dynamics, Hobley (2007: 17-18) defines three types of people within a community: elite, capable/middle class and the poor. The elites are gatekeepers to networks, resources, and decision-making. They work with others to open space for other voices in decision-making and contest through advocacy, social movement and supporting democratic processes. The capable people work as intermediaries to build entry to decision-making, and help articulate voices for others. They also try to build voices of the excluded. Ensuring their access to forest resources and decision-making does not prevent access by other groups as overall, access builds livelihood security for all groups.

Hobley (2007: 18) further defines the poor into three types: “extreme/declining poor”, “coping poor” and “improving poor”. The extreme poor are those who experience multiple vulnerabilities simultaneously (e.g. poor health, homelessness, very limited cash incomes, indebtedness and social exclusion). They have very limited capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land. Different mechanisms are needed to improve their livelihoods. The coping poor are those who are just about able to meet their basic needs. They experience temporary food shortages and are insecure and risk-averse. They are reliant on powerful patrons for livelihood support. They have limited capacity to pursue forest claims, and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land. They experience high level of insecurity and invisibility from normal development practices. The improving poor are people with greater social and political networks, and greater skills, education levels and assets. They are more secure, take risks and are sometimes reliant on patrons. They have greater capacity to pursue forest claims and gain access to and make effective use of forest resources and land (ibid.).

Existing CF literature defines poverty within FUGs mainly from an income/consumption perspective, classifying people into three broad categories: the rich, the middle-class and the poor that is not enough. People living in poverty are affected by exclusion, difficult or denied access to resources, choices and services, deprivation of basic rights and security and inequalities of power (Pokharel 2009: 4). Hobley (2007) and Hobley et al. (2007) argue for the need to look at poverty beyond economic dimension in which structural dimension shapes access to and influence over forest resources by the people living in poverty. Address-

ing poverty in the Nepali context requires multi-dimensional perspectives and practices at the policy level. There is a close relationship between poverty and exclusion. Poverty leads to exclusion and vice-versa, as we will see in chapter 2. The above concepts of the poor and poverty in this study will guide us in understanding the extent to which the CF policy process recognises social issues and people living in poverty. The poor in this study refers to the extreme poor as defined above and include migrant wage earners, landless, illiterate, and members of FUGs who have low income, low literacy, limited employment opportunities outside agriculture, little or no voice, little influence and whose livelihoods depend on forest resources. The terms the poor, elite and chronic poor are referred to in the analysis of poverty from economic and social perspectives.

1.4.4 Inclusive participation

In the development literature, there appear two views of participation. Mosse (2005) calls the two views: the 'productivity' or 'techno-centric' view and the 'entitlement' or 'process' view. The productivity view conceptualises participation as a process of delivering technology and materials. The 'entitlement' view focuses on overcoming unequal access to resources and services, and the marginality of people (ibid: 33). Guijt and Shah (1998) distinguish between two approaches to participation, the 'instrumental' and 'empowerment' approaches. An instrumental approach considers participation as a means to achieving better cost effectiveness of projects or programmes, while an empowerment approach values the process of increasing participation as an important end in itself (ibid: 9).

Social scientists criticise the misuse of instrumental participation, which emphasises the reproduction of power relationships at the local level (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Hickey and Mohan (2004) also criticise the use of participation in development interventions for instrumental purposes alone (the productivity or instrumental view of participation). They argue that participation must be a process of transformation that addresses existing power structures and political empowerment at different levels. Thus, the purpose of participation is, 'to ensure the transformation of existing development practices, and more radically, the transformation of the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which are at the root of social exclusion' (ibid: 13).

Nymau-Musembi (2002) makes a similar argument, from a human rights perspective: the conceptualisation of participation as a citizen right enables the protection of social and economic rights of individuals, which is beyond the welfare approach to empowerment.

NRM scholars argue that participation is a socially embedded phenomenon linked with power relations (Admassie 2000; Buchy and Rai Paudyal 2008; Lama and Buchy 2002). This means that the concept of participation in CF policy cannot bypass structural and institutional issues arising from local power relations.

This research follows the school of thought that only the 'transformative form of participation' can lead to inclusive outcomes in NRM. Theories of institutional transformation in which power relations, respect for and recognition of the social identity of the powerless are key elements of the institutional system of an intervention that emphasises a participatory approach (Silver 2007) support this view. Reducing existing exclusion will require recognition of social structure and unequal power relations in an intervention, which constitute intended actions to initiate change in a system (Checkland 1989: 278 in Mahanty 2000: 80).

Rural life is much more complex than urban life in terms of livelihood strategies and choices, access to and use of resources, and social relations (Frankenberg 1966: 17 in Robertson 1984: 144). Interventions to promote collective action for NRM and development should directly address structure, power relations, institutional norms and networks that exclude the powerless from participation and decision-making (Westermann et al. 2005: 1796). This is not achieved unless the intervening actors developed capacity to understand and analyse social dimensions of NRM and participation processes critically (Costa 2007; Salinas Lanao 2007).

1.4.5 Inclusive policy and supportive ideology

Following the above view of inclusive participation and the causes of exclusion, a forest management policy that promotes inclusion should contain at least three elements: (a) recognition of inclusive participation as discussed above; (b) policy ideology that recognises social heterogeneity in the definition of problems of forest management; and (c) embedded knowledge, expertise, value and perspectives in policy implementing institutions to implement the policy with social objective.

As this thesis will show, the ability of CF policy and the policy process to adopt these principles depends largely on the dominant ideology of forest management.

In environmental management, there are two major ideologies (a) eco-centric and (b) ethno-centric. Eco-centrism ideals believe in green consciousness where human beings are agents of environmental protection and development. The eco-centric view recognises the full range of human interests in the non-human world as well as the interests of the non-human community (Eckersley 1992 in Dryzek 2005: 184). The focus in this ideology is always on the environment rather than on the interrelatedness of environment and human beings. The existence of the ecosystem as the primary agenda and natural resource development from an egalitarian point of view does not consider social hierarchy and the concerns of the powerless and oppressed over the resources.

An ethno-centric ideology, on the other hand, focuses on human beings as the centre of natural resource management. In this ideology, all policies and processes on natural resources are oriented towards conceptualising ecological processes for people and not the other way around. Dryzek (1997) points out that there is a need to shift environmental discourse from dominant economic ideology to holistic dimensions, which include cultural, moral, historical, social and economic value of forests and land resources. He points out that this is essential to recognise people's diversity in the natural resource sector based on gender, castes, classes and social status.

Social science scholars argue that if social policies are to address the interests of society as a whole rather than only those of its powerful elites, the policies must reflect social values (Cook et al. 2003). In the case of NRM, this implies adopting an ethno-centric view of environmental policy. In his analysis of park management, Child (2004) argues that successful protected area management requires a much wider perspective than provided by 'conservation biology' if it is to understand and manage the challenges it faces. Scholars who develop socioeconomic parameters of community forest use and forest product distribution also view the need for appropriate policy measures to address the needs of poor families (Dhakal 2005; Dhakal et al. 2007). Public policy scholars inform that the experience and discipline of decision-makers and influential actors play a role in shaping perspectives and prioritising agendas and processes in policy planning (Grindle and Thomas 1991; Mooij and Dev 2004). In

Nepali forestry, however, the dominance of scientific forestry ideology might support the development of eco-centric thinking in policy and policy practices.

Developed in Germany towards the end of the eighteenth century, scientific forestry intends to manage forests for conservation and production functions. The basic rationale is that forest conservation and regulation is possible only through forestry experts, managers and hierarchical administration style (Kumar 2007; Gauld 2000). The capitalist enterprise thinking dominates scientific forestry (Scott 1998: 14). Scientific forestry believes that the exclusion of people from the forests, the separation of forest and agricultural uses and yield regulation of forests through active forest management are essential to guarantee the survival of the forests (Lang and Pye 2000: 27). Scientific forest management discourse acknowledges state's central control over forests for national revenue. It focuses on the negative role of people in conservation and forest management in the sense that they destroy environment (Fabricius 2004).

1.5 Policy as Process: Analytical Framework

In this study, policy is seen as a dynamic and changing process rather than as a single action, decision or piece of legislation (Winter 1996: 9). Policy process consists of people and politics and of knowledge and power (Keeley and Scoones 2003: 97). The study conceptualises exclusion/inclusion as an outcome of policy processes. Policy process in this study refers to the process of decision-making in designing and practicing policy statements, programmes or working strategies related to CF development in Nepal.

Human agents construct policy therefore, it is important to understand their interests and thinking (Keeley and Scoones 2003) if one is going to understand the policy itself. The anthropology of policy sees policy as a cultural process in which the individual's construction of ideas and understanding play an important role in shaping policy (Shore and Wright 1997). Understanding policy from an anthropological perspective requires studying policymaking processes (structures, knowledge, locations and actors) rather than defining a 'good' policy. It includes examining norms and institutions, ideology and perception, knowledge and power, and global and local in the study of policies (ibid). Viewing policy as a process requires assessing ideas, interests, knowledge and processes

of negotiation among actors where actors with more capability (expertise, money, networks) are more likely to influence others with less power (Keeley and Scoones 2003; Mooij and Dev 2004; Rap 2004).

Unlike the conventional ways of looking at the policy process, which considers state structure as the decisive body to make policy, this study conceptualises the policy process as an 'agency-based outcome'. The state-centred policy process includes defining problems, finding alternatives, making the rational choice out of the best options and organising implementation. The agency-based policy process on the other hand emphasises the dynamic of actors' interactions in which a number of actors from global and national levels with different powers, perception, knowledge and roles interact in shaping and changing a policy and its operation processes. This approach to understanding a policy suggests that exclusion/inclusion can be the result of a macro level institutional process (Silver 2007).

Considerable CF policy study derives from a state-centred policy perspective in which the process of actors' influence in policymaking are limited to the role of state and political governance (Gautam et al. 2004; Gautam 2006; Mayers and Bass 2004; Ribot 1995; Talbott and Khadka 1994). These scholars focused their policy analysis from an institutional arrangement point of view. Nevertheless, their analysis neglects the institutional context within which CF policy emerged and changed, the exercise of power, the ideology dominated in articulating poverty and forest management problems and its relationship to social outcomes. It is equally important to look at the actors dynamics in the creation of the relationship between 'state and community' regarding the control of forest resources (Doornbos et al. 2000: 7). Recent scholarly work on environmental governance (Kutting and Lipschutz 2009) shows the need for looking at environmental issues from a local and global interaction point of view.

To study CF policy as a process, this study employs a mix of four key analytical approaches: (a) actor-centred knowledge/power relationship approach; (b) study of actor-networks, perceptions and learning; (c) study of discourses in environmental governance; and (d) examination of the role of aid in policy process. Later sections of the study describe each approach in more detail.

In the choice of these four approaches, the political economy approach within the field of political ecology influenced this study most.

The political economy approach recognises the importance of multiple actors and their institutional, historical and social relations in shaping and regulating development. The study also employs a post-structure perspective, focusing on the analysis of CF as the process of change in which certain knowledge, perspectives and power dominate the policy and its institutionalisation processes.

Studies of land resource use and management used the political economy approach. For example, scholars (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987: 17) combine the concern of ecology with political economy to understand the cause and impact of soil erosion. The pioneer work of Blaikie (1985) and, Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) introduced the political economy concept, which constitutes a broader field in political ecology. Blaikie and Brookfield used the political economy approach to understand economic development of people rather than a particular policy process.

The political economy approach recognises the importance of interests, actors and power relationships in the emergence and development of any policy discourse nationally and globally. The approach seeks to investigate political and economic goals of powerful actors behind the discourse. The political ecology approach on the other hand stresses the importance of the relationships between environment and people. The relationships between state's environmental policy and people represent a primary agenda for research into political ecology (Bryant and Bailey 1997).

The use of the political economy approach in the present study would guide the understanding of key actors' 'will' to tackle local issues of poverty and their capacity and relationship practice that hinder or facilitate them to challenge the unequal power relationships at the grassroots level NRM institutions. Moreover, the political economy approach helps widen the horizon of the political ecology field beyond the household or community level, which is essential when understanding social issues in NRM (Nightingale 2006: 9-12). Despite decades of writing on CF, the relationships between global knowledge about environment management and national policymaking processes and its impact on socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are still missing. The study focuses on understanding the complex relationships between aid, actors' relationships, networking and knowledge systems in the policymaking process. As argued by Eyben (2006), looking at the research issue from a relationships

perspective is a new shift to look at aid processes beyond the flow of money, fiscal crisis and output.

1.5.1 Actor-oriented power/knowledge relationships in policy processes

Norman Long's (1992) actor-oriented approach to rural development focuses on agency, power and knowledge. Long argues that power, agency, knowledge and efficacy shape the perception and strategies of different actors. He developed the concept of social actors (individuals and groups) as capable of exercising power, coping with difficult circumstances and active participants involved in an intervention. An actor-oriented approach places greater emphasis on the role of individual agency in reinforcing, contesting and changing institutions and policies than on structure (*ibid*). This approach allows for exploring the agency/power exercise of different actors in shaping policy in an intervention process. It emphasises the interplay and mutual understanding of internal and external factors and relationships, and recognises the central role played by human action and consciousness (Long and van der Ploeg 1989: 226-34). It also provides an analytical framework to identify and characterise contested actors' strategies and rationales, the conditions under which they arise, their effectiveness for solving specific problems and their structural outcomes (Long 1992: 27).

The actor-oriented analytical frame is one of five approaches that political ecologists suggest for understanding the complex web of interest, characteristics and actions of different types of actors in environment politics (Bryant and Bailey 1997: 20-6). NRM scholars (Mahanty 2000; Murdoch 1997; Murdoch and Marsden 1995) contextualise the actor-oriented approach in a broad way to understand relationships between institutions and various actors. For understanding macro level factors responsible for exclusionary outcomes, an actor-oriented approach broadens knowledge about the nature of interaction and relationships between actors at the policy level and their influence in shaping the focus of change in CF discourse. The actor-oriented approach is useful for conceptualising CF policy and operations as an outcome of interplay between actors' power, agency, knowledge and interests.

The following concepts form key reference points, which focus the actor-oriented approach as an analytical approach in this study.

Concept of actor and agency

The term 'actor' originally came from the term 'stakeholder', which is commonly used in rural development and NRM. The term 'stakeholder' was first recorded in 1708 as 'a person who holds the stake or stakes in a bet' and then translated as 'a person with an interest or concern in something' (Buckles 1981: 101 quoted in Tu 2004: 8). A stakeholder group could be a group of individuals, but is more often conceptualised as an organisation or social group with an interest in a particular issue or system (Mahanty 2000). In actor-oriented research, the term actor explicitly denotes individuals or social groups with the capacity for agency, decision-making and action (Hindess 1988 in Mahanty 2000: 1375).

According to agency theory, there is a link between individuals and structure. The agency of an individual actor determines structure, norms, rules and vice-versa (Giddens 1984: 14-5). Actors associate by formal and informal institutions and the practice of relationship within a system that in turn produces knowledge/ideas and power (Long 1992). Long sees agency from a broader perspective beyond the decision-making capacity and considers the circumstances that help an actor be capable of making or influencing decisions. For example, power of agency depends upon the social relationships between actors and emergence of a network of actors who become members of a project of other persons. This means that actors can be individuals, sub-groups and organisations, all of which hold the power of an agency. For instance, in the study of irrigation policymaking process, Rap (2004: 280) identified significant influence of technicians, official researchers, experts and consultants in the production, promotion and dissemination of the policy. Agency of individuals became powerful enough to allow entrance to others in policy spaces. The work of Masaki (2007: 23) shows that the individual is not only a passive vehicle of disciplinary power, but also an agency to reproduce and modify prevailing discourse.

Mahanty (2000) points out that development research conceptualises organisation from two perspectives: a structural and an agency-centred perspective. The structural approach looks at an organisation as a whole entity interacting with the outside world in which the organisational goal determines the role of individuals. The agency-perspective focuses on internal dynamics and sees an organisation as a complex unit of power, expertise, leadership and organisational culture (ibid: 44). In the CF policy context, the agency approach is useful for understanding how institu-

tional dynamics of key CF intervening actors such as donors, the DoF and the MFSC influence the policy spaces and social interaction. The study considers actors to be national and international organisations, and the individuals within them, who have been engaged in the emergence, development and operation of CF policy in Nepal and whom donors and government value in policy formulation process and its operation.

Some scholars of international aid identify a role for aid interventions in turning important actors into influential actors (Eyben 1998: 4 in Green 2002: 65). Influential actors are those who can make a significant impact on project outcomes (e.g. government officials, local community leaders and the donor agency). Important actors' rights, interests and needs are central to project goals, for example poor women and men, and marginalised *dalits* (ibid). Shifting important actors into influential actors would suggest that one goal of aid is to transform relationships between actors (Green 2002: 66). This argument complements Abbott et al. (2007), who see an important role for decision-makers in challenging intervention on behalf of the poor. This implies that dealing with social inequity issues in development is not about focusing only on a local group as change agent, but rather paying attention to the decision-making actors in intervening organisations (Abbott et al. 2007: 165). In the CF case, this study will examine whether powerful project actors contest current practices and relationships and/or work to persuade government actors to conceptualise CF interventions as inclusive participation processes. The concept of agency in the present study therefore is useful to understand how development actors at the policy level influence not only policy but also policy processes.

Theories of power

The term 'power' is closely associated with politics. Politics is about 'who gets what, when, how' (Lasswell and Kaplan 1950: xii-xiii). Lasswell and Kaplan define power as participation in the making of decisions that involves an interpersonal relationship (ibid: 75). Critical political ecologists argue that the role of power is important in shaping policy, strategies and plans (Forsyth 2003). There are different ways of looking at power. Feminist theorists view power from a human rights perspective as a person's internal strength, as the right to determine one's choices in life and the right to influence the direction of social change (Bunch and Carrillo 1990). They see 'domination over other' as a conventional view of

power. Some scholars argue that power is not simply control over institutions and resources, but rather it involves controlling the agendas and thinking of others (Lukes 1974 in Parpart et al. 2002: 5-6).

According to Foucault, power is relational; it is exercised and not possessed. Power exists only when put into action. Foucault argues power is neither given, nor recovered, but rather exercised over other's actions (Foucault 1978: 94). Power is never localised here or there, never in any one person's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth (ibid: 98). He argues that power relationships exist between every point of a social body, between a man and a woman, between a boss and his/her subordinate, between everyone who knows and everyone who does not. He points to the role of power relationships in making certain actions possible and significant (ibid: 137). For Foucault, the question on how power is exercised implies placing power relations as the object of analysis and not power *per se*. In *Subject and Power*, Foucault claims that his work did not have the analysis of power as objective but rather creation of 'a history of different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault 1983: 208). The relational approach to power considers power as process rather than resource (Eyben 2008: 36). In the CF case, through social relationships of power between actors during policy planning, some people become subjects in governing CF at the grassroots, but not necessarily the powerless.

Modern power therefore is not restricted to political institutions. Power is complex, fluid, relational and the researcher needs to go beyond the traditional notion of power as the ability to exert power over structures, people and resources (Parpart et al. 2002: 7). A structural approach to power neglects the invisible influence of powerful players in their day-to-day interaction, exercised in informal expression, behaviours and worldviews (Mahanty 2000). Power is complex and manifested in formal rules, structures, authorities, institutions (visible), social norms and values, perception (invisible), social relationships and setting agendas (hidden) (Veneklasen and Miller 2007: 40-50), which are brought to govern the action of others. In light of these considerations, this study uses Foucault's 'work of power'. The concept of power in CF policy processes is useful to understand actors' roles in defining and re-defining policy ideas at the policy level.

Four forms of power relationships are present in social interactions. This includes 'power to', 'power with', 'power from within' and 'power

over' (Rowlands 1998; Veneklasen and Miller 2007). 'Power to' is the power that generates new possibilities and actions without domination. 'Power with' refers to collective actions to tackle problems. 'Power from within' is power that the individual has her or himself to have respect for and acceptance of others as equals. This power enables individuals to hold positions or activities in the face of opposition or take a serious risk. 'Power over' refers to the ability of an actor to change the incentive structure of another actor deliberately (Rowlands 1998: 14).

Introduced by Max Weber, 'power over' refers to power as a zero sum game. One person or group of people is able to control in some way the action or options of another (Rowlands 1998: 12). Dowding (1996) terms it 'social power'. These forms of power relationships are found at all levels of institutions from the household level to local to national to international levels and are exercised by individuals or groups (Dowding 1996).

Actors within a system also become influential through different sources of power. According to Dowding (1996), their extent of power depends on various sources such as knowledge or information, legitimate authority, incentives, reputation and informal relations. In CF, aid resources (policy, money, expertise), project-based knowledge and institutions of relationships act as sources of power both for national and global actors to influence the decision-making process. Such power helps establish institutional and functional relationships between the state and the local community in NRM, but not necessarily for challenging existing unequal power relationships.

Understanding the different types of power and power relationships in policymaking and policy outputs is relevant as the role of powerful actors can be influential in controlling policy agendas and maintaining institutional interests. The analysis of power in this study will focus on four dimensions of policy process: (a) the role of actors in establishing global environmental discourses in national policy and organisation; (b) the pattern of relationships between government, donors and non-state actors in CF operations; (c) institutional mechanisms in policymaking and organising policy spaces; and (d) the subjective position of forest organisations and individuals in forest resource management.

The relationship of power also links to the concept of knowledge, which provides a basis of social interaction between actors in policy planning and operational process.

Theories of knowledge

Knowledge is a source of power and vice-versa (Gordon 1980). Gordon notes that power produces truth or knowledge transmits truth, which in turn reproduces power. Foucault argues that a relationship to power is established and implemented with the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a scientific discourse (Hindess 1996). Foucault relates power with knowledge or truth in order for a society to function. He attempts to break down the boundary between the natural and social sciences arguing that truth, whatever its domain, is socially produced (Richardson 1996: 282). Scientific norms and knowledge manifest as power and carry certain social values and standards. These norms define a thing as 'true or false'. Development of certain fields of knowledge is to gain disciplinary power of individuals within a system. Like power, knowledge is not something possessed and accumulated (Gordon 1980). It emerges because of social interactions between actors (Long 1992).

The aim of a discipline is to control and increase efficiency of operation (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983). A discipline does not replace other forms of power in society, but it uses them to extend their hold and sharpen their efficiency. The domination of a single discipline in policy-making hinders the change process, as actors trained in one discipline have limited expertise to deal with other dimensions that necessitate the recognition of, and attention to power relationships and social heterogeneity (Richardson 1996).

Knowledge acts as power in both policy and policy implementation processes. Policy research has shown significant leverage of knowledge and science in shaping policy, which excluded social issues of environment management (Keeley and Scoones 2003). A state can become a knowledge centre because of the production and diffusion of knowledge through educational, technological and other policies (Brand 2009: 105). Thus, understanding the process of knowledge production and transfer of policy provides insights into the way policy recognises local issues. Haas (1992) discusses the importance of expert knowledge. He defines an epistemic community as 'a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue areas' (Haas 1992: 3). Haas points out, policy ideas of an epistemic community evolve independently rather than under the direct influence of govern-

ment authority. Decision-makers value professional background, prestige and reputation of experts in a given area. These characteristics can win access to the political system and can legitimise their activities (ibid: 17). Drawing from international environmental policy analysis, Haas (2004: 578) argues for the need to make policy epistemic groups interdisciplinary in order to recognise social agendas of environment and development.

The dominance of a single science and perspective has limitations in articulating measures for a policy operation. For example, government organisations with technical expertise have limited capacity to define policy and institutional processes from socio-political perspectives (Mollinga 2002; Mollinga and Bolding 2004). Policy excludes the poor mainly through failure of intervening actors to develop appropriate skills and approaches to dealing with the complex poverty dynamics in Nepal (Rijal 2007). Likewise, the lack of appropriate capacity both at state and community levels constrain them from benefiting from international regimes (for example access to genetic resources). While the state has scientific knowledge (e.g. forest and biodiversity management), political actors in the House of Representatives lack information about the regimes and have limited capacity to pursue patent rights claims of genetic resource (Pokharel 2007). This empirical evidence shows the significance of knowledge in dealing with development. However, the type of knowledge and its influence in policy process requires attention. For example, the dominance of scientific forestry in CF policymaking may limit inclusion of other knowledge that is essential for tackling exclusion and poverty.

Knowledge theory is useful in this research to understand production and institutionalisation of knowledge within the forestry sector. The process of knowledge production might affect inclusion outcomes in the sense that knowledge may be insufficient in understanding complex socio-political and cultural dynamics of forest management systems. At the same time, knowledge becomes a powerful tool to reinforce traditional forestry ideology.

This study uses the theory of knowledge in three areas. First, the role of aid in the production of forestry discipline and its relation to institutional capacity of the DoF to deal with social dimensions of CF. Second, the process in which the discipline becomes influential in policymaking and empowerment of FUGs. Third, influence of

knowledge in the constitution and dissemination of the role of foresters in CF development and operation of actor-networks.

Since the actor-oriented approach focuses on agency, knowledge and actors, it fails to address the role of networks of individuals and their source of networks in an intervention. The networks have direct links to develop and sustain actors' understanding about human-nature relationships in the environment and in development. The section below discusses two interrelated concepts actor-networks and learning.

1.5.2 Actor-networks, perceptions and learning

Actors do not operate in isolation, but rather in their networks. These informal relationships affect the interests, perceptions and attitudes of individual actors, which, this study will show, in turn play a role in shaping policy processes and ultimately determining policy outcomes. To capture this, the study uses a second set of analytical tools, related to actor networks and the importance of perceptions and learning in explaining actor behaviour and policy discussions.

Actor-network theory (ANT)

The actor-network theory (ANT) conceptualises the functioning of an organisation as a complex system in which the actors have diverse networks and competencies (Law 1999). It considers the process of formation and operation of networks of actors within a particular system as an important aspect of creation of knowledge and its transfer. Latour (1999) adds ANT as a methodological approach to understanding the processes of building alliances, negotiation and exercise of agency and perspective of development in an intervention. ANT as an ethno-methodology helps us to understand complexity of relationships among actors, which explains what, how and why actors do what they do (Latour 1999). The essence of ANT is that actors generate knowledge/ideas and pass that knowledge through their networks (Latour 1987: 54).

Law (1991) notes the influence of individuals' networks in change processes. He argues that actor relationships are defined by such characteristics as position, profession and social status that ultimately generate power effects between actors. He points out that the bureaucracy is not the only form of hierarchy but pragmatic strategies of social relations also create hierarchy in which actors with less power are identified as disqualified because of selective criteria (ibid: 182). Law argues that situ-

ating staff in weak relations can achieve more outcomes, as they can challenge power relation issues, nepotism, corruption or social injustice practices.

Scholars noted the negative effect of the patron-client relationship at the grassroots level CF (Hobley 1990; Malla 2001). Research from other contexts reveals the difficulty of change when tight networks between individuals operate at the state-civil society interface (Abdelrahman 2001). Likewise, analysis of policy on irrigation management shows the role of informal relations between actors in developing and disseminating ideas that sustain technical perspectives (Rap 2004). In Nepali CF, the idea of actor-networks is essential to understand the (in) sensitivity of actors to unequal power relationships in their working culture and their lack of interest in challenging the governance of the system in which they work.

Pokharel (1997) points out the complexities of actors and their relationships within the DoF and between the forestry sector and the community. He claims that there is a limited possibility for change at the forestry governance level due to bureaucratic procedures and the culture of relationships. However, the theory of actor-networks suggests there is networking of individuals, whereby some actors tend to be in a position to exercise power while others are not (Latour 1987). Actors are in networks and may have connections through global or local forces; these connections have roots in people, institutions or money/materials (Rocheleau and Roth 2007: 435). Those enrolled in the network strengthen the objectification process and make their views/perspective stronger. They are active participants in guiding methods and processes in an intervention. Thus, these relationships also affect the governance of the DoF and reproduce or reinforce dominance of certain perspectives regarding CF development.

The types of alliances between actors at the policy level are contextual and depend mostly on social, professional and institutional relationships. In the present study, ANT theory helps identify two aspects of the policy process. The first is the process of alliance formation between individual actors in CF aid. The second is the role of actor-networks in generating and validating 'ideas' in the CF institutionalisation and policy process. By shaping and validating certain ideas, the networks affect how key actors understand the social objectives of CF and, in turn, their motivation to influence the change process.

Perception and learning

Like ANT, theories of learning and perception also foster understanding of actors' attitudes and influence in shaping policy ideas. Development scholars argue that the role of personal characteristics such as perception, attitudes and thinking are crucial for making a difference (Chambers and Pettit 2004; Hancock 1989). Theories of change find that personal and organisational values and beliefs are crucial to understanding and influencing 'change' (Eyben et al. 2008: 205). Interlocking factors such as personal experience, roles and training determine the willingness to challenge development issues in a transformative way (Kaufmann 1997). In the CF context, perception affects change, as it shapes actors' thinking on development issues, which in turn shapes their actions or agendas for policy.

Learning and perception link to each other. Learning is not a desirable outcome or a goal, but an activity that involves making an interpretation that in turn guides decisions and actions (Mezirow 1990: 375). Eyben (2006) defines learning as a process of organisational change in which changes in deeply held perceptions, beliefs, behaviours and relationships are essential elements for achieving outcomes.

According to learning theory, actors can learn in three ways: instrumental, communicative and transformative (Mezirow 1990: 7-14). Instrumental learning involves getting actors engaged in task-oriented problem solving (i.e. how to do something). In this case, actors reflect back on the content and process of tasks to understand whether the task actors are charged with is consistent with their pre-defined goal, and whether the attitude of actors are objective. This learning emphasises the continuation of cognitive routines and strategies. Communicative learning process focuses on achieving coherence or consensus rather than on exercising better control over the cause-effect relationship to improve performance. The intention in this learning is that actors validate certain ideas communicated between them and actors are less prepared to question shared values and assumptions and explore differences. Transformative learning involves a critical reflection questioning uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs and perspectives (Mezirow 1990). Transformative learning links to participation and empowerment in the sense that critical reflection is essential to analyse different contexts, identify power relationships, and understand one's position and role in the process of change (Buchy and Ahmed 2007).

Literature reaches the institutional barriers to learning and the need to overcome them if one is to achieve inclusive outcomes. One barrier to learning identified in the literature is knowledge and the dominance of scientific knowledge. While discussing the role of knowledge in development, Wilson (2006) shows the important relationship between science and learning. He argues that actors within the same discipline reproduce dominant views and non-participatory processes of social interaction, even when they are engaged in a learning process for change. He points out the need to make science participatory and self-critical (Wilson 2006). Wilson's idea supports other scholars who claim that the effectiveness of participatory approach in environment and development depends on the way science engages with people (Leach 2008; Nightingale 2005). Engaging science with people is also associated with what organisation scholars (Goetz 1998; Rao et al. 1999) call 'the nature of institutional arrangement of organisations'.

Some scholars argue that the structure, professional culture and values within forest institutions are the problem regarding implementation of CF (Britt 2002; Gilmour and Fisher 1991; Pokharel 1997). Others, such as Thoms (2008), highlight the technical-scientific role of the DoF as a barrier to achieving inclusive outcomes. However, the suggested policy response is to mandate more inclusive decision-making at the FUG level. Emphasising policy reform at the FUG level would not tackle inequity and exclusion issues unless policymaking processes tackle actors, knowledge and power relationships.

Nightingale (2005) demonstrates the domination of scientific knowledge at the grassroots CF in Nepal as one of the institutional barriers to achieving three interconnected objectives of CF: poverty reduction, ecological system and social empowerment. She argues for the need for government officials to be participatory to adapt the forest management priorities of different social groups and to recognise people's ecological knowledge. Making the DoF staff closer to the people relies on changes in the institutional culture, perspectives and capacity of the forestry sector (Dove 1995; Sood and Gupta 2007).

Actors' interactions in policy spaces and networks are another factor that can affect learning. Research reveals that 'an organisation' can be a space for dealing with poverty, development and environment issues at the grassroots level. However, the space can reinforce asymmetrical relationships and omit conflicting perspectives, even when organised to

address concerns of the poor. The interest, socioeconomic profile and value of individuals guide the behaviour of relationships with others (Coelho and Favareto 2008: 2948-9). This is why some scholars argue that the process of organising participants determine the focus of agendas and the spaces need to be diverse and inclusive—by discipline, perspective, organisation, position and social backgrounds—if the discussions are to address issues related to the socially disadvantaged (Landau 2007). There is an important strategic role for some actors during policy dialogue and negotiation to enable other actors to enhance the capacity of actors on transformative learning and deal with social agendas in participatory and inclusive ways.

This research applies the concepts of transformative learning and actors' perceptions to examine how key policy actors understand 'development objectives' and 'social values' in CF, and how those perceptions affect their interests in CF and the discussions in policy spaces.

1.5.3 Discourses in environmental governance

The third analytical approach employed in this analysis of the CF process in Nepal is the study of discourses. Discourse can be defined as a concept and category through which meaning is given to phenomena (Apthorpe and Gasper 1996: 2). It is about how and why a certain concept or idea is related, developed and used. Ideas are never innocent; rather they either reinforce or challenge existing social and economic arrangements (Schmink and Wood 1987: 51 in Bryant and Bailey 1997: 21). Dryzek (2005) argues that discourses are not unique or permanent. A number of discourses might coexist over time, and at different times, certain perspectives dominate others. Powerful actors who feel established or consider emerging discourse as threatening can attempt to modify discourses (Kumar 2007).

A discourse created through intervention creates actors, legitimises and circulates certain knowledge. In this way, discourses act as power; actors are conditioned to speak to advance the interests of some groups while others' interests are suppressed (Foucault 1978). Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgments and contestations (Dryzek 1997: 9). Even if discourses appear progressive, many of the dominant discourses that Western donors introduced and influenced in developing countries do not help the poor, they neglect to capture complex dynamics of local society, as Eyben (2007) argues.

Anthropology of policy and development theorists (Grillo and Stirrat 1997; Shore and Wright 1997) contend that it is difficult to separate discourse analysis from the analysis of different actors, their motivations and agency. There are linkages between discourses and actors' agendas. CF in principle offers political spaces for participation by people, especially the poorest and other forest dependent peasants in forest management planning and use. However, for this to happen, CF discourse must be explicit in the conceptualisation of its social objective and of existing social heterogeneity and these ideas must be present in national policy instruments such as policies, legislation and strategies on the one hand and in the policymaking process on the other.

The study employs the idea of 'discourses' to understand how CF emerged as a progressive idea for forest management and development, how certain perspectives and knowledge dominate CF policy, and the perspective taken on social values and issues in CF policy and discussions.

1.5.4 Role of aid in national development processes

One of the key sets of actors to participate in discussions of CF policy and in policy implementation is international donors. Throughout the thesis, these actors are included in the analysis of actor networks, perceptions, knowledge systems and policy processes. To understand the roles, interests and power of aid donors better, the study uses analytical handles that come out of literature on the influence of aid in national policy processes.

Characteristics of aid

Aid or development assistance consists of grants, loans or transfer of technical expertise from public sectors in the North to the public sectors of the South (Browne 2006). Aid implies a richer party helping a poorer party as part of a 'from-to' relationship (ibid: 4). The relationship between donors and the aid receiving government is unequal (Eyben 2003, Williams 1991). The identity of donors is established and maintained through 'giving' and donors do not expect a material return (Eyben 2003). The relationship between aid-recipient governments and donors can become oppressive as the former cannot give anything back (Bauman 1993 in Eyben 2003: 10). 'Aid money' thus acts as a source of power for donors to establish the rules by which state and non-state ac-

tors engage with donors in development (Eyben 2003). Donors exercise power over aid recipients, as donors' norms define what they can and cannot support, and under what circumstances aid is provided (Bass et al. 2005; Hancock 1989). In this way, global ideas, ideology and policy are promoted through the use of donors' influence. As such, the focus of aid changes over time. The dominant ideology of a particular period determines the nature of aid (Browne 2006; Robb 2004).

When aid and donors become powerful, they can dictate agendas at the national level. As a result, citizens and their elected representatives are bypassed during policy process. Previous studies of environmental management policy have shown how the policy dialogue can become a donor—government conversation. Policy studies on water management and administrative reform in Mexico and Lebanon, for example, show the influence of donors' agendas and actions in defining the structure and procedure of domestic policymaking. Water bureaucrats and state's elites were the key players for defining water management plan and public administration reform systems (see Ghaziri 2007; Rap et al. 2004).

In the last decade, donors have become increasingly concerned that this tendency to exclude a wider group of stakeholders in policy dialogue results in a lack of policy ownership and thus problems with implementation and sustainability. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Process, the Paris Declaration, and the more recent Accra Agenda for Action aim to address pieces of the problem by defining principles that should govern aid relations. The attempts to increase voice and ownership in the policy process have focused, however, on civil society groups rather than on elected representatives. This has led to criticism that policy dialogues in the "new aid architecture" still bypass domestic policy processes.

One of these principles of the new aid architecture is the mutual accountability of governments and donors (Madeley 1991; Molenaers and Renard 2006; Eyben 2008). The Paris Declaration monitoring group defined three kinds of accountability: 'horizontal', between institutions of the state; 'vertical', between the state and citizens/societal actors; and 'external', between the state and international actors including donors and treaty bodies (Eyben 2008: 11). Eyben argues that 'mutual accountability' in aid relationships should be transparent and include a broader set of actors from the partner country, because the relationship between the executive branch of government and donors undermines the process of domestic accountability. Donors are accountable to five types of

actors: taxpayers in the donor country, government in the donor country, government in the recipient country, poor people in the recipient country and the international human rights framework (Eyben and Ferguson 2004: 165). To fulfil their responsibilities, donors need to make sure that the government/sector is serious about what it has promised and deliver good value with their aid money (Molenaers and Renard 2006: 18).

When the goal is to achieve poverty reduction or to help deliver benefits to the poor, donors need to find a way to ensure that aid monies achieve this goal. However, some limitations prevent donors from emphasising only the poor. First, in donor-government relationships, donors are accountable to different groups of people for different things, and perhaps not all prioritise poverty reduction. More generally, donors do not have total control of outcomes. Reducing poverty depends on both aid and the policies of the recipient country (Williams 1991).

Moreover, in international development, aid paradigms or policy often shift, not because of local context, but because of global contexts (Browne 2006; Périn and Attaran 2003; Renard 2006). As one example, in the analysis of aid priority in the health sector, Shiffman (2006) identifies that the interest of aid providers are determinants in choosing policy action in the aid receiving countries. Donor funding priority remained high as regards HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis because the perceived threat of the diseases to developed countries. They neglected the diseases that were endemic to the developing countries, especially the poorest (Shiffman 2006). In line with Shiffman, other research on health shows that aid policy often reflects the needs of donors more than the needs of aid recipient countries (Périn and Attaran 2003).

Aid in the policy process

Recent literature argues that for aid to be effective, donors have to build state capacity and commitment because ultimately government must implement policy. Research about the effectiveness of aid in the PRSP implementation in Latin American countries finds the limited attention of donors in building capacity of government to own and implement PRSP effectively (De Jong et al. 2008). De Jong et al. suggest the need to improve efficiency in public management to implement plans and mobilise available resources to eradicate poverty rather than adding strategies externally. Molenaers and Renard (2006) also found that the capacity building and commitment at the level of government is not only essential but

also required for practicing 'participation' and 'poverty reduction' objectives of aid intervention. These arguments link to the role of donors to enable the state to manage development (Browne 2006). Browne suggests the need to shift 'aid influence' from donors to the national government. He argues that development is a domestic issue and progress relies on the way the government manages development (ibid: 10).

Critics of development highlight the influence of Western ideology and thinking in defining local development issues as a limiting factor for tackling poverty. Development praxis dominated by the ideology of economic efficiency without considering political and social relations that surround them is a problem for social change (Crewe and Harrison 1998). The influence of ideas and approaches that donors impose to address local poverty has given rise to negative impacts on the poor (Hancock 1989). Numerous studies on the implementation of development projects argued that aid failed to reduce rural poverty because of the control of donors over ideas, processes and procedures (Chhotray 2004; Ferguson 1994; Mosse 2005; Porter et al. 1991). In such circumstances, both donors and government actors need to be aware of whether ideas brought from afar are conducive to socially just outcomes.

The International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) identified the limited progress of agriculture technology, knowledge and science to practice rural development in socio-political ways (Röling 2008). This evidence brings to mind that, to be effective, aid must play a role not only in funding programmes, but also in changing institutional practices in ways conducive to socially just outcomes.

Moreover, donors alone cannot solve the local socio-cultural and institutional problems that hinder participation by the powerless in rural development. Researchers (Hancock 1989; Porter et al. 1991; Ferguson 1994) demonstrated the downside to donors' influence when it ignores the local social structure and social needs. Aid can be harmful to its targeted groups if aid processes do not consider local social structures (Scott 1979). This point relates to the experience of Nepal in the CF aid, and teaches that the social, political, institutional contexts of Nepal and social problems of CF require careful consideration by the Nepali government.

The impact of aid on the specific social groups depends on the way aid is involved in a particular social setting and policy process. Instead of

viewing the role of aid on outcomes at the grassroots, this study examines aid and donors as an overarching influence in the policy processes (policy planning, idea development, capacity building and making government actors accountable and participatory) that leads to inclusion/exclusion outcomes.

1.6 Research Strategies and Methods

Research fieldwork took place in Nepal from February to December 2006. The focus of the case study is on the analysis of interrelationships between aid, knowledge and power in the process of policy design and operation, and its relation to persistent exclusion outcomes.

1.6.1 Data collection strategy

The main strategy of the research was qualitative. By exploring the views of a range of actors on the issue of exclusion and policies, their positions on the drive or inhibition to bring about a social agenda became clear. The qualitative approach allows an understanding of the complex phenomena of a particular context in detail (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Neuman 1991; Patton 2002; Yin 1989). The approach in this study is to understand how and why power/position, knowledge, intentions, and actor networks affect the inclusion or exclusion of social issues in strategic and operational CF policy agendas. The detailed analysis of interconnected institutional and contextual factors lends itself to a qualitative research strategy, which facilitates the exploration of subjective views through ethnographic details.

This study combines two approaches: a 'case study approach' and the use of grounded theory as study unit. The case study approach emphasises the explanation of an event, issue, process or programme (Creswell 2007). It uses multiple sources of data. In this study, the case is CF in Nepal, and the case study develops through five different sources of data, described in detail below. The grounded research approach (Strauss and Corbin 1998) focuses on a process, action or interaction as the unit of analysis and builds a theory grounded in data in the field. Interviews are the main source of data in this approach.

1.6.2 Data sources and collection methods

This study used various sources of data and data collection methods. The study emphasised both ‘manufactured’ (interview) and ‘natural’ (non-interview) data (Creswell 2007: 59). Natural data is a rich record of people living their lives, pursuing goals and managing institutional tasks (ibid). Interviews provide perspectives people experienced in the subject under study.

The data collection process started with the identification of major decisions and events over the last 30 years in terms of CF policy and policy operation strategies. Key informants knowledgeable about forest policy and documents from the ‘grey literature’ (O’Laughlin 1998) helped identify these key moments and events. These events were the icons for exploring the information through interviews. Knowledge of six key informants (four from government and two from CF projects) assisted in the identification stage.

The study employed five tools to collect data depending on the research themes: interviews, informal discussions, organisations, observation of CF related events at the national level and review of CF literature. The researcher used purposeful sampling in selecting organisations to study, and to choose respondents from within the organisations (Creswell 2007). Selection intentionally included key government organisations (the DoF, the MFSC), non-state actors and CF donors and projects involved in CF implementation. Sampling considered individuals within organisations and their CF experience, current roles and positions and their ability to inform the researcher about the research themes.

The study undertook formal and informal interviews with 99 people from four categories of organisations: (a) donors/INGO/projects, (b) government, (c) political representatives and (d) non-state actors. Table 1.1 presents the attributes of the respondents.

By profession, the respondents consist of foresters, non-foresters, activists and politicians. By position, they include decision-makers and professional staff. By institution, they include staff of national and global organisations involved in CF development projects.

Table 1.1
Respondents' attributes

Organisational Actors	Organis- ation	Total Respond- ents	Profession		Levels	
			Forester	Non- Forester	Decision- makers	Profes- sional **
Forestry sector*	1	32	30	2	17	15
Donors/INGO	9	11	5	6	8	3
CF/NRM projects	5	30	16	14	11	19
Non-state actors	7	19	3	16	15	4
Politicians/HOR	1	7	0	7	7	
Total no.	20	99	54	45	58	41

Source: Fieldwork 2006

* Officials from the forest ministry office (MFSC) and forest department (DoF)

** Professional staff include 2nd and 3rd rank officials in case of INGO and project officers with social and technical roles in case of others

In-depth interviews

In-depth interview is a method of collecting insights of interviewees in a less structured way than talking or using a formal questionnaire. The in-depth interview takes place as a conversation. It is considered an appropriate tool to obtain the interviewee's perspectives, knowledge and experience on the topic under investigation (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Neuman 2003; Patton 2002). The in-depth interview, executed in story telling form, explored respondents experience with CF policy as it was realised and changed, the forces that included or excluded the agenda of social issues during policymaking, their beliefs of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' in CF and interests in CF.

In qualitative research, the interviewer is the key instrument of an interview inquiry and needs certain qualities for the interview process (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). The researcher maintained the attribute of 'sensitive researcher' during the interviews. The attribute emphasises listening actively to the content and process of saying; what is said, what is not said, and how it is said are each important (ibid: 166-7).

The researcher prepared a topic guide or checklist of the main issues to explore, while staying mindful that each interviewee would answer the same questions based on research questions and the questions should have the same meaning to each one in each theme of the investigation. To deepen the insights to a question and depth of response, detail-oriented probative questions such as 'why', 'who', 'where', 'what', 'when'

and 'how' were used (Patton 2002). Rapport building (explaining the objective of research, reason for interview, expected time), appointment with intended respondents and reading the organisational overview, impact and evaluation study reports of the concerned were done in advance (pre-interview stage). During the interview stage, the researcher started the conversation by introducing herself then, the research interest and context, objective of the interview and the value of interviewee's knowledge. The researcher then requested respondents to recall their career path (success and challenge stories over time focusing on academic career, job) to understand their interest in and contribution to CF and/or rural development process in Nepal. Respondents' experience in CF and CF policy development followed, and then their perceptions of exclusion issues in CF.

To identify and discuss key events in CF development, respondents were to identify the significant policy dates in terms of CF policy development from their point of view and to explain their view of the moment. Some things asked were, what happened, why it happened, who made decisions, where the ideas came from, with what interest and why they thought the date was a success or challengeable. Appendix 1 contains the topic guide. Each interview ended by the researcher thanking the respondents for their time, acknowledging their knowledge, and asking if they had any questions for the researcher. Some of the respondents kindly provided information about references and sources that were useful for this research. The post interview stage included making notes of the researchers own reflections and interview information the same day the interview occurred, in most cases, immediately afterward. In some cases, the researcher penned the notes the evening of the same day. The time of note taking was important to capture the information respondents gave in conversation so, it received significant attention.

Secondary sources

The study applied various techniques to collect secondary data. Information on forest policies, legislation, directives, policy meeting minutes, CF progress reports and guidelines, and CF workshop proceedings were collected from government, project offices and individuals. Data concerning the CF projects, donors' strategies, CF project impact studies, annual reports, research and conference reports came from CF projects and national libraries. The researcher accessed information regarding compli-

ance with international environmental conventions and national commitment to address poverty and deforestation through websites and the ISS library. Articles and visual aids captured views on CF and its role in poverty reduction as expressed by national and international professionals and activists to triangulate data collected through interviews.

Field notes: Tool for self-critical reflection

Field notes or researcher diaries are necessary to record feelings, insights and inspiration experienced during fieldwork. Field notes are required for self-critical reflection and describing eyewitness events in qualitative research (Ortlipp 2008). The researcher maintained a journal for personal reflection after each interview and event. The focus was on recording self-awareness (Patton 2002): ‘what did I know’, ‘how did I know’, ‘how did I perceive interviewees’, ‘how did they perceive me’, direct quotations of people, and descriptions of events observed. Key aspects of the field notes were interests, personal networks and power relationships between actors and their role in pushing or pulling ideas.

1.6.3 Data analysis strategy

Scholars debate which comes first in qualitative research, the development of a theory or testing a hypothesis. Some argue that qualitative research involves testing theories in advance of data collection (Bryman 2004). The pioneering work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) develops a theory grounded in fieldwork. Grounded theory is a method of generating theory from data instead of testing hypotheses. In this strategy, the researcher does not begin a project with a pre-conceived theory in mind; rather the researcher begins with the key research question and allows the theory to emerge from the data (Strauss and Corbin 1998). The process of research is iterative, as data collection and analysis proceed together. It has three major interrelated stages of data analysis: coding, development of concepts, and linking the concepts to draw an argument or theory. The data analysis strategy of this research follows mostly the grounded theory. The researcher developed an analytical framework prior to field work, but modified it during the fieldwork and data analysis, as new concepts (such as the role of aid and actor-networks) and patterns emerged from the data.

Data analysis occurred at two stages. First, in the verbatim transcription and electronic storage of interview data, then coding the descriptive

data. Timing of coding is important in qualitative research to enhance the robustness of the data and quality of the analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994: 65). The codes were manually analysed until categories and patterns started to emerge.

Since the volume of data was manageable and the analysis of data was comprehensive, I decided that I did not need to use software to analyse the data. In qualitative research, there are a number of code orders (Strauss and Corbin 1998). First order is descriptive in which to generate key codes while analysing stories that respondents or documents tell about people, events or things. Next was the task of grouping the codes into second level coding and then a third level coding, which refers more to concepts. For example, in this study, 'forest', 'soil conservation', 'land-use' and 'plantation' were identified as first order coding while analysing the interest of respondents in CF policy, which were then grouped into the second order coding such as 'conservation' or 'environmental management' and then follows the concept development such as 'eco-centric' ideology. This study follows the process for generating other concepts (see Appendix 3). Codes were named according to the closeness to the concept it described. For example, the terms 'forest', 'plantation' and 'deforestation' were named to describe the main concern of actors in policymaking.

Importantly, to unearth perceptions about CF, forest management and social issues in forestry, the researcher emphasised interpretive ethnography in which views of respondents were analysed from the perspective of a cultural system. Cultural systems include ideas and social life that reflects the actual practice of people or systems studied (White 2007: 1200). In the study, selected concerns and feelings expressed by respondents were displayed verbatim and the meaning interpreted in relation to transformative change.

Nepali government's forest policy and strategies in combination with donors' strategies and social programmes invested in CF over time were analysed to understand whether the CF policy framework is actually conducive to tackling structural and power issues.

The information collected on the career path of the respondents was analysed to study the motivations of policymakers and CF practitioners to work with CF, their social relations, the way influential actors conceptualise the meaning of 'success' and 'problem', and its link to exclusion and participation in forestry profession.

Official documents and personnel reports were analysed to identify and verify the dominant ideology in CF development, actors' perspectives in poverty and the interests of forestry professions and donors in the discourse. In analysing these documents, the researcher followed methodological approaches for interpreting institutional discourses (O'Laughlin 1998: 107-26): the role of researcher is to find key words and interpret both messages and silences as part of socially constructed institutional discourse. This approach helped identify the politics of knowledge in policy reports and to situate the focus of CF policy discussions. Illustrations provided in the documents about forests, people, poverty and government's role in CF were good tools to understand the view of actors in CF social issues.

The interview number followed by organisation name and date of interview indicates the coding of respondents in this study. For example, 'I. no. 1, GO, 8 March 2006' refers to a respondent who is and used to be working with a government organisation. Similarly, 'I. no. 49, donor, 29 May 2006' refers to staff of CF donors. 'I. no. 58, project, 12 October 2006' as project respondents and 'I. no. 16, civil society, 10 July 2006' as staff or member of non-state actors (see Appendix 4 for respondent list).

Validation of data

Validation of data is required for maintaining quality in research. To ensure validity, this research starts with the concept of 'validation' as process (Creswell 2007: 207). Validation as process differs from terms such as verification, authenticity and credibility that the contemporary qualitative research emphasises, as Creswell (2007) points out. Creswell considers the detailed thick description, extensive time spent in the field and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study as validation strategies.

This research also used two tools of triangulation. In social research, triangulation implies combining more than one set of insights in an investigation. The forms of triangulation include triangulation of data, researchers and, theoretical and methodological aspects (Downward and Mearman 2007: 81). The researcher reviewed newspapers, articles and speeches to triangulate data collected through interviews. The study also considers the use of multiple analytical approaches as theoretical triangulation.

Limitations of the study

The experience, value and assumptions of the researcher prior to doing research can affect the research and create limiting factors for the researcher. The researcher's more than 15-year affiliation with CF development in different institutions (the forest department, NGOs and CF development projects) and in various capacities helped her establish a good relationship with institutions and individuals in the Nepalese forestry sector including bilateral projects and I/NGOs.

Being high-caste and coming from a forestry background made it easy to approach other high-caste foresters and decision-makers in government and donors/projects. During the research design phase, the researcher saw social and professional relationships with people in donor-government interface as one enabling factor to do this research. She viewed these relationships as a driving force for rapport building with informants during the fieldwork. To some extent, fieldwork followed informal networks of high-caste professional elites to approach highly influential decision-makers and politicians with high-caste advantages, ethnic group and social status. The network afforded entry into national level policy and projects related meetings and workshops and, gave opportunities to establish rapport with informants for interviews. This means that the researcher became part of the story this analysis tells about unequal relationships and actor networks. However, status and connections also provided some limitations to this research: difficulty in contacting and establishing confidence with respondents from low castes and ethnic minorities. It is difficult to say whether personal position affected this research negatively but the researcher is aware she was possibly not as critical as possible. The probability of returning home and having to find a job made it difficult to expose the extent of exclusion within the networks. At the same time, personal experiences of unfairness and discrimination have perhaps derailed the rigour of the analysis.

Doing research about people or organisations while being a part as well results in some challenges. The research concepts and approach was critical, focusing on understanding the relationship behaviours and attitude of actors in the donor-government interface and the role of aid in maintaining traditional forestry value and knowledge systems at the policy level. It may limit entry to the interface if responsible people at the policy level do not recognise the value of critical research as a process of dealing with change for just social outcomes.

In addition to possible limitations related to the researcher's background and connections, this research also has some possible limitations related to methodology and context. For example, since this research focuses on people at centre level forestry organisations, it missed the opportunity to capture the perspective of field staff of the DoF. If this group holds views that are different from their colleagues at the policy level, then it would have been interesting to investigate why views coming from the field do not permeate into the ranks of policymakers. This could be the subject of future research.

In terms of the timing of the study, it is important to recognise that political governance drastically changed since the fieldwork. The agendas of policy discussions emphasise 'inclusion' in the state apparatus. Thus, the attitudes and policy agendas analysed in this study do not necessarily reflect the situation as I write. Again, a future avenue of research could be to address this weakness and to analyse the process of emergence of any new discourses in forestry and the nature of change in the forestry sector brought about by political transformation.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study has eight chapters and four appendices. This introductory chapter sets the research context and theoretical and analytical framework of the study. This chapter also defines community, exclusion/inclusion, poverty, participation and policy for the purpose of this research. The chapter presents the analytical framework of the study that includes key concepts and theories on aid, power, knowledge, actor-oriented approach, actor networks, and perceptions and learning.

Chapter 2 is meant to familiarise the reader with the research context and with previous research on the question of exclusion in community forestry. It includes a discussion on the way 'exclusion' is 'in-built' in Nepali society and the Nepali state and of how exclusion in forestry has its roots in pre-modern forest policies. The chapter also reviews existing literature on the nature of, and local-level causes of, exclusion in Nepali CF.

Chapter 3 begins the examination of macro-level exclusion—exclusion in Nepali CF policy and its relationship to the policy-making process. The chapter first examines in detail the development of CF policy and how CF policy, legislation, and operational guidelines contribute to

exclusion. The chapter then turns to exclusion within the state organizations charged with making and implementing CF policy.

Chapter 4 looks at the role of aid organizations in the establishment of the modern forestry organisation in Nepal and in shaping the forest policy discourses that underlie CF policies. It shows how aid becomes influential in the policy process and argues that aid helps maintain exclusion by supporting policy ideas that do not challenge unequal local power relationships.

The analysis in the remaining chapters moves from policy and policy ideas to actors in the policymaking process—their perceptions, knowledge base, and participation and interaction in networks and policymaking fora. Chapter 5 provides a detailed account of how key CF actors interviewed for this study view exclusion and inclusion in CF. The chapter documents an unwillingness among actors from many different groups to own the cause and solution of exclusion, despite the fact that they all express a desire to work towards a common goal of poverty reduction through effective CF.

Chapter 6 looks at how aid has been involved in shaping these perceptions, by producing and reproducing knowledge at the national level. In particular, the chapter examines the role of aid in capacity building processes—at the national and local levels—that largely ignore the national context and local problems associated with forest resource management and maintain eco-centric views of forestry.

Chapter 7 analyses the dynamics of actors' relationships, interactions and networks in CF operations and policymaking. This chapter demonstrates how relationships serve to maintain exclusionary networks and tend to reproduce instrumental views of participation and exclusion. It shows how little change on these issues at the government level has taken place, despite the engagement of donors with CF development for years.

A summary of key findings and reflections regarding the research questions, objectives and implications appear in concluding chapter 8.

2

Background: Inequality and Exclusion in the Nepali Context and in Existing Literature

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to familiarise the reader with the research context and with previous research on the question of exclusion in community forestry. The chapter begins with an analysis of unequal Nepali social structures, followed by aid relationships in the Nepali context. It then provides a brief overview of the history of forest governance and the current structure of CF in Nepal. It closes with a discussion of the micro-level exclusion problems identified by earlier literature on CF.

2.2 Inegalitarian Social Structure of Nepal

Nepal is a heterogeneous society with a complex ethnic, caste, culture and language diversity (Gurung 2006). Access to social and economic opportunities varies within and between castes, gender, classes, culture and locations. Nepal is made up of 103 castes and ethnic groups (61 ethnic groups, 4 castes and 36 sub-caste groups, 2 unidentified groups) speaking 92 languages (Gurung 2006, 2007; HDR 2009). King Jayasthi Malla in the late 14th century introduced the caste principles and norms. He categorised professional activities for different castes and established punishment rules if anyone left their given occupation. Untouchables had to live in the outskirts of town and had to wear special dress so that others would recognise them (Bista 1991).

The high and low caste (*dalit*)¹ people of Indo-Aryan origin speak Nepali-the official language while the Janajati belong to the Mangoloid racial group and speak Tibeto-Burman languages. Ethnic groups such as the Rai, the Limbu, the Yakha, the Sunuwar, the Raute, the Jirel, the Hayu, the Gurung, the Magar, the Tamang, the Thakali, the Thami, and

the Chepang in the hills; and the Tharu, the Danuwar, the Bote Mahji, the Dhimal, the Meche, the Koche, and the Jhagad in the *terai* speak their Tibeto-Burmese dialects (Bista 1991: 17). These groups have specific geographical settlements. The government of Nepal has never recognised the inclusion of dialects in the national language. Language is a status symbol that subsequently defines the power of people. The use of Nepali as the national language has also alienated non-Nepali speaking people in government employment. Only 48 per cent of the country's population speaks Nepali. Nepali speaking people have more employment opportunities. For example, the employment percentage of the Nepali and non-Nepali speakers is 69 and 18 per cent of their populations respectively (Yadava 2006).

The social hierarchy based on the caste system affects social relationships and opportunities. Many indigenous ethnic groups (recently known as *Adivasi Janjatis*) and *dalits* have been historically disadvantaged in socio-political and economic opportunities (NPC 2003). Muslim, *Dalits* and *Janajatis*, who have had lower levels of human development for generations, continue to suffer today (UNDP 2009: 46). There exists higher inequality and discrimination in each of the caste and ethnic groups. For example, exclusion of *Tamang and Chepang* among *Janjatis* has been a serious problem in some hills districts.

Dalit women and girls in Nepal are the most vulnerable groups; they face the double burden of caste and gender discrimination in all aspects (Goyal et al. 2005). Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar have high levels of education, social, political and economic status. They dominate the state system, since they occupy more than 70 per cent of the government administration and parliament positions (Bista 1991; DFID and World Bank 2006; Gurung 2006; Lawoti 2005). Between 1951 and 2005, a Brahmin/Chhetri or Newar always occupied the post of the chief secretary (the head of the civil administration) in the government (Yadav 2007: 111). Moreover, their access to leadership in civil society and local political bodies (DDCs and VDCs) is also high (DFID and World Bank 2006; Gurung 2006). There are 22 *dalit* caste groups (Gurung 2007: 51). Intra-caste discrimination is also predominant within the *dalits* group. Among hill *dalits*, artisan shoemakers (*sarkzi*) and tailors (*damai*) are untouchable in relation to artisan metalworkers (*kami*-blacksmith). The situation of *dalits* in the *terai* is even worse. For example, in three general elections between 1990 and 1999 only 12 *dalit* parliamentarians won

seats. None of them was from the *terai* (Kisan 2006). The *dalits* have no active participation in national policymaking (Kisan 2008).

The patriarchal social structure of Nepal is another dimension of the social hierarchy. Males are generally in powerful positions within and outside the household domain. The social identity of men differs from that of women. Wealth, education, castes/ethnicity and relationships with the bureaucracy, development actors and politicians shape the status of a man (Lama and Buchy 2002). Fathers, husbands or sons make most household decisions. Women make household decisions when men are away for work. Men receive recognition for their economic, political and cultural contributions. Being male means the ability to take part in economic activities, political leadership and religious rituals. Women's identity is linked more to non-economic and non-political work (Acharya 1979). This, in turn, influences the recognition of women's work even if they are breadwinners for their families and have the capacity and the commitment for social change.

Stereotyped gender ideologies appear more often and more intensely in the high caste families where women receive second-class treatment (Bista 1991: 73). They experience three types of subordination at the household level: they should obey their father (before marriage), their husband (after marriage) and their son (after their husband's death). This male supremacy has limited women's access to knowledge and ability to define the preferred future for the household (ibid). Because of the patriarchal structure, the socialisation process also varies between sons and daughters in which the father guides the sons and the mother takes care of the daughters. The level of personal freedom and respect also varies between Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman groups. For example, social mobility and the decision-making status of Tibeto-Burman women at the household level are relatively higher than those of the Indo-Aryan women (Watkins 1996). They however remain in marginalised positions due to the power and privilege of high-castes (Gurung 2006).

The situation has changed in some respects over the past 25 years. Access to social services such as health, education, savings/credit programmes and informal employment by women has largely increased (Acharya 2003; DFID and World Bank 2006). However, their access to economic assets and property has not changed in the period. Only 0.8 per cent of total female population own a house. Female owners of land and livestock make up 5.3 and 5.4 per cent of total female population

respectively (Shrestha 2007: 72). Violence against women exists both in the domestic and public spheres.

Patriarchy has implications for the political role of women. Women are not in a leadership position of any political parties. The political parties failed to integrate issues of exclusion into their action plans (DFID and World Bank 2006). Women's representation in the upper and lower house of parliament is nominal and no great difference exists in their representation between democratic and the party-less Panchayat system. Even after the last election held in 1999, there were only five women out of 60 in the upper house and seven out of 205 in the lower house of parliament (Election Commission 1999). The Local Self-Government Act (LSGA) in 1998 introduced compulsory representation of women (one in five ward committee members and 20 per cent of municipality members) in the local elected government. The LSGA act however lacks policy provisions to ensure women are in decision-making bodies of VDC and DDC committees that decide local development plans and budgets. The Constitution Assembly (CA) election in 2008 was a historic shift in which women and *dalits* made-up 33 and eight per cent representation of total CA members respectively (Election Commission 2008).

Kinship and social networks are important for survival. The 'joint family' is a common family institution in which parents, children and grandchildren live together and share resources. Though this family structure is changing gradually towards the nuclear system in urban areas, the kinship relationship is important as a means to share feelings and help each other in times of vulnerability. Marriage is restricted within families that have same clan or blood relations. In society, there are various ways to maintain relationships among people. The poor establish relationships with village property owners in order to obtain material support for subsistence livelihoods; in return, they do sharecropping and provide wage labour to proprietors. Blacksmiths (artisan metalworkers) make agricultural tools for landlords that are essential for farming (Dhakal et al. 2005). Bista (1991) conceptualised 'relations' as *afno manche* (one's own people who can be approached whenever need arises), which is institutionalised in Nepali society. Making one's own circle (social network) is an essential element to making things happen and expanding one's social capital. The kinship and caste-based favouritism, observed in the bureaucratic system restricts development opportunities for those who do not have connections to government officials. Most high caste

people have more ties with bureaucracy, national executives and the private sector (ibid: 98).

Nepal has a subsistence economy primarily led by agriculture. About 90 per cent of the country's population engages partially or fully in agricultural work. Eighteen per cent of the total land area is under cultivation with the remaining land consisting of forests, mountains, meadows and communal land. The intensity of agriculture work is higher in the *terai* than the hills and mountains. Both institutional and geographical factors made the land a limiting factor of production. In 2002, the average land holding was less than 0.8 hectare per household (CBS 2003). However, the top five per cent of landholders owned 37 per cent of the total land area of the country while the bottom 47 per cent of land owning households owned 15 per cent of total arable land with less than 0.5 hectare on average. Twenty-nine per cent of total rural households are landless (UNDP 2004). More than 60 per cent of landholding households have food deficits (CBS 2001).

Landlessness is severe among *dalit* families. About 23 per cent of *dalits* are landless and about 50 per cent control less than five *ropani* (0.25 ha) of land (Rai Paudyal 2008: 51). A recent study on *dalits'* citizenship in the *terai* shows that about 61 per cent of total *dalits* in the *terai* are landless (Sigdel 2008: 4). *Dalits* in Nepal face highest food deficiency (Rai Paudyal 2008: 51). Their survival strategies include working on farms owned by others, sharecropping, out migration and illegal collection and selling of firewood (Gurung et al 2008; Rai Paudyal 2008). *Dalits* are an artisan group. However, their involvement in the artisan occupation is very low. For instance, only one per cent of total *dalits* in the *terai* do artisan work (Sigdel 2008: 4).

The incidence of poverty is more prominent amongst rural women, *dalits* and the landless with little access to and control over resources. The income poverty level is the highest among *dalits* (65-68% of their population) followed by ethnic groups (ranging from 45-59%) (CBS 2001). Poverty is even more critical in rural areas where more than 85 per cent of the population cultivate some land, raise a few animals and use forest resources as their main livelihood strategy. Children of poor families are *de-facto* excluded from secondary school education because they cannot afford the cost of education, even when exempted from school fees. On-farm employment opportunities in the rural areas are virtually non-existent (NPC 2003). The far West and mid-West regions

suffer more from poverty and vulnerability than the East and Centre do (Bhattarai 2003).

In short, Nepali society is highly unequal. The social structures and relationships provide some groups better access to social, political and economic opportunities while excluding others. Deep inequalities exist between men and women, the high and low castes and ethnic groups in terms of social and economic opportunities. Women, *dalits* and the majority of ethnic groups (except Newar and Thakali) are among the most affected social groups disadvantaged in social, economic and political spheres (Gurung 2006). The state's exclusive structures and culture contributed to increase exclusionary dynamics.

2.3 Nepal: Aid Dependent Country of South Asia

Nepal, a small landlocked country, is one of the poorest in South Asia, with a per capita income (GDP) of US\$ 383 for the year 2006/07 (CBS 2007). Nepal stands as the 14th poorest in the world (DFID 2008). Aid has been an important leverage in development since the beginning of modernisation in the 1950s (Metz 1995; Mihaly 2002; Sharma 2001; Tiwari 1992). Following the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951, the first cabinet formed under the leadership of Mohan Shamsar Rana. The restoration of the Shah King as a constitutional monarch in 1951 became the basis to start a formal relationship with international actors.

The Swiss government was the first, funding a geological survey in 1951, followed by the United States in 1952 (Metz 1995: 179). The government of Nepal began 'planned development' by formulating the first five-year development plan in 1955/56. The US, as lead development actor, formulated the Plan (Metz 1995).

Nepal receives the highest amount of foreign aid (in total amount of aid per capita) in South Asia and one of the highest in the world (Sharma 2002: xxxiii). Until the mid-1970s, most aid was bilateral (66% in 1975) and most in the form of grants (93% in 1975). Multilateral aid (55% in 1987) has been the important resource since the 1970s, and 61 per cent of the multilateral aid was in loans in 1987 (Khadka 1991: 431 in Metz 1995: 179). The official aid amount rose from US\$ 26.3 million in the 1950s to US\$ 2.2 billion in the 1990s. In the FY 2002/03, aid contributed to 61.83 per cent of the total development expenditure in the country (Acharya 2004: 24-5). Nepal received US\$ 514 million total net in official development assistance (ODA) provided by members of the

OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) in 2006 (OECD 2008: 38-41).

In Nepali forestry, the aid relationship has a long history. It began as technical assistance in the 1930s. In 1922, a British Forester assisted the GoN to export timber from the *terai* forests to India. The government established a formal forestry administration in 1925 (Pokharel 1997). Aid was the prime mover for the creation of the DoF. The DoF was established in 1942 with the technical guidance of Western expatriates. Aid also influenced the structure and function of the forest administration including the education system in Nepal in the modernisation period. Although there are currently three donor funded CF projects, at least 13 donors assisted the DoF in CF over the past 30 years. These include the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the European Economic Community (EEC), the Finish International Development Agency (FINIDA) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Nepal made progress in terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) between 1996 and 2000, increasing from 0.325 to 0.466 (Murshed 2005). Nevertheless, people with low power and limited resources become trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. Despite the constant support of aid, literature shows that aid in Nepal contributed little to reduce inequality and improve the situation of the poor (Metz 1995; Mihaly 2002; Sharma 2001; Shrestha 1998). Community and state elites captured development opportunities. The key issues highlighted are weak state governance such as the influence of feudal power in development process and corruption. This prevented growth (Metz 1995: 184). As of 2005, more than 200 *dalit* NGOs are involved in development process with special interest in *dalits* suffering from high poverty levels. Donor support for *dalit* NGOs began to increase in 2001. However, *dalit* NGOs have not addressed their social and economic issues (Paudel 2005). None of the *dalit* NGOs raised their voice against *dalits* living in chronic and

extreme poverty (*ibid*). The key reasons are the dominance of urban powerful *dalits* in the NGOs, the use of aid money for private benefits, urban-oriented activities and lack of clear vision of empowerment of *dalits* and role of *dalit* NGOs in Nepal. This institutional complexity reflects the importance of class relations for social change within a specific social group.

Nepali society has been characterised by persistent exclusion, inequality, poverty, gender disparity and caste or ethnic-based discrimination. Exclusion and social discrimination caused by weak state governance supported the emergence of a revolutionary political movement—the Maoists in 1996. Upreti (2009) argues that the Maoist insurgency was not solely the product of failure of restored multiparty democracy in 1990. It was the cumulative effect of more than 345 years of exploitation. The post-1990 governance failure gave space to escalate the conflict because of (a) its inability to fulfil people's expectations and malgovernance, and (b) the freedom it offered (Upreti 2009: 22). Upreti (2009: 24-43) explains eight foundations that caused the conflict. These include socioeconomic, political, ideological, psychological, spatial, external, catalytic and legal. The establishment of the peace accord between the Maoists and the government in 2007 enabled national and international actors to concentrate their efforts on the peace process with the major objective of the formulation of a national constitution. Donors started to rethink their strategies only when their development programmes and projects were affected by the conflict. Some donors (e.g. SDC, DFID) changed their approaches, procedures, and practices to translate the 'do-no-harm' principle into action (Upreti 2009: 41). However, it is difficult for donors to follow basic tenets of humanitarian aid and 'do-no harm' principles (Seddon and Hussein 2002 in Upreti 2009: 41).

In 2003, donors developed 14-point Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) as working principles that development organisations have to apply and advocate on during conflict. BOGs are based on the established and accepted humanitarian principles and international legal standards. They protect the interest of the conflict-affected population and the safety and security of UN, donor and INGO staff. BOG negotiations between donors, the Maoists and the Government ensured the maintenance of an operating environment for continuation of development activities in the country. The role of SDC was crucial to recognise the importance of engaging with the Maoists not only for reasons of

development staff security, but also to build a form of political engagement that could lead to peace.

A decade-armed conflict in Nepal created several negative impacts on development such as destruction of basic development infrastructure. On the spectrum of development, it involuntarily transferred resources to fuel conflict, creating high but unfulfilled expectations of people. Different approaches adopted by donors lead to confusion, contradiction and conflict in communities. Donor-dominated development projects created dependency and decreased government incentives to mobilise internal resources. It has also been observed that donor supported interventions did not address spatial vulnerability, as interventions concentrated on accessible areas. This also helped develop feeling of exclusion of people and ultimately non-cooperation as Upreti (2009: 311) points out.

Observation shows that a global and national political economy of forest policy and policy practice has taken root in the MFSC and persists today (Rai Paudyal 2008). Understanding of the relationships between forest policies and access to forests by the excluded historically is important before we move to discussion of CF.

2.4 Forest Use and Forest Policies in Nepal: a Brief Overview

Nepal has 5.8 million hectares of forests that comprise 39 per cent of the total national area (MFSC 1988). Forests are the main source of people's livelihood in general, and the poor, indigenous people, *dalits* and women in particular (Gurung et al. 2008; Dev et al. 2003; Rai Paudyal 2008). Firewood, fodder, leaf litter, thatch grass, weeds, climbers, medicinal plants and charcoal constitute the most important resources for their livelihoods. Fodder is the main livelihood resource of Nepal, as it provides feed and bedding materials for livestock (cows, oxen, goats, buffaloes and pigs), which in turn provide farm manure, ploughing and nutrition to the farmers (Dhakal et al. 2005). Firewood makes up more than 70 per cent of energy needs of a peasant household for cooking and heating.

The poor use forests for meeting their livelihood needs and the use pattern varies, depending on geography and their livelihood strategies. They use firewood for cooking and charcoal making, fodder/forage for goats, cattle and pigs, leaves for vegetables, wild fruits for food, thatch

grass for roofing, small poles for building houses and herbs/roots for medicine. Studies show that firewood and fodder are the priority products for *dalits* and women, small poles for the poor and timber for the rich (Koirala 2007; Paudel 1999). State forests are the source of subsistence income for the poor, as they collect and sell firewood and non-timber forest products in nearby markets, but mostly illegally. CF, in contrast to private forestry, can improve access of the landless to forest resources (Chakraborty et al. 1997). In high-mountain areas, landless semi-nomadic groups/pastoralists depend on meadows and forests as sources of fodder for their cattle and shelter. The landless and poor in-migrants squat on government owned forestland. Some indigenous groups such as *rautes* who do not practice agriculture rely on forests for food through hunting/gathering and shelter. Despite high dependency on forests, forest policies neglect the protection of the fundamental rights of the poor, indigenous people and *dalits* (see chapter 3). Historically, forests have been used to meet the interests of the state and powerful individuals from the local and national levels. Both formal and informal institutions of state and village elites influence forest management and use system. Access to forests by the poor is arranged through either village elites or illegal measures (see Bhattarai et al. 2002; Hogley and Malla 1996).

The state adopted varying policies to manage forests. Until 1976, forest policies focused on forestry staff's control over resources. The emergence of the CF policy in 1976 established the community approach to management of government owned forests under the partnership with the community and the state. The current Forest Act of 1993 categorises forests into two types: government and private, based on ownership. The government owned forest has been sub-categorised into five types based on management objectives, the community forest is one of them. The sections below will discuss a history of forest management policy in three institutional regimes: pre and Rana regime (1750-1951) and post-Rana regime (1951-1990s).

2.4.1 Forest policies in pre and Rana regime

Unification period (1750-1846)

The Unification period can be considered pre-Rana regime in Nepali forest history as it adopted informal forest policies. Before 1750, what is today Nepal was a number of small kingdoms and principalities. By

1769, Prithwi Narayan Shah, the King of Gorkha, unified most of the divided kingdoms into one nation (Gautam and Shivakoti 2005). Though there was no formal forest policy, two purposes dominated forest management in the unification period: the national revenue and providing a physical barrier against possible attack from the British East India Company. Forests in the *terai* region were the main attraction for King Prithwi Narayan Shah because they had high economic valued *sal* trees and wildlife resources. The revenue generated by these resources was one of the main sources of state income spent on the unification process and the livelihoods of royal families (Adhikary et al. 2006). Regmi quotes a letter sent by Prithwi Narayan Shah in which he describes the *terai* as ‘superior and revenue-yielding territory’ and the hill region as ‘inferior territory’ (Regmi 1972: 9 in ibid: 59). Because of the relative abundance of forests, people in the hills were encouraged to convert forests into agricultural land to increase state taxes. In the *terai*, the landless were not able to access forestland because of heavy taxes.

Rana regime (1846-1951)

During the Rana regime, the state elites and local village elites utilised forest resources for three objectives: social relations, amenities and state revenue. The Ranas maintained close ties with the British rulers in India for their political survival. The forests in the *terai* built this relationship. Hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) timber went as gifts to British rulers. At the time of the Second World War, Prime Minister Chandra Shamsar offered 100,000 cft of *sal* to British administrators in India as courtesy gifts. The dense forests were also hunting grounds for the Ranas, the Kathmandu-based elites and the British rulers (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). To fulfil the lavish expenditure of the Ranas and the timber needs of British India, forestry rules were amended in 1870, 1894, 1904, 1910, 1918, 1924 and 1933 (Bhattarai et al. 2002: 321).

In addition, the *terai* forests were the state’s revenue asset. The expansion of the railway network in northern India increased the demand for timber. *Sal* timber from the *terai* forests filled this demand. In 1925, the forest inspection office (*banjanb adda*) and forest check posts began to regulate the sale of forest products and forest game (Bajracharya 1983; Hobley and Malla 1996). Export of timber to British India for the construction of railways caused massive deforestation between 1925 and 1930 (Hobley and Malla 1996).

The forests in the hills were managed under the authority of village leaders and government employees bypassing the needs of the poor and less powerful people. The Rana regime adopted land grant policies such as *Birta*.² The *Birta* system offered state elites (warrior, administrators, priests, relatives of Ranas) tax free national forest land as compensation for their services. At the end of the Rana regime in 1951, at least one-third of Nepali forests were under the *Birta* system and three-quarters of this land belonged to the Rana family (Regmi 1978 in Hobley and Malla 1996: 68). At the same time, local elites (*talukdar*-local revenue functionaries and *jimmawal* and *mukhiya*-village headmen/landlords) received decision-making rights over the protection and use of local forests (Hobley and Malla 1996: 65-92). This institution established the 'patron-client' relationship between village functionaries and the greater public. Ordinary people had to provide in kind incentives to please the functionaries before getting permission to cut fuel wood or timber (Mahat et al. 1987b: 120). These local institutions of forest regulation restricted the poor and *dalits* from accessing forests. Adhikari, in his analysis of indigenous forest management systems in West Nepal, found that the exclusion of *dalits*, other landless and the poor from accessible forests managed under the local system, and their dependency on forests in highly remote areas, which were inaccessible to the village elites, regulated forest use (Adhikari 1990: 262).

Forests were the source of power for the powerful. The Ranas practiced the distribution of forestland to high-ranking employees, functionaries and their kinships as private property with the main goal of establishing social relationships. This system supported the exclusion of socially and economically weaker individuals who had no connection with state elites.

2.4.2 Forest policies in post-Rana regime (1951-1990)

In 1957, the GoN approved a forest policy that nationalised all forests privately managed during the Rana regime. The Private Forest Nationalisation Act of 1957 was the first policy that formalised forestry staff control over forests. In 1961, the apolitical Panchayat regime approved the Forest Act of 1961. In 1976, the MFSC approved the first National Forestry Plan that introduced the concept of people's participation in forest management or the 'community forestry' policy. The way these policies contributed to maintain exclusion of the poor and powerless in forest

access and control is analysed in chapter 3. The sections below discuss briefly the way CF operates in Nepal.

2.4.3 Structure of community forestry in Nepal

Operation of community forestry

Like Joint Forest Management in India (Reddy et al. 2007; Roy 1993), CF in Nepal is a forest management concept based on a participation philosophy. CF emerged in 1978 as a formal strategy of managing national forests under partnership between the government and forest user groups (Shivakoti et al. 2004; Malla and Hobley 1996). The current model of CF is organised by FUGs—village-based organisations established to protect, develop and use a particular area of national forest as a community forest under the current Forest Act of 1993 and Forest Rule of 1995 of Nepal. FUGs receive the technical, managerial, financial and institutional support from the forest department, donors/projects, NGOs, civil society and line agencies.

A FUG consists of a specific group of households, defined according to their traditional use of the forests. Households constitute the general members of a FUG. The main variables used to determine the membership are the geographical proximity of the households to forests and their dependency on the forests historically. The membership provides internal legitimacy to participate and to benefit from the FUGs (Rai and Buchy 2004). Each FUG has its executive committee, elected by the general assembly of FUG members, in order to coordinate and implement national policy and FUG decisions.

A FUG is legally acknowledged if people of a particular location form a group, develop a constitution and register at the district forest office (DFO)—the district level authority of the forest department (Kanel 2001). The district forest officer hands over to the FUG a delineated part of national forest as community forest under the conditions and terms specified in a forest operational plan, which must be consistent with the forest legislation and decisions of the MFSC and the DoF. In this sense, the district forest officers, who approve the plans and constitutions of FUGs, are the institutional “gatekeepers” in CF operations (Kanel 2001: 72).

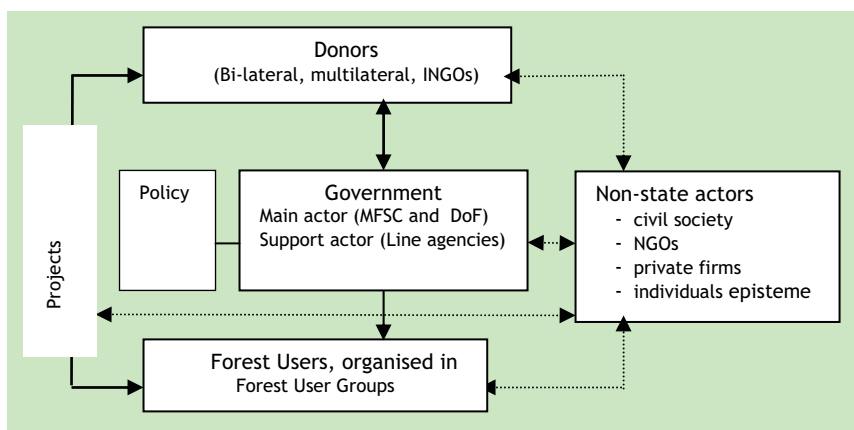
Currently, there are more than 14,439 FUGs in Nepal, which manage about 22 per cent of the total forest area of the country. About 39 per cent of the total population is included in the FUGs. The hill region has

larger coverage than the *terai* in CF intervention. As of February 2009, only about nine per cent of total FUGs manage 14 per cent of total community forest in the *terai*, which comprise five per cent of total forest area of Nepal (DoF 2009). The *terai* has 47 per cent of total population (CBS 2001) and more than 30 per cent of the total *terai* population is landless (Karan and Ishi 1994 in Bhattarai et al. 2002: 331).

Actors in the operation of community forestry

CF operation in Nepal involves a range of actors directly and indirectly. As shown in figure 2.1, key actors involved in CF fit into four broad groups: Forest User Groups (who manage forests at the local level), the government (who set and oversee forest policy and well as implement policy in some areas), donors (who operate projects that implement policy and who, as we will see later in the thesis, have influence over policy), and non-state actors (who take on a variety of roles mostly in the capacity of service provider, with some limited involvement in policymaking). Spatially, actors fall into three groups: local, national and global.

Figure 2.1
Actors in the operation of community forestry, Nepal



Notes:

Thick line two-way: direct role in policy setting and/or implementation

Thin line two-way: 'operational relationships' (service providers, user representation)

Thick line one-way: direct role in the operation of CF policy

At the government level, the MFSC and the DoF act as the main actor and establish the main link between FUGs and forest users at the community level and international donors in CF development. They have a direct bearing over the governance of FUGs at the community level and aid relationships with donors at the global level. The MFSC and the DoF are the key implementers of CF policy, programmes and projects. Line agencies include sectoral ministries and departments including National Planning Commission (NPC). They act as support actors in CF operation. They interact in informal relationships with FUGs and donors in the implementation of CF programmes. Non-state actors consisting of NGOs, civil societies, private agencies and individual think tank act as service providers and user representatives, and run across three scales. Civil society organisations include the representatives of community-based NRM groups. These include the federation of FUGs (e.g. FECOFUN), organisation of forest resource user groups (e.g. NEFUG), association of forest-based enterprise groups and organisation of women grassroots groups working in NRM sector (e.g. HIMAWANTI).

Global level actors include bilateral and multilateral donors and INGOs. They provide financial, technical, human and physical support to the government and non-state actors in order to assist local communities in the establishment and functioning of FUGs for affecting changes in people's livelihoods. The local communities consist of different actors with varying degrees of relationships and poverty. They include individual citizens, households and groups. There are elites, landless, migrant wage earners, illiterate, women/men, ethnic and caste groups, pastoralists and people with specific cultural identity (e.g. *raute*, *chepang*). There are poor and non-poor households. There are groups that range from FUGs, agriculture groups, health and non-formal education groups, savings/credit groups, mother groups and water groups. For CF operations, FUGs represent forest users at the local level. They, in collaboration with forest offices, line agencies, non-state actors, development projects, local government bodies (e.g. village development committees) and other community groups implement several development programmes. Although donors, government and non-state actors interact with each other for 'development' through CF, the patterns of exclusion of some social groups are observed at the FUGs level.

2.5 Dimensions of Exclusion in Community Forestry

The existing literature on CF in Nepal documents the exclusion of the poor, ethnic minority, indigenous people, *dalits*, landless pastoralists, and women. The nature of exclusion within FUGs differs between geographic regions and communities. However, there are some general patterns of exclusion. One of the biggest problems of CF is the skewed distribution of benefits between class, gender and caste/ethnicity influenced by the domination of male, high-caste and social elites in decision-making positions on FUG executive committees. This section reviews literature on the dynamics and micro-level causes of exclusions. The dimensions of exclusions in FUG operations are economic, political and social.

2.5.1 Economic dimension

The poor, *dalits* and ethnic minorities are excluded from tapping economic opportunities. FUGs generate income from forests and non-forest activities (membership fees, fines/penalties, donations, interest, rewards and grants) (Kanel 2004; Shrestha and Khadka 2004). A study from 369 FUGs from 17 hill districts shows that the average annual income for the year 1994/95 was US\$ 340 per FUG (Hunt et al. 1996 in Thapa 2000: 48). FUGs spend large amounts of income in community development activities (temples, electricity lines, schools, drinking water, and health care), forest management and FUG office administration. These activities do not benefit the poor as most of these activities meet the interests of elites who dominate FUG executive committees (Malla 2000; Rai Paudyal 2008; Koirala 2007). Case studies show that only about three per cent of annual income of FUGs goes to pro-poor activities (Kanel 2004; Shrestha and Khadka 2004).

Various authors describe examples of inequitable access to and use of forest resources. Data on timber distribution within FUGs shows the unequal consumption of timber between different economic groups (Iversen et al. 2006; Koirala 2007). The poor households use less timber than the elite class do. This is mainly due to the difference in needs between them and livelihood strategies. The poor need small poles for building houses and lack money to buy poles when needed. In contrast, the rich and middle class people use timber for building houses, furniture and store timber for future use (Koirala 2007). Better-off households

benefit from access to economically valuable timber at a lower price than the market provides (Iversen et al. 2006; Koirala 2007). Iversen et al. (2007) argue that the hidden economy of FUGs reinforced unequal power relationships and inequity in community forest use.

Limited access to private land for the poor affects their capacity to own livestock. Families who have a large number of cattle have been able to use greater amounts of forest products than the households who have only a few or no cattle (Adhikari et al. 2004). Moreover, in some villages, fuel wood requirements for the elite and poor families from community forests differ: typically an elite household will require about 5 headloads whilst a poor family would need about and 45 head loads (Timala 1999). This is because elites in the study village draw fuel wood mostly from private land whilst the poor rely entirely on government forests. The arbitrary supply of eight head loads per household resulted in inequitable benefits. The poor complied to meet the deficit through other means such as buying from landowners or stealing from government forests.

CF creates the opportunity for income from the sale of forest products. However, the poor and *dalits* are affected negatively. A household generates on average 7.4 per cent of total household income from selling products from community forests. The elite members benefit most from this income (Khanal-Chhetri 2005: 58). Some poor families are self-excluded because of the high membership fees and annual levies charged by FUGs (Rai Paudyal 2008). Poor households and *dalits* who were making their livelihood by selling firewood and charcoal production had to change their occupation (Dev et al. 2003, 2004). FUG policies did not account for the collection and selling of firewood by the poor.

Women, especially poor women, are compelled to go to other forests because of restrictions on firewood collection in their community forests (Agarwal 2001). Access to resources and economic opportunity under current CF policies are inadequate to address the needs and abilities of the poor (Dhakal 2005; Dhakal et al. 2007). Based on analysis of the distribution of forest products from community-managed forests, Maharjan (2003) concludes that community forest management in Nepal is making rich people richer and poor people poorer. When the poor have access to forests, they pay relatively higher amounts in fines/penalties. The community forest use system has not met the firewood requirements of the poor, who lack an alternative source of energy for cooking. They rely

on community forests and collect firewood illegally thereby paying more in fines (Timsina 2003a).

The literature also reveals the neglect of basic rights of pastoralists. In high mountain areas, some pastoralists such as sheepherders have no access to grazing inside community forests where they used to have access before (Winrock 2002). FUGs charge excessive fees for allowing cattle to pass through community forests and they do not allow sheep to graze (Bhatta 2002).

The protection-oriented forest management system of most FUGs stopped the harvesting of leaf fodder, which is important for the poor, although fodder trees in community forests are plentiful (Gautam and Shivakoti 2005). There has been a reduction in fodder and firewood supplies (Malla 2000; Malla et al. 2003). This has a direct implication for poor households who have to rely on common resources. The conservation-oriented attitude of forestry staff and protection-oriented forest management rules within FUGs caused limited use of community forests (Malla et al. 2003).

2.5.2 Political dimension

The poor, *dalits*, ethnic disadvantaged groups and women have no voice and lack effective political representation in FUGs. The high-caste and elite dominate the internal politics of FUGs (Adhikari 2008; Agarwal 2001; Koirala 2007; Lama and Buchy 2002; Rai Paudyal 2008; Timsina 2003a; Yadav et al. 2008). More than 60 per cent of FUG executive board members are from high castes and advantaged ethnic groups such as Newar (NACRMLP 2006) yet, they represent only about 40 per cent of the total population (CBS 2001). They hold the decision-making positions of the boards. As mentioned earlier, these groups also dominate the decision-making level of public administration in Nepal. Although there is no gender and caste/ethnicity disaggregated CF database in the DoF, data available from CF projects shows that there is a higher percentage of men in the executive bodies (75-61%) (NACRMLP 2006; NSCFP 2004b). The domination by high-caste and advantaged ethnic men in FUG politics is common, although FUGs are exposed to projects for many years. For example, only 34 of 807 FUGs in the Swiss funded project areas had women chairs in 2003 (see NSCFP 2004b).

The local elitism in decision-making influenced the harvesting, distribution and selling of forest resources, which eventually reduces access to

resources and markets by the poor and *dalits* (Dev et al. 2003; Malla et al. 2003; Rai Paudyal 2008; Timsina 2003a; Yadav et al. 2008). The study of gender dynamics in FUGs functioning reveals that women's exclusion in decision-making has negative implications for their access to forest resources (Agarwal 2001).

The limited skills of the grassroots CF facilitators to analyse social, political and economic marginalisation of the poor and other disadvantaged groups supports social injustice for the poor (Yadav et al. 2008; Hobley and Rai 2008). The reason for political exclusion of the poor, women, *dalits* and ethnic minority appear interconnected with social factors.

2.5.3 Social dimension

The social dimension of exclusion includes caste/ethnicity and gender-based social norms and values, perception and beliefs towards the role of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. The econometric analysis indicates that along with economic factors, the caste system and education status impact the membership in decision-making positions in FUGs (Adhikari 2008; Yadav et al. 2008). As a result, illiterate poor *dalits* have limited opportunity to attain leadership positions (ibid).

Perception, what Veneklasen and Miller (2007: 49) call "invisible power" contributes to exclusion in decision-making. Men, the high-caste and elites perceive negatively contributions from the poor, *dalits* and women's agencies to FUG activities including leadership positions (Agarwal 2001; Buchy and Subba 2003). Social norms that define gender roles such as domestic work and childcare as women's role and timber harvesting and off-farm work as men's role affected women's ability and opinions in CF activities (Agarwal 2001). The lack of respect for women, *dalits* and their capacity is the main issue of exclusion in the social sphere.

Literature also revealed that the caste relationships, gender roles and literacy/skills affected the ability of *dalits*, women and illiterate members of FUGs to exercise power in the management of community forests (Buchy and Rai Paudyal 2008; Chhetri and Nurse 1992; Lachapelle et al. 2004; Lama and Buchy 2002; Nightingale 2006; Yadav et al. 2008). As a result, high-caste women dominate *dalits* women, and men dominate women in the collection of forest products from community forests. The influence of single caste and gender in decision-making led to inequitable access to community forest resources and benefits. Although some level

of changes in social practices appear in some FUGs, such as *dalits* sitting and drinking together with upper caste people, most *dalits* do not have much influence in decision-making (Timsina 2003a). The caste system and gender relations also contributed to maintain personal networks between high-caste male members of FUGs and the government's forestry staff in deciding FUG rules about forest management (Nightingale 2002, 2006).

Ironically, the poor are often *de-facto* excluded by the implementation of an equality policy for the sharing of forest resources in FUGs (Dhakal 2005; Malla 2000; Tiwari 2002). The idea behind the policy is one of equality of inputs (labour, time, fees and price of forest products) and output (distribution of forest products). This practice affects the chronic and the extreme poor, as they have limited capability to pursue forest claim and gain access to make effective use of community forest resources.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter showed how the context of exclusion and inequality results historically from a combination of the social systems, poverty, state governance and forest policy practices. Social orders such as gender, caste/ethnicity and class relationships, political and social discrimination, remoteness and state's control over people contributed to exclusion of some people. The poor, *dalits*, pastoralists, disadvantaged ethnic groups, women and indigenous people are the most disadvantaged people in political economy of Nepali forestry and society in general. They suffer exclusion and extreme poverty from the state, social and FUG structures for political, socioeconomic and institutional reasons. They live in insecure environment in the sense that they have limited assets or entitlements (e.g. land, private forests, income, skills). They have limited influence over state's activities. They engage in low paid work. They suffer exclusion from benefits and decision-making in CF due to social values, norms, perception, education, social relations, limited capacity to seek forest claims and bargain with elites. The existing literature on CF in Nepal also points to policy problems. At their worst, CF policies contribute to exclusion. At their best, the policies ignore the factors that created exclusion and thus allow it to persist. The next chapter looks in detail at in-built exclusion in CF policies.

Notes

¹ The literal meaning of *dalit* in the Nepali dictionary is ‘the person who is suppressed’. In the context of South Asia, *dalit* is a common term used to address culturally, economically and socially marginalised individuals or communities (UNDP 2004: 179).

² *Birta* is land granted by the state to individuals on a tax free and hereditary basis. Originally, *birta* land was given by the state to individuals as a reward for bravery, especially in military action (Talbot and Khadka 1994: 5).

3

Modern Forest Policies and Structures: In-built Exclusion

3.1 Introduction

As the previous chapter showed, existing CF literature tends to focus on the implementation of CF policy and locates the cause of exclusion problems there. This literature tends to emphasise the strengths of existing policy frameworks, which are seen as participatory and democratic (Britt 2002; Gautam et al. 2004; Pokharel 1997; Sapkota 2000; Talbott and Khadka 1994). As stated in the theoretical chapter, exclusion can be caused by the policy itself, not just by the way policy is implemented. The first part of this chapter discusses exclusionary elements in current and past CF policy.

Policy evolves over time and it carries certain beliefs and assumptions about the problems of forest management and the relationships between people and the environment, which may not address the participation process sufficiently. Although contemporary views on CF policy focus on state-community relationships, policy might have affected the poor because of neglect of transformative participation in CF policy concepts. Looking at policy from a transformative change perspective is important when the political economy of the policy process plays a catalyst role in the operation of CF to reduce inequality in a society like Nepal. In Nepal more than 30 per cent of total population lives below the poverty line, 29 per cent is landless, and an individual's social relations determine her/his agency to access to and influence over natural resource as explained in chapter 2.

Not only policy, but also organisational structure and actors' dynamics of policy implementing agency have a role in exclusion/inclusion outcomes. As informed by institutional and organisational change theories (Goetz 1998; Hood 1998), there is a complex relationship between formal and informal rules and organisational arrangements and regular

patterns of behaviour. Organisational dynamics such as actors' diversity, expertise, education, social backgrounds, relationships and the level of influence within an organisation impact social outcomes (Goetz 1998). The DoF and the MFSC as key actors in the implementation of CF policy create social outcomes. However, the lack of actors' heterogeneity in the sector can affect the government of CF in inclusive ways. The composition of the state organisations charged with making and implementing CF policy is the subject of the second part of Chapter 3.

3.2 Forest Policy, Guidelines and Strategies

This section analyses the role of forest policies, guidelines and strategies in recognising the livelihood needs and policy measures to ensure the needs in the context within which castes/ethnicity, gender and class-based hierarchy, inequality and exclusion historically were established.

3.2.1 No access to forests in state centred policy

The Private Forest Nationalisation Act of 1957, The Forest Act of 1961 and the Special Forest Protection Act of 1967 entered into 'development' processes. These laws established the state's control over forests. These laws provided powers to the DoF for the protection of state forests and regulation of the use of those forests. Access to forests was restricted. These policies were powerful tools to take action against any suspected persons and many landless peasants (Pokharel 1997: 113). Since these laws legitimised policing and licencing roles of the forestry staff and focused on forest conservation, the poor and disadvantaged groups suffered the most. They were the target of the attentions of forest officials in policy practice. The local elites were able to exploit forest resources and to escape through influence and manipulation (Mahat et al. 1986).

Article 27 of the Forest Act of 1961 defined seven activities as forest offences. Forest clearing and/or shifting cultivation, forest fires, grazing, damaging forests while collecting forest products under a license, cutting of trees, plants or branches, stone quarries, charcoal collection and making, and forest product collection (MLJPA 1994). The act strengthened the decision-making power of the forest authority on the use and management of forest resources (Ojha 2006). Forestry officials were authorised to issue permits for tree harvesting and charge royalties. The district forest officer or his authorised staff had to hammer trees and investigate

before the person could obtain the timber (I. no. 11, GO, 3 May 2006). People in need of timber for domestic purposes had to spend resources (kind, cash), which were sometimes higher than the royalty was, in order to satisfy the forest authority (I. no. 25, civil society, 12 November 2006). The royalties and bribes, as well as the bureaucratic procedures made it more difficult for the extreme poor to approach forest officials. The Forest Act of 1961 introduced the concept of “user committee” and “user group” to establish community forests with the main interest of forest conservation (MLJPA 1994). However, the power to decide the roles and responsibilities of the group or committee rested with forestry officials.

To strengthen control over forest resources by the DoF, the Government of Nepal (GoN) enacted a special Forest Protection Act of 1967. The act provided judicial power to forestry officials as law enforcing actors. The Act of 1967 allowed forest officers to shoot offenders below the kneecap if they jeopardised the life or health of forest officials (MLJPA 1994). This provision still exists under article 56 of the Forest Act of 1993. The Act identified nine activities as forest offences. Activities such as destruction and change of forest boundary pillars, damaging plants and fences in plantation areas and changing and/or damaging ‘official mark’ hammered on timber or trees, and removing forest products beyond the terms and conditions of forest license were the additional offences to the previous 7 offences in the Forest Act of 1961. The Forest Act of 1967 included ‘non-woody’ plants and ‘stumps’ in the definition of trees. Both of these products were the source of livelihood for the poor and *dalits*. While the non-woody plants were the main source of medicine and food, stumps produced charcoal for blacksmiths for artisan metalwork. The act included a provision of reward to those who helped in the identification of offenders.

All these policies developed based on the assumption that local land use practices and people were the sources for deforestation (Gautam et al. 2004) and on the need to practice scientific forest management. The policies benefited state authorities (Chhetri 2006). These policies were the beginning of exclusion in modern forestry, as the tendency of these policies was to control people’s access to forests and use forests for conservation and production purposes. The policies excluded the basic rights of the poor, ethnic groups, *dalits* and women to access forest re-

sources by restricting the use of basic forest products such as collection of charcoal and leaf litter.

3.2.2 People as tools: first CF policy model

The National Forestry Plan of 1976 was the first policy to formalise ‘people's participation’ in forestry. It recognised ‘people’ and their representative political institution at the grassroots such as ‘Panchayat’ as ‘tools’ for creating and maintaining ecosystems.

The Plan defined the Panchayat Forest as ‘community’ or ‘government land planted and protected by the Panchayat’ (NAFP 1982: 15). The role of the Panchayat was an intermediary to seek people’s involvement in forest promotion activities and coordinate with forestry officials to obtain technical and material support. A reading of strategies of the DoF highlights scientific ideology that dominated forest management at the time.

Likewise, the nature of forests development activities is framed within a scientific ideology. The Plan identified 14 activities. None of which include the social aspects of forest management, although the forestry development vision in the Plan used the terms ‘social’ and ‘economic’. The activities focused on the creation of biophysical resources, conservation of ecologically sensitive areas and sensitisation and mobilisation of people in conservation. The Plan called for international cooperation to increase scientific expertise, techniques and physical support (NAFP 1982: 36-74).

Some argue that the forestry plan is the first attempt of the forestry sector to recognise the role of communities in forest management (Gautam et al. 2004; Pokharel 1997). The idea of people’s participation in forestry developed only as a social duty to improve forests in highly degraded areas when government had no human resources to protect forests. Moreover, the Plan developed under the assumptions that human pressure causes degradation of forests and ecosystems. The incentives provided to communities in the Plan were free seedlings, technical assistance and rewards to both individuals and organisations to motivate them to create plantations. The first CF plan saw people as a tool of environmental conservation, which ultimately added on extra costs to the the poor and chronic poor.

In 1977, the GoN amended article 32 of the Forest Act of 1961 to include the provision of the Panchayat Forest (PF) and Panchayat Pro-

tected Forest (PPF). The PF and PPF discourses formalised 'Community Forestry' in 1978 after the promulgation of the PF rule 1978 and the PPF rule 1978. The definition of community forest in these policies differs in terms of forest stocking, size and benefit sharing. The PF refers to community forests with fewer trees and requires two-thirds plantations in the forest area. A Panchayat is eligible for 125 hectares of forest area for the creation of the PF. Income from the sale of forest products from PF will go to the Panchayat treasury. The PPF refers to community forests, which need protection and/or partial planting. Each Panchayat is entitled to 500 hectares of forest for the creation of PPF. Seventy-five per cent of the income from the sale of forest products from PPF will go to Panchayat treasury and 25 per cent to the Government treasury (Manandhar 1982: 8-9).

The CF rules conceptualised participation as 'plantation' and 'protection' to be carried out by people with the technical and material services of forest officials. It maintained the power of the DoF. For example, Panchayats, which managed community forests, had to comply with a number of functions under the supervision of the DFOs. This included plantations within three years of community forest handover, protection of the forest, acting according to the Plan of operation formulated by forest offices, planting after the sale of forest products from community forests, managing financial records, submitting an annual report to forest office and following forest directives (Manandhar 1982). The PF/PPF rules allowed Panchayats to sell forest products and credit the income to the fund of the concerned Panchayat, but only after spending at least 50 per cent of the total income on forests in the case of PF. The policy ignored the way the income would improve the economic condition of the poor or landless. When PF/PPF rules recognised forest marketing, it did not ensure the basic needs of the low-income family and artisan metalworkers before Panchayats sold their products. There was no discussion of these rules regarding the use of forest resources or revenue to meet the needs of the poor or those dependent on forest resources.

The initial CF policy and plan formally maintained people's exclusion in several ways. It helped the DoF to regulate people. While the policy recognised people's role in conservation, it ignored the need of the poor and other forest dependent social groups. Significantly, the policy created an alliance between local elites and officials. An experienced elite who has been with local forest management since 1966 recalled, 'We had to

participate in plantation and protection according to the order of Panchayat leader. Panchayat leaders were made accountable towards the forest officials rather than people' (I. no. 25, civil society, 12 November 2006).

3.2.3 Instrumental participation: forestry master plan

The next major development in forestry policy was the Forestry Master Plan of 1988. This plan defines a comprehensive strategic framework for forestry intervention. The Plan sets up five long-term and three medium-term objectives. It identifies 12 development programmes to attain the objectives in which community and private forestry receive high priority (MFSC 1988c: 10). The long-term objectives such as to meet the people's basic needs for forest products on a sustainable basis and the medium-term objective to promote people's participation in forestry resource development, management and conservation were not intended for the poor and socially excluded groups. The focus of participation was to organise local people into user groups, to maintain the ecological system and encourage local users to meet their basic needs with forest products.

The Forestry Master Plan of 1988 defines four pillars of development as instruments to achieve political, social, economical and ecological outcomes. These include satisfaction of basic needs, sustainable use of forest resources, participation in decision-making, sharing benefits and socioeconomic growth (MFSC 1988b: 8). These pillars did not explain how forestry as a discipline could transform into tackling these socially focused strategic frameworks. Like the previous policy, the Master Plan blames the livelihood activities of the peasants on the problem of deforestation. 'The main causes of forest degradation are over cutting of wood for fuel and heavy lopping of trees for fodder' (MFSC 1988a: 31).

The role of fodder in livelihood is overlooked while articulating policy problems. The farmer's practice of obtaining tree fodder by careful lopping enhances fodder productivity (Bandhyopadhyay and Moench 1985 in Agarwal 1989: WS57). At the same time, the Master Plan encouraged trees on private land. For example, the Master Plan projected the establishment of plantations on 48000 hectares of private land during 1990-91 (MFSC 1988c: 14).

The Master Plan identified six supportive development programmes policy/legal, institutional, human resources, resource information, re-

search/extension and monitoring/evaluation within the forestry sector. These were the foundation for implementing six primary development programmes including CF. While all the supportive programmes intended to change the attitude of forestry sector, staff and policy practices to implement CF effectively, none of the supportive programmes discussed the relationship between staff social skills, knowledge and CF outcomes at the grassroots.

The Master Plan recognised for the first time the need to involve women and the poor in CF activities. Although not in the main report of the 1988 plan, the summary report published in 1989 recommended that at least one-third of the members of FUG executive boards should be women (MFSC 1989). This policy provision does not reference the fact that the social relations and chronic poverty could limit the influence of women on the executive board.

Moreover, in the thinking of forestry planners, women were actors responsible for population growth, which has negative implications on forests. It reinforces technical beliefs in participation process. 'Since the main collectors and users of forest produce are women, the forestry sector could lend credibility to programs involving women and family planning, by emphasizing women's role in community forestry and extension' (MFSC 1988a: 118).

The Master Plan symbolises a historical shift in Nepali forestry, as it provided a new direction for CF development. The Plan supported shift away from the participation of people with a few permitted rights (e.g. political representatives) engaged in forest plantations to participation of users of forests (natural and planted) with 'rights' to manage forest resources. However, many see the Plan as a reference point to institutionalise instrumental forms of participation. The view of women and the poor are as 'users', 'manager' and 'wood cutters'. The concept offers them no civil rights of participation. Moreover, the Plan fails to indicate how social and political relations affect access to resources and opportunities by the poor, *dalits* and other disadvantaged groups in community forest management (Buchy and Subba 2003).

The Master Plan institutionalised the "user group" approach as an appropriate CF model for the protection, development and sustainable use of local forests (Gautam et al. 2004: 139). The emergence of the multi-party democratic government in the early 1990s legitimised FUG discourse through the passage of the Forest Act of 1993 and the Forest

Rule of 1995.¹ As we shall see, this legislation maintains exclusion in many ways.

3.2.4 Maintaining unequal power through current CF legislation

Some CF concepts in current forest laws (MFSC 1995) by definition ignore social issues and maintain unequal power relationships. The fundamental goal of CF in the Forest Act of 1993 is the development, conservation and utilisation of community managed forests for the collective interest (article 2 of the Forest Act of 1993 in *ibid*). CF is not a process to tackle social equity and exclusion issues or inequalities within the FUGs.

The forest laws deliberately exclude the landless and migrant wage earners (Bird 2001). The definition of 'users' uses 'traditional users' and 'geographical proximity' as determinants for inclusion of people in FUGs. Since traditional users imply those people residing historically in villages and using nearby forests, it does not permit landless and migrant wage earners to qualify as members of FUG (*ibid*). The definition of 'FUG handover criteria' such as the distance between the forest and the villages and willingness and capacity to manage forests (article 26, the Forest Rule of 1995 in MFSC 1995) supports exclusion. Because this policy gives priority to environment over people, it reinforces social networks of local elites along with powerful staff of the DoF, as the former can afford time to approach forest officers by showing community interest in forest management. The greater focus on 'community' as spatial and homogenous social structure with shared interests to contribute to conservation as the basis for forest handover symbolises deep held interests of the forestry sector to value instrumental approach to CF development and scientific forestry ideology in natural resource management. The 12 elements required in the forest management plan of FUG stated in the Forest Rule of 1995 is further evidence of the emphasis of the sector on scientific values.

FUGs and their members are not empowered through CF. Users have more power than under the previous Panchayat-driven model but the real power still lies with the DoF. Legislation recognises people's usufruct rights as well as roles and responsibilities towards forest resources but they do not have the freedom to make choices about trees, plants and forestry development plans. The legislation sets-up a 'power over' relationship between the forest department and the community in

several ways. Local users who want to manage community forests have to prepare a 'constitution' and a 'forest operational plan'. The head of the district forest office has the power to approve these policies. An operational plan is a forest management plan that describes the community forest and prescribes silvicultural practices, rules on forest protection, harvesting of forest resources, pricing and distribution within and outside FUG and community development activities. There is no requirement to address social equity in the plans nor do DoF guidelines see a place for this. Social equity is not among these provisions in CF legislation.

As in PF/PPF rules of 1978, the provisions in the recent forest legislation make FUGs accountable to the DoF by maintaining records and reporting annually. A FUG has to maintain at least seven types of documents: records of forest products sold, income and expenditures; receipts for forest product sales, forest product transportation permits, audit reports, annual progress reports, constitution and operational plan (MFSC 1995). For predominantly illiterate people inexperienced with administration processes, these procedures can be inappropriate. Administrative hurdles seem antithetical to a programme that targets the poor and most disadvantaged (Talbot and Khadka 1994: 12). FUGs can fix prices and use 100 per cent of the benefits, but have to inform the forest authority about the sale price and follow the forest operational plan while utilising and selling forest products, although the former can fix the price of forest products.

While the Forest Act of 1993 recognises the FUG as an autonomous and corporate body (article 43, the Forest Act of 1993 in MFSC 1995), there is no specific measure to address decision-making about excluded groups in FUG administration. The concept of 'corporate' stresses the promotion of economic opportunities at the FUG level, but it ignores the inclusion of the excluded in the management of the opportunity. For example, a FUG may be an entrepreneur and manage its funds. It can collect funds from five different sources including grants and donations. As elites dominate the administration of the FUG, the executive committee excludes the poor. This led some to call for strengthening the FUG general body (Tiwari 2002). Since the executive committee represents general users, access to the committee by the excluded groups is their political right. However, the FUGs recreate societal inequalities. CF legislation does not call for representation by members of various

caste/ethnicity, class and gender in decision-making structure as a way to overcome inequalities in society. Importantly, the legislation is conceptually silent about power relationships between people within FUG.

The application of CF legislation also maintains exclusion. For instance, the constitution of FUGs defines membership based on 'household head'. Defining 'household head' as a member of FUG excludes women, as men own the household in most rural families. Similarly, fees defined for user membership and forest protection measures exclude the poor, although fees are low (Rai Paudyal 2008). The FUG constitution defines the role/responsibility of FUG general members and executive boards. The board has the responsibility for relationship building with and communication of their plans, progress and policies with the DoF, development agencies and other line agencies. Nowhere does the Forest Rule of 1995 states that participation/decision-making is a requirement or explains how to include the illiterate in deciding the roles/responsibilities of FUGs and their participation on executive boards. A study in the *terai* shows that a FUG maintains 32 types of records for FUG administration and account management (ODG and NORMS 2003: 190). This documentation practice can show the 'institutional maturity' at the grassroots CF. Nevertheless, it is not conducive for the poor and socially disadvantaged members of FUGs in assuming leadership positions in it.

3.2.5 Recent change in CF legislation: reinforcing ideological power

Forestry power dominates in CF legislation, when the GoN and the forest ministry make forest decisions. The MFSC made 16 policy decisions between 1998 and 2004 (Timsina et al. 2004: 552-4). These decisions all affirm natural science as the dominant consideration in forest management. In 1998, the GoN amended the Forest Act of 1993 to strengthen the power of the DoF over community forest management. For example, the district forest officer can punish FUG officeholders for violations against the provision of 1993 Forest Act and 1995 Forest Rule, and FUG's constitution and forest operational plan (Article 27, sub clause-1 Ka, sub clause-3 of Forest Act 1993 in MFSC 1995). The amendment also requires FUGs to spend at least 25 per cent of their funds on forestry activities and the remaining on other community development activities (article 30-Ka, Forest Act of 1993 in MFSC 1995).

Interviews show that two factors embedded within ‘scientific forestry’ resulted in this policy change. First, forestry officials consider ‘development’ unscientific when FUGs spend funds for community development activities, even though the community planned and implemented the activities. A forest official reported that lack of focus by FUGs on forests while spending funds formed the basis for policy change. He remarked, ‘FUGs started to misuse collective funds. They used the funds on administration, health equipment, community utensils, and school activities. These activities are not forestry work. The percentage of expenditure became low in forest development’ (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006).

Forestry decision-makers were aware of the misuse of forest income in two FUGs. A large portion of money generated from selling economically valued timber went to road construction and drinking water. This information became a supportive factor to create a policy that at least 25 per cent of total annual income has to be spent on forest management activities (I. no. 55, project, 10 July 2006).

Second, following the inclusion of fund allocation for forestry activities in the Forest Act of 1993, the MFSC circulated a directive on forest inventory in 2000 in which FUGs must have forest inventory before they remove forest products from their community forests.

In July 2003, the Ministry of Finance promulgated a financial ordinance that compelled FUGs to put 40 per cent of the income accrued from selling forest products into the government’s treasury fund and to spend the remaining on forest and other community development activities (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006). CF non-state actors including donors heavily criticised this policy and reasoning. FUGs’ federation namely FECOFUN appealed to the Supreme Court to challenge the policy. Politicians were sensitised on the policy and its possible implications on FUG development (I. no. 24, civil society, 22 February 2006). Donors also pressured the MFSC to amend the policy. Finally, the Supreme Court considered the FUGs’ federation appeal and decided that the 40 per cent tax was inappropriate. The financial ordinance then amended the policy for a 15 per cent tax on *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) and *Khair* (*Acacia catechu*) (high economic value tree species). The provision also stresses that the remaining income go to forest conservation, development, environment protection and local development activities. After 30 years of hard work on protection and reforestation, forests are now valuable capi-

tal and thus the value of taxing profit became interesting for the government. However, in many places community managed forests have limited economic returns and levying a tax is a huge disincentive.

The motive of the MFSC to amend CF legislation rests with strengthening the focus on production and conservation as described earlier. This tendency reveals the limited scope of change within the MFSC in order to operate the CF discourse through transformation of traditional forestry ideology.

3.2.6 Missing social concepts in CF operational guidelines

Like CF policies and legislation, the CF operational guidelines do not emphasise social goals of CF. The CF development guideline of the DoF provides the procedural norms for governing FUGs. It does little to change the behaviour role of the DoF. The guideline is a practical instrument for the implementation of CF policy (Buchy and Rai Paudyal 2008). It focuses on the process of FUG formation including planning of the 'constitution' and 'forest operational plan' required for *de-facto* legitimacy of FUGs by the DoF. The guidelines describe some procedures for including women and the poor in forming FUGs and how to develop a programme suited to them (CFD 2001). The methodology, however, does not include an analysis of the specific constraints encountered by the excluded in gaining forest access and use. 'Women' and 'the poor' are mentioned only as categories of users with different needs. The problems do not arise in the context of 'gender' or 'equity' concepts (Buchy and Rai 2008).

The DoF staff and NGO facilitators using the CF guidelines recognise its inadequacy to conceptualise social equity in local forest resource management. A respondent from the forest department reported, 'The CF development guidelines talk about the need for participation of women and the poor in FUG formation process, but the guidelines do not explain the way gender relations at household level affects their participation' (I. no. 78, GO, 10 October 2006).

Another respondent from non-state actors added that:

The content and audience of the CF development guidelines have evolved over time. The guidelines developed in 1995 targeted field staff of the forest department and focused mainly on technical issues. The guidelines revised in 2001 targeted more audiences such as ranger and forest guards, social mobilisers and CF facilitators from government, projects and

NGOs. It is relatively the poor and women oriented. However, the guidelines do not explain gender concepts (I. no. 35, NGO, 10 May 2006).

Government field officers also informed the lack of attention on social differentiation in the guidelines and argued that the guideline design process was an impediment to tackling social issues. An official expressed his experience as:

The process of making guidelines is not bottom-up.... The guidelines do not focus on social and forest resource diversity while assessing the needs of people and FUGs.... Field staff who are experienced with local context and problems are not considered as actors in the designing of the guidelines (I. no. 78, GO, 10 October 2006).

As discussed in chapter 7, power relationships and facilitation of donors at the policy level have direct linkages with the exclusion of field staff and their knowledge not only in defining policy but also in the development of implementation strategies.

Available CF literature considers the lack of sufficient work force in the DoF to provide services to FUGs as barriers of social change. They argue for the need to enhance the capacity of FUGs and other actors to see CF beyond trees and biophysical resources (Pokharel 1997; Smith 2004; Upadhyaya 2002). In the political economy of CF, CF strategies that connect government staff with society are also equally important.

3.2.7 Exclusion from dominant CF strategies

Some CF strategies by definition exclude the poor due to their social and economic inability to grasp the opportunity created through the strategies (Koirala 2007; Rai Paudyal 2008). Some strategies include them, but exclude them in social and institutional aspects. Two strategies such as the promotion of plantations and pro-poor income generation can be analysed to explore the dynamics of exclusion created through CF strategies. Introduced by AusAID and SDC, plantation strategy received top priority in interventions since the 1970s. Implanted by DFID, pro-poor income generation has been the key strategy since 2000.

Between the 1970s and the 1990s, the sector and donors considered plantations instrumental in tackling deforestation and poverty with the assumption that plantations would lead to access to fuel wood, fodder, poles and timber by rural peasants, which in turn would improve their agriculture productivity (see Jenkin et al. 1978; Griffin 1978; World Bank

1978; MFSC 1988a; DRCFDP 1991). The CF actors practiced four major mechanisms to implement plantations. These include requirement of villager's voluntary labour on plantations and its protection against grazing and fire, free distribution of seedlings, grants for plantation and natural regeneration protection and mass awareness about conservation. Since 2000, plantation of non-timber forest products in community forests, public wasteland and private land has been emphasised as a source of financial capital for the poor. These mechanisms however affect the excluded in many ways. The elites had access to free goods (seedlings), as they mostly owned private land. As seen in other contexts, plantations and plantation subsidy policies become counterproductive to poor farmers (Arnold 2001). The plantation created an extra economic burden for the poor, because they lose a day's wage when they work for the FUG. They lose access to grazing when forests are closed for protection. The poor and *dalits* do not have a voice in forests opening, use and distribution of forest resources (Rai Paudyal 2008).

Plantations satisfied the forestry decision-makers, as it meets their professional interests as expressed in the following: 'I began to enjoy when we [Nepali and expatriate foresters] intensified plantation and forest nurseries work in the 1980s. We used to review villager's interests in plantations and make plans for nursery and plantation activities' (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006).

The technical issues related to plantations became central to the agenda of forest decision-makers even when they were involved in the impact assessment of CF intervention. Their limited knowledge to link plantations with social, economic and institutional benefits to the poor and *dalits* is reflected in the impact study carried out by the MFSC with aid support. In FY 1996/97, a team of 15 forestry officials of the MFSC monitored development activities in 28 FUGs in 18 districts (MFSC 1997). Throughout the report, techno-scientific knowledge dominates while analysing local CF issues. For example, they focused on the FUG's contribution to plantation protection, survival rate, grazing, site quality and fines/penalties against seedling damage. Social issues embedded within plantations or forest improvement and resource distribution were absent. Instead, they acknowledged, forest protection measures practiced by FUGs for example cash contributions for forest watchers, restrictions on grazing and the role of FUG chair to sensitise others about forest protection.

In addition, plantation strategy maintains 'patron-client' relationships at the village level. Plantation work requires good coordination between the forest offices and FUGs. Local elites who dominate the FUGs end up developing better relationships and connections with the forestry staff, which consolidates their dominance within FUGs. When local elite act as intermediary between the government, projects and FUGs, local society tends to view them as 'people with high-social status'. On the part of government, plantation agreement helps conceptualise the forest office as legal body of CF. Thus, both the local elite and the forest officials interplay with power in the work place.

A few scholars in the 1980s pointed out the exclusionary nature of plantation programmes claiming that projects predefined people's need by setting its goal on the assumption that plantations reflect people's needs and priorities. These scholars suggested making CF sensitive to social problems (see Bajracharya 1983) by understanding and linking issues. The equity issue such as whether the needs of the poor will be met from private planting was raised by project staff in the late 1980s (Malla and Fisher 1988). It seems no one followed up on these suggestions. Actions of donor staff and the way they understand poverty supported the sideline of the equity agenda in the policy discourse (see chapters 4 and 7).

Unlike plantations, recently practiced pro-poor income generation strategy intended to help the poor. The key concept of the pro-poor income strategy includes facilitating better access to income generation opportunity by the identified poor families (DoF 2006). Nevertheless, the strategy gives less priority to deconstruct local poverty. Social hierarchy and relations are crucial issues that exclude the poor, ethnic disadvantaged groups, *dalits* and women in securing economic opportunities, as discussed in chapter 2. These aspects are not conceptualised in the pro-poor income generation strategy. The strategy includes three ways that attempt to increase income of the poor. It assists FUGs to make pro-social forest operational plans and a constitution, establishes and operates community forest-based enterprises and directs access to project services by the poor such as 'livelihood grant, skill development training'.

Although these activities included some groups among the excluded, strategically it supports exclusion. It lacks policy measures on creation of space for participation of the poor, *dalits*, ethnic disadvantaged, indige-

nous people and pastoralists in forest-based enterprise promotions. Likewise, supported by donor money, pro-poor income generation activities focus on immediate physical needs of the poor who lack resources. It includes channelling livelihood funds to them through FUGs and assisting FUGs in preparing livelihood programmes. This strategy misses the issue of difference and respecting otherness, which is essential for aid effectiveness from institutional perspective (Eyben 2007). Moreover, the strategy assumes that the lack of income and capacity blocks the poor to participate in CF (I. no. 76, GO, 22 November 2006). This assumption enhances the capacity of CF actors to recognise 'poverty' in single dimension in which 'resources' rather than 'people', and 'social relations' receive high priority in CF development process.

Targeting the poor, the income generation strategy has been identified as counterproductive. Although more research is needed, a recent joint study of DFID and SDC-Nepal undertaken to understand the impact of income-based poverty reduction development approach on the poor reveals the failure of targeting programmes in which the poor are marginalised (Hobley and Rai Paudyal 2008). The income generation strategy sidelines the poor at the policy level because the social capacity to deal with poverty has not been conceptualised in the forestry sector's institutions. Also shown in chapter 5, decision-makers of the sector are not ready to accept the fact that social aspects are a part of forestry.

Recent research in India shows the loss of food security and income by tribal groups even when the Joint Forest Management Programme with donor support adopted an off-farm income strategy for the poor (Reddy et al. 2007). This finding informs of the need to consider institutional aspects of CF in pro-poor intervention. Conceptualising 'poverty' from targeting ideology increases inequality, unless it gives equal priority in power issues operating in an intervention (Eyben 2007). However, CF development strategy on pro-poor income has underestimated this dimension.

In conclusion, CF policy, plans, legislation and strategies create and maintain active exclusion, as they ignore conceptualising excluded groups as important actors for sustainable forest management. Policy and legislation do not go far enough to address exclusion even if it focuses on participation. Organisational arrangement and actors' behaviour and structure of policy implementing have linkages in determining social outcomes. The section below will look at this.

3.3 Actors Relationships within the Forestry Sector

The hierarchy and dominance of forestry seen in the policies and rules also appear in the institutional structure. Actors' dynamics such as expertise, position, education, style of administration, information and relationships make up the forest department and the forestry sector. As argued by Goetz (1998) and Rao et al. (1999) these aspects determine social outcomes in an intervention.

Table 3.1
Actors in the forestry sector, Nepal

Category Actors	Male (No.)	Female (No.)	Total		Women (% of total category)
			No.	%	
Level					
Officer level staff	534	25	559	7	0.4
Non-officer level	7736	267	8003	93	3
Education					
Technical science*	5555	185	5740	67	2.2
Non-technical science	2715	107	2822	33	1.2
Ranks					
1 st class officer	27	0	27	0.3	0
2 nd class officer	137	1	138	1.6	0
3 rd class officer	370	24	394	5	0.3
Non-officer	7736	267	8003	93	3.1
Roles					
Foresters (officer level)	423	8	431	5	0.1
Other technical officers**	111	17	128	1	0.2
Forest ranger (non-officer)	1515	84	1599	19	0.9
Forest guards/skilled foresters	3506	76	3582	42	0.9
Administrative staff	2715	107	2822	33	1.3
Total no. of staff	8270	292	8562	100	
% of total	96.6	3.4		100	

Source: Annual reports of the DoF (2000 to 2005), and other departments of the MFSC

* Forest management experts, soil scientists, botanists, agriculturists, engineers, wildlife biologists, conservationists, research scientists and forest technicians

** Agriculturists, botanists, chemists and engineers working in the department of soil and water conservation and the department of plant resources

3.3.1 Actor structure within the forestry sector

Dominated by technical science, the forestry sector structure hinges on actors based on levels, ranks, education backgrounds and roles.

Table 3.1 shows stratification of actors within the forestry sector along four dimensions: professional level, education, rank/position and role/expertise. Overall, men dominate the forestry sector in Nepal. They make up 97 per cent of total staff. Ninety-three per cent of total staff is non-officer level. Technical professionals outnumber the administrative staff. Women are mostly in low-rank positions, as they occupy only 0.5 per cent of total officer level staff. Women make up 1.5 per cent of total foresters. There are no women in the first and second-rank positions.

3.3.2 Actor hierarchy within the forestry sector

The forestry sector is very hierarchical in a way that labels low-ranking actors as ‘the follower’ of their superior who wants to operate with power hierarchy (I. no. 85, GO, 2 May 2006). Figure 3.1 provides a schematic representation of the forest hierarchy.

The MFSC, the DoF and the CF division at the central level represent the policymaking body of the forestry sector. They represent the interests and activities of the state in relation to forest management. The regional forest directorate and DFOs with its sub-branches (Ilaka and Range posts) constitute field level actors.

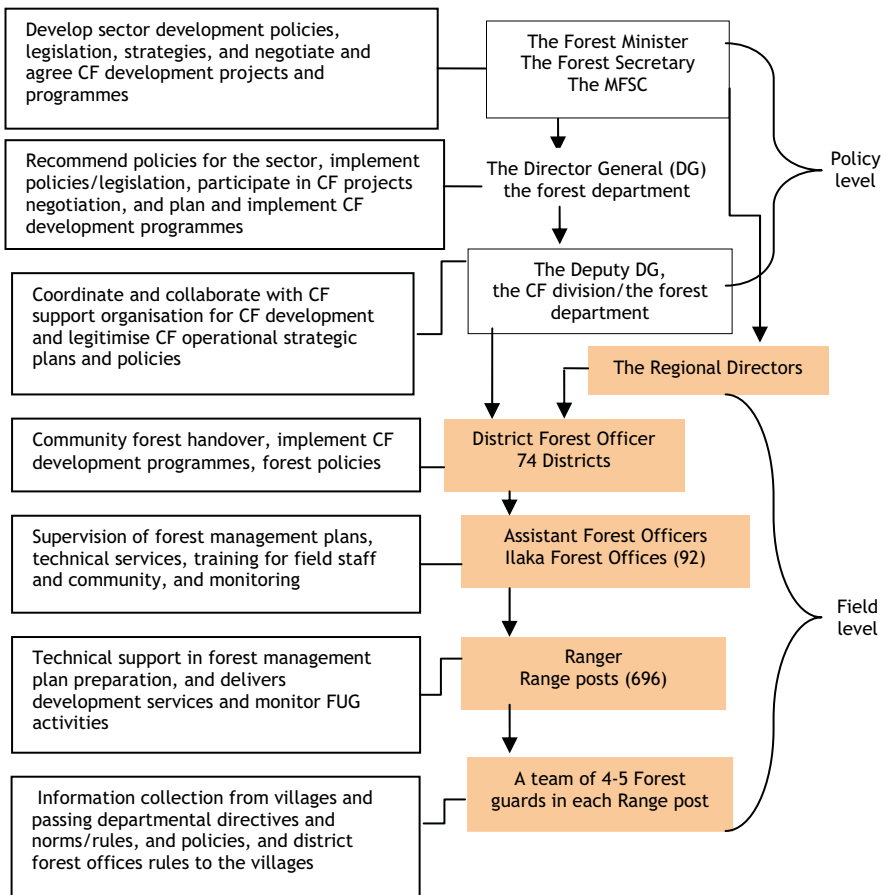
While the MFSC develops policies, legislation, strategic plans and directives, negotiates and agrees to CF projects, the DoF and the CF division are responsible for recommending policies and plans for the sector and for CF development and implementation. Significant authority and decision-making power remain at the head of the MFSC, the DoF and the CF division regarding CF development and forestry administration. For example, extension of expatriate visas and project approval depends on the recommendation of these officials (I. no. 85, GO, 2 May 2006).

Hierarchy also exists between and within five sub-offices of the sector (shaded boxes in fig 3.1). The staff of regional offices have more power than district level offices. Within district offices, the district forest officer has power to approve forest management and constitution of FUGs. Assistant forest officers, rangers and forest guards are dependent on district forest officers to take action on forest management and delivery of development resources (e.g. plantation grant, training plan, budget and FUG enterprises). Although forest guards constitute the major work-

force of the forest department who have direct contact with the community (Pokharel 1997), they stand in low status by education qualification, expertise of social facilitation and advisory role related to implementation of FUG plans.

Actors within the forestry sector work in a hierarchical style. This supports works against inclusionary outcomes, as the hierarchical style of public management is non-participatory and exclusionary (Hood 1998).

Figure 3.1
Actors hierarchy in CF development, the forestry sector



3.3.3 Caste/ethnicity in the forestry sector

Data show that senior staff of the DoF and MFSC belong primarily to high-castes (Brahmin and Chhetri) and Newar-*advantaged ethnic group* (original emphasis DFID and World Bank 2006: 63). Table 3.2 gives an example of unequal position of forest officers by caste/ethnicity, gender and regions within the forest department.

Table 3.2
Forest officers in the department of forest

Gender	Terai	Hills	Total		Caste/ethnicity			
			No.	%	Low caste	High caste*	Ethnic group	Minority**
Male	62	190	252	98	2	233	15	2
Female	1	4	5	2	0	5	0	0
Total	63	194	257	100	2	238	15	2
%	25	75			nominal	93	6	nominal

Source: Institute of Forestry (IoF), Pokhara 2006

* high caste including ethnic advantaged (Newar)

** Religious minority (e.g. Muslim)

Hill foresters occupy 75 per cent of total officers (while hill dwellers are only 40 per cent of the Nepali population). Caste/ethnic composition in the DoF is disproportionate. The high-caste and Newar who make up 40 per cent of the total population share 93 per cent of officer positions in the DoF. *Dalits* with 12 per cent total populace have nominal representation in the DoF. Disadvantaged ethnic groups including religious minorities (e.g. Muslims) who together constitute more than 40 per cent of the total population occupy about six per cent of the positions. By gender, men dominate. Disproportionate staffing by caste/ethnicity also shows in non-officer field staff of the DoF (see Pokharel 1997).

Compared to the forestry sector, CF projects are relatively heterogeneous in staffing, but projects do not have influence to improve the deeply held homogeneity and hierarchical style of management in the sector. There is no trickle up in projects. Foresters hold most of the power in the project. The majority of women staff on projects are at the

implementation level. The sector interacts with CF projects at the policy level. The process of social interaction within and between organisations is characterised by unequal power. The sector's social interaction with the *dalits* or religious minority is low, as it runs with the high-caste people in power. As a result, the issues of *dalits* or religious minority receive little priority in public administration. Moreover, the sector interacts with CF projects in which the high-caste/ethnic advantaged group, men and forestry discipline dominate senior positions (see Appendix 2).

Actors' homogeneity in the sector has tightened by the enrolment of forestry graduates with similar caste/ethnicity produced in forestry training centres such as the Institute of Forestry, Nepal. Data from the Institute of Forestry (IoF) Pokhara, Nepal shows that Brahmin and Chhetri students (87%) outnumbered the BSc Forestry training between 1981 and 2001 (table 3.3). *Dalits* and religious minorities are low in number. By region, 75 per cent of total students represent hill residents. Hill high-caste women graduates outnumbered the *terai* high-caste women. Until 2001, there were no women graduates from *dalits* or religious minorities. Inequality by caste/ethnicity will remain an issue in forestry education without initiating policy mechanisms to increase women graduates from *dalits* and religious minorities.

Table 3.3
No. of BSc forestry graduates produced at IoF, Pokhara (1981-2001)

Gender	Terai	Hills	Total		Caste/ethnicity			
			No.	%	Low caste	High caste*	Ethnic group	Minority**
Male	176	490	666	91	4	583	73	6
Female	4	62	66	9	0	59	3	0
Total	180	552	732		4	642	80	6
%	25	75			4	87	11	1

Source: Institute of Forestry (IoF), Pokhara 2006

* high caste including ethnic advantaged (Newar)

** Religious minority (e.g. Muslim)

Official records show continued domination by high castes in new waves of recruitment in the forestry sector (PSC 2006). Institutional culture such as the job in the DoF symbolises the means of power and prestige in Nepali society (Malla 2001) perhaps the reason for the domination of socioeconomically and politically stronger groups in the enrolment at the IoF followed by the sector.

There is homogeneity within the forestry sector, as actors from the same gender, caste/ethnicity, discipline and location dominate. The actors' dynamics are not conducive to attention to exclusion and inequality issues of CF and support to maintain exclusion. Social interactions and relationships between actors with same backgrounds in terms of knowledge, caste/ethnicity, position and religions raise an institutional issue in the government of CF. As discussed in chapter 7, these characteristics are interconnected with the formation and operation of a close network between individuals at the policy level.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the forest policies, plans, legislation, guidelines strategies and structure to understand the extent to which CF governing actors are inclusive and concerned with tackling exclusion issues. As opposed to dominant CF literature that highlights CF as participatory and inclusive, this chapter shows the history of 'in-built' exclusion in CF policy, legislation and guidelines along with the structure of CF implementing actors. The tendency of forest policies seems to govern forest resources under the control of state elites, forest bureaucracy and local elites. When CF legislation is exclusionary in itself, it results in exclusion in its practice.

CF legislation does not make specific provision for the historically excluded groups and people living in chronic and extreme poverty to gain full access and participation in CF policy design and implementation processes. CF policy and legislation ignore the poor, women, *dalits*, disadvantaged ethnic groups, religious minority and indigenous people in three ways.

First, environmental restoration is the priority. This corroborates with other policies (Kumar 2007; Gauld 2000) in which strong state control over forest management is seen as a necessary element of CF policy. CF policy and legislation focus on the scientific forestry ideology. As a result, technical and productivity aspects dominate in forest management

despite the shift in the direction from state managed to community managed forest policy approach.

Second, from the perspective of power, the relationship between FUGs and the DoF is skewed. The real power lies with the DoF. FUGs need to follow instructions of the DFOs when utilising forest resources. When CF legislation clearly states the roles and responsibilities of community to maintain sustainable yields, production and protection functions of forests, it lacks the provision of the role and responsibility of the government towards people to help them manage their own forests.

Third, forest policy and legislation do nothing specific to combat Nepali exclusionary social structure. Because of the unequal nature of Nepali society, it is not enough to send power down to FUGs. Power relationships between people in the Nepali context bear more responsibility to cause exclusion of the powerless from gaining access to benefits and decision-making opportunities. CF legislation does not consider actors' differences and power relationships in forest development and use. The basic rights of the poor, *dalits*, indigenous people and women to access common property resources are interpreted in physical terms without considering the history of their social, economic and political exclusion in the use of forests. At some point, policy and legislation recognise and support an instrumental form of participation but Hickey and Mohan (2004) remind us that only a transformative form of participation can create space to address inequalities and inequities embedded within social structure of a particular society.

While CF policy and legislation provided local user groups access to resources, it ignored local exclusionary institutions and social norms that exclude the poor and other disadvantaged groups to participate in CF without fear of intimidation from powerful actors.

In addition, actors' relationship structure and their work style in key government institutions such as the DoF and the MFSC are exclusionary. Actors' homogeneity in these institutions constrained the inclusion of other actors in the system.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, it is not only the policy and institutional structures, but also the emergence and development of policy discourses and institutional structures that affect outcomes. The next chapter will explore the relationships between aid and the emergence of policy ideas, as an important step in understanding how the current CF policy was evolved and developed.

Notes

¹ The Forest Act of 1993 categories Nepal's forests as two types based on the ownership of land: private forest (private property of individuals) and national forest (state ownership). The national forest further has been classified into five types of forest based on the management regime: (1) government forest-where the forest ministry or the forest department decides the management and use system; (2) community forest-where development, conservation and utilisation by community groups for the collective benefits; (3) protected forest-where a forest managed for specific environmental, scientific or cultural performance; (4) religious forest-where a forest given to religious body, groups or community; and (5) leasehold-a forest given to organisations or groups (industry, community) on lease (MFSC 1995).

4

Aid and the Emergence of Forest Institutions and Policy Ideas at the National Level

4.1 Introduction

Aid has been a major force in the development of the Nepali forestry sector in general, and CF specifically. In 1978, the World Bank estimated that donors would need to invest US\$ 265 million between 1980 and 2000 in order to start CF in Nepal (World Bank 1978: iii). This budget included the cost of restructuring the government forest services, staff salaries, rural infrastructures and community support such as plantations. In 1988, the Forestry sector's Master Plan defined the funding requirement—donors and the GoN would need to provide US\$ 1.74 billion for undertaking 12 development programmes over a 21-year period (1989/90-2009/10). CF programmes were allocated the largest programme budget, occupying 47 per cent (US\$ 811.2 million) of the total development budget (MFSC 1988c). About 61 per cent of the CF budget was to come from international assistance (*ibid*: 15).

In the late 1990s, 60 per cent of the annual development budget for forestry came from donors, while donor money comprised 80 per cent of the annual development budget of CF (DFID 2000). It includes multi-lateral and bilateral forms of aid. As of 2006, more than 70 of 74 districts of the DoF had CF aid. The analysis of aid from 13 donors shows that the sector annually receives US\$ 19.33 million (Pokharel 2006).

Given the aid dependency of Nepali CF, aid providers are likely to have been and to be an important force in the development of CF policies, organisations and structures, which in turn shape how local actors understand forestry and development. As defined in the introductory chapter, aid has effects not only at the operational level, but also at the policy level. Actors' influence in the policy process depends on their power. In the Nepali forestry context, external resources such as donors'

human resources, money, policy, ideas and position of expatriates all contribute to the shaping of forest policies and to their application.

Based on data from documents, reports of aid personnel, and interviews, this chapter will discuss how aid became a prime mover in the establishment of the modern forestry organisation in Nepal and shaped forest policy discourses.

4.2 Establishment of Modern Forestry Institutions

Aid has been the prime mover in shaping the Nepalese forestry organisation, structure and roles. A discourse on ‘administrative rationalism’ (Dryzek 2005: 75)¹ that believes in conservation and management of forests through forest scientists and hierarchical administration style emerged in the 1940s. In 1941, Mr E.A. Smithies, a former forestry division chief with the United Company became a forestry advisor to Nepal (Robbe 1954). His role was to set up an autonomous forestry service to manage productive forests in the *terai* and to introduce the concept of a working plan for scientific forestry in the region. In 1947, expatriates restructured the department with the main interest of institutionalising the role of foresters to ‘forest control and law enforcement’. Previously, the forest department comprised territorial circles and 33 divisions following the Indian system in the 1950s. India was one of the first countries in the world to introduce scientific forest management. In 1864, the British Raj established the Imperial Forest Department (IFS 2009). Those expatriates who worked under British India helped Nepali forestry in the establishment of the forest department in 1942 (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006). As discussed in a later section, the GoN passed the first formal policy, the Private Forest Nationalisation Act of 1957. This policy demanded the expansion of forest services in the country. As a result, the forest ministry was established in 1959 (Pokharel 1997).

USAID supported the establishment of two institutions in early 1960s to manage forests for production and protection purposes: the Timber Corporation of Nepal (TCN) and the forest inventory and management division (now the Department of Forest Research and Survey). The former came about in 1961 to execute selling timber from resettlement areas in the *terai*. Established in 1962, the forest inventory and management division aimed to carry out aerial surveys of forests and to create maps, with the major purpose of assessing the commercial viability of

forest exploitation and scientific management (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

Intervention on plantations expanded in the 1960s with worldwide interest in Eucalyptus species as a fast growing species suitable for fuel wood. The DoF established the Kathmandu Valley Reforestation Division to execute a plantation programme. In 1961, Assistant Chief Conservator to the DoF visited Australia. This visit led to the establishment of inter-country relationships with Australia. In 1962, the GoN approached the Australian government for assistance in plantations (I. no. 11, GO, 3 May 2006). The DoF enrolled an Australian forester in 1966 to oversee the plantation project that the DoF had started in early 1961 (Griffin 1988: 9). The rationale was to demonstrate plantation work to local residents and attract more projects in the other densely populated areas of Nepal (ibid: 8).

Swiss Aid supported the establishment of forest divisions in the central hill district, Dolakha, to address the problem of forest and pasture management in the mountain region. The Swiss Agency for Technical Assistance (now SDC) entered in 1962 with the main interest of improving agriculture and pastureland for promotion of a rural economy in the hills. Its project, the *Jiri* Multipurpose Development Project (JM DP), the first integrated rural development project in two hill districts, included forestry components with a major focus on timber marketing and forage production for hybrid cows (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). *Jiri*, the original district headquarters of Dolakha, has landscapes similar to Zurich. Enriched by the high altitude natural forests, pasture/meadow with a large potential for timber harvesting and forage production increased Swiss interest in developing *Jiri* (ibid).

In 1977, the forest ministry with the help of the FAO and the World Bank established the current community forestry-development division and structure of communication and relationships with the main purpose of CF policy implementation (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006). The DoF increased division offices from 33 to 40 and forest range posts to 174 in the late 1970s. Following the Decentralisation Act of 1982, the DoF changed its structure with the creation of 5 regional directorate offices and 75 district forest offices in 1983. Changing the organisational structure along with shifting forest policies is a common phenomenon in Nepali forestry (Joshi 1993: 105). The development of the Forestry Master Plan in 1988 affected the DoF structure. In 1990, a new unit called

'Ilaka office' that links the district forest offices at the district level and range posts in the village level was created for carrying out CF development programmes (Pokharel 1997: 134). As of 2008, 74 of 75 districts of Nepal hold the forest office. Currently, two ministries deal with environment issues in Nepal: the forest ministry and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST), the latter was established in 1995 with the major interest of promoting environmentally sustainable economic growth in the country. Interviews with government officials reveal that aid was one of the factors that attracted national bureaucrats to establish the MEST (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006).

Apart from the establishment of forestry administration and structure, aid also contributed to strengthen the forestry-training centre in Nepal. The GoN established the training centre in 1947 with the main purpose of training non-officer level foresters. The centre was located first in Kathmandu and then inside the *Bhimphedi* army barracks in Makawanpur district where only men could enrol (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). Identification of forestry as a man's profession in Nepal came in the early stages of modernisation. Indian aid supported the establishment of the Institute of Forestry (IoF) in Hetauda in 1957. The training centre moved to Hetauda in the late 1950s. Aid from the World Bank and USAID assisted the IoF campus to upgrade its capacity to produce the technical work force for CF development. As a result, the IoF established a new training centre in Pokhara, the western region of Nepal in the 1980s.

While aid supported the establishment of forestry structures, it also influenced the process of bringing global policy discourses in Nepali forest policies.

4.3 Establishment of Forest Policies

The global context had a major influence on the establishment of Nepali forestry policies. As shown in table 4.1, there is a link between global environment management discourses and the activities funded by aid in Nepal. By introducing different global policy discourses, aid influenced policy activities at the local level.

4.3.1 Introduction of scientific forestry

In the global policy discourse, the crowning moment for scientific forest management as the basis for forestry intervention was the 6th session of

the FAO conference held in Rome in 1951. This conference defined the principles that would shape the role of forestry and forestry administration throughout the world. The principles explain the key factors to consider when formulating and implementing forest policy. They include land use, forest management, research, statistics, forest laws, administration, public awareness about forest values and technical training of forestry staff. The conference produced 'Resolution No. 26', which aid-receiving states would have to follow when developing forest policies (FAO 1952). India was the first country to adopt the principle by changing its 1894 Forest Act (FAO 1953). These global principles transferred to the Nepali state through formal entry of donors and western professionals in 1951.

On 27 July 1951, the GoN entered into a Supplementary Agreement with the FAO to provide two forestry expatriates as consultants. In his report on the Nepal forestry sector, one of these two consultants, Ernest Robbe, pointed out that the activities of locals were rudimentary and traditional, causing forest degradation. Following the FAO guidelines, he developed a number of policy recommendations that conceptualise forestry as a "discipline" responsible for the management of land and forest resources under the control of forestry authorities and technically trained foresters (Robbe 1954). Given the state's weak financial position, he also called for voluntary work of people in conservation (ibid: 46). The concepts such as scientific forestry policy, laws, science, decentralisation of forestry structure, disciplinary hierarchy, land-use, grazing control, plantation and conservation that Robbe introduced became the reference point for the DoF and donors in early forestry modernisation.

Since the mid-1950s, USAID, the FAO and the Indian Aid Mission (IAM) helped the DoF practice a growth-oriented development model employing two strategies. The first strategy includes the marketing of forest products in the *terai* as a source of national revenue. The second strategy focused on conservation. USAID and the FAO under the USOM (United States Operation Mission) launched the *Rapti*-Valley Development Project in the *terai* with a special focus on health, community development, agriculture and natural resource management (Isaacson et al. 2001; Mihaly 2002).² The forestry component of the project helped build government infrastructure, forest demarcation, forest roads, forest fire lines, and to establish herbal farms (NAFP 1982; Sigdel 2003). The development activities initiated, however, mostly reflected the interests

and expertise of American experts (Isaacson et al. 2001: 24). At the same time, the GoN enacted the Private Forest Nationalisation Act of 1957. Advocated by donors, especially British Forestry advisors, the act abolished private ownership of forests (Talbot and Khadka 1994: 6). The reason was to regulate forest use under scientific forest management (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006).

In 1957, the FAO asserted the role of forestry as a discipline responsible for scientific management of land and its resources for national economy and ecological sustainability, when it assessed its role in forestry over the course of a decade (Leloup 1957).³ The 5th World Forestry Congress stressed the need for scientific forestry, and for aid to assist with forestry development in tropical countries (FAO 1960). The effect of these proclamations on Nepali forestry appear in the entry of projects from USAID in 1960. Western foresters enrolled in the sector under the OPEX (Operational and Executive Personnel) programme of the United Nations. They lead the sector with the main interests of forest management for growth and ecological balance. The intervention included the establishment of sawmills, wood processing and preservation technologies in the *terai* region, forest resource surveys, plantation experiments on fast growing tree species and the preparation of scientific forestry plans (working plans). Because the plans were inappropriate, they never saw full implementation. The silviculture prescriptions stated in the plans were not compatible to the growing stock of forests. The prescriptions and objectives of forest management definitions were on the Indian forest contexts, which differ from Nepali forests (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

In 1961, a French forester, Pierre Legris, provided information on the forestry situation in Nepal and suggested immediate action for forest protection. Legris' report became another powerful tool to devise forest policy, legislation, forest protection measures and for the replication of the management model carried out in other countries (see Willan 1967: 3).

International meetings became a source of knowledge for policy actors in environmental management (Haas 2004). The representation of Nepali government officials at the 7th session of the forestry commission of the FAO in 1964 led to enhanced understanding of development problems from a scientific perspective. For example, the progress report presented by the Nepali forestry sector in the 7th session (the DoF 1964:

6 annex I in Robbe 1965) listed the lack of forest protection from fire, encroachments, shifting cultivation and grazing as problems. The inadequacy of staffing level (such as staff occupancy only in 22 divisions out of 33) and the lack of watershed and land use policies were institutional challenges. Moreover, the sector officials reported during the conference that the forest policy statement developed in the past was to be vague and lengthy. They reported progress towards developing a policy that would clearly define the government's aim and objectives in the protection and use of forests according to Resolution No. 26 (ibid).

Following the participation in the 7th session, the MFSC submitted a proposal to the special FAO fund to tackle land and soil issues in the *Trishuli* forest division. Three donors commented on the proposal with great concern about the need to conserve forests and land from encroachment, fire, grazing and livestock. An international agency commented that, 'There is no control over the forests in the region of *Trishuli* which is nearest to Kathmandu. The consideration is that of protection (against abuses in cutting, fire, and the ravage of goats) and reforestation' (Robbe 1965: 9).

To respond to the government proposal for conservation aid, the FAO sent the same expatriate in 1964 as 1951 (Robbe 1965). He developed a project on conservation in the *Trishuli* watershed area, in which people's practices such as shifting cultivation, forest lopping and firewood collection were pictured as a threat to forests. He introduced development ideas such as improved agriculture, forestry and pasture management as means to improve the quality of people's lives while protecting forests (see Robbe 1965). The mission led to two outcomes in forestry aid: (a) the birth of the first five-year pilot project on integrated watershed conservation in the *Trishuli* forest division in 1966 with aid from the FAO and the UNDP, and (b) a call for more support of donors in conservation programmes. Interviews show that the *Trishuli* project was a historical event, engaging Nepali government staff in development processes following Western ideas of technology transfer in land use and control. It engaged 11 expatriate foresters, agriculturists, engineers, soil scientists and hydrologists, and 11 Nepali professionals including foresters (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006). According to respondents involved in project implementation, the project failed to achieve its objective. For example, check dams constructed to control landslides were swept away by floods (I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006).

Table 4.1
Aid in the emergence and transfer of global environmental discourse in Nepali forestry

Environmental discourses	Basic premises	Key global policy activities	Aid in policy activities in the forest sector	Effects on government policies/institutions
Scientific forest management	Forest conservation and regulation is possible only through forestry experts, managers, and hierarchical administration style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 6th session of the FAO conference, 1951 declared resolution no. 26 and defined the principles of forest policy that set the role of forestry and forestry administration. Review of the protection and production roles of forestry by the FAO, 1957 The 5th World Forestry Congress, 1960 identified the need of aid for undertaking forestry role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study on Nepali forestry administration and policy by the FAO's forest expatriate, 1952 Study on Nepali forests, 1961 by the FAO's forestry expatriate Expansion of intervention in scientific forestry with aid from USAID and Indian Aid/Mission Appointment of an expatriate forester as the Chief Conservator to the forest department, Nepal Participation of the forest sector in the 7th session and the sector highlighted the lack of policy on watershed management and land conservation Feasibility study of proposed project on conservation in <i>Trishuli</i> division, 1964 Recommendations of forest policies to the Government of Nepal by the expatriate Chief Conservator, 1965 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donors' recommendations for scientific forest policy and structures to the Government of Nepal Promulgation of the Private Forest Nationalisation Act of 1957 Establishment of forestry training centre Enactment of the Forest Act of 1961 Establishment of the Department of Forest Resource survey Establishment of the Timber Cooperation of Nepal Creation of the reforestation division in the forest department Commitment of the Government of Nepal (GoN) to revise forest policy considering the FAO's forest policy resolution no. 26 Enactment of Special Forest Protection Act of 1967 Declaration of the <i>Chautara</i>, <i>Trishuli</i>, and Kathmandu forest divisions by the GoN as 'conservation areas' under the Special Forest Protection Act of 1967
People's participation in forestry	Deforestation cannot be halted unless people are involved in environment management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stockholm conference, 1972 Identification of the potential role of village committee in improving forest productivity, India (Buggel 1973) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Forestry Development Project and National Park conservation projects/USAID, 1970 Study on local use of forests and land use by the FAO/USAID project in 1971 Advisory support of Australian Professor for the validation of <i>Eucalyptus</i> species plantation, 1972 Experimentation on People's participation, 1973 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the Department of Soil Conservation, 1973 Promulgation of Conservation Act of 1973

Environmental discourses	Basic premises	Key global policy activities	Aid in policy activities in the forest sector	Effects on government policies/institutions
People's participation in forestry (continued)	Deforestation cannot be halted unless people are involved in environment management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of the concept of Forestry for Local Community Development, the FAO 1976 - Theories on ecological crisis in the Himalaya, Eckholm 1976 - Development of policy on Forestry for Local Community Development, the FAO 1978 - VIII World Forestry Congress, 1978 Jakarta led by Western forester (Westby/FAO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National agriculture survey, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1974 - SDC led conference on 'mountain environment and development' 1975 - The FAO led conference on deforestation, 1975 - The FAO's 10th session on Asia-pacific forestry commission with key theme on Forestry for Local Community Development in Asia and the Far East, 1977 - Forestry sector's policy review, 1978 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emergence of CF policy, the National Forestry Plan 1976 - Establishment of Community Forestry and Afforestation Division, 1977 - Enactment of CF legislation , 1978 (Panchayat Forest Rule of 1978 and Panchayat Protected Forest Rule of 1978)
Conservation and sustainable development	Environmental conservation and sustainable development for poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forestry for rural development, 1985 - World Conservation Strategy, 1984 - Brundtland commission, WECED, 1987 - Establishment of regional level CF networks of the FAO/SIDA, 1987 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donor funding studies - User group model experimentation - First five year CF national conference - Project for the Forest Master Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forestry Sector's Master Plan, 1988 - New policy direction on CF's Institutional arrangement : From Panchayat unit to village based user group
Sustainable forest management and development (the Earth Summit's Agenda 21)	Participation of the indigenous people, women and the poor in environment protection, decision-making and management of forests for multi-local livelihood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earth summit, UNCED, Rio-De Janeiro 1992 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ADB's support in policy reform - USAID's support in legislation planning - Donors commitment to the Master Plan implementation, 1990 - Donors support for FUG national workshop, 1993, and second five year CF national workshop 1993 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enactment of the Forest Act of 1993 - Enactment of the Forest Rule of 1995
Sustainable Livelihood Approach	Livelihood improvement through sustainable forest management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of Sustainable Livelihood Approach, DFID 1999 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DFID's missions on forestry development - Support the Joint Technical Review Committee, 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-poor livelihood improvement, FUG governance and sustainable forest management as second generation issues of CF

Source: The FAO 1978, 1987; Griffin 1988; NAFIP 1982; The FSCC 2003; JTRC 2001; DFID 2000; interviews 2006

As observed in other countries (Fabricius 2004), Western expatriates working in the forestry sector often viewed people, their farming system and forest harvesting practices as rudimentary and unsustainable. For instance, an expatriate forester, who was the Chief Conservator to the Department of Forest in Nepal between 1962 and 1965, prepared a completion report to the GoN. He re-stressed the scientific role of the sector. He emphasised the need to formulate and implement centralised forest policies and legislation, maintain hierarchy and scientific discipline, revise forest policy according to Resolution No. 26, and implement development programmes in scientific ways (see Willan 1967: 10-12). The impact of this opinion shows in the passage of the Special Forest Protection Act of 1967 by the Nepali government. The Act focused on conservation with high levels of disciplinary power given to forest officials. For instance, three forest divisions of Kathmandu, *Trishuli* and *Chautara* in the hills and 13 divisions in the *terai* were identified as special conservation areas under this Act (MLJPA 1994). These were also the main locations where donors entered with forestry projects. Donor interest and concerns for conservation enabled the DoF to play a 'scientific role'.

Through aid, Western expatriates with their knowledge and ideas viewed local forestry problems and solutions from a perspective dominated by science, which perceived people as a threat to ecology. The approach of forest management changed from production to conservation when global actors became conscious of environmental crises in developing countries. People's participation in conservation emerged as a solution.

4.3.2 People's participation in forestry

The oil crisis in 1973 had a significant impact on aid (Robb 2004). The British Government's aid policy entitled 'the Changing Emphasis in British Aid Policies: More Help to the Poorest' (Ministry of Overseas Development 1975, cited in Slater and Bell 2004: 122) was an influential strategy at the global level. The concept 'integrated rural development' (IRD) was conceived as the suitable approach to increase growth and meet the subsistence needs of rural people in developing countries (Robb 2004). The FAO was a proponent of the IRD concepts that recognised the participation of village-based organisations in development (FAO 1977). Meanwhile, the World Bank defined 'people's participation'

as an approach to effective development in 1975 (Bajaracharya 1983: 235).

The idea of involving people in forestry emerged through the network of Western actors with the main understanding that poverty and population led to environment degradation. In 1972, the UN sponsored a conference in Stockholm on the human environment, which examined the quality of human life and the natural resources that support it (Browne 2006: 32). The conference declared common principles to involve people in maintaining carrying capacity of the natural capital with a view that poverty causes environmental problems. Donors also considered the rapid population growth in the South as a threat to development progress (Browne 2006). Institutions based in the North began to disseminate knowledge about deforestation, shifting cultivation and land use issues in the South. Iconic events such as the publication of 'The Other Energy Crisis: Firewood' (Eckholm 1975) and the production of *Himalayan Degradation Theory* (Eckholm 1976) highlighted the over exploitation of forest resources and the worldwide issue of energy crisis as a threat to human beings.

In 1976, the FAO introduced the concept of Forestry for Local Community Development and documented case studies on people's role in forest conservation and production (FAO 1987). Following the studies, the FAO produced a famous report on 'Forestry for Local Community Development' in 1978. The report was a milestone within forestry aid. The report defined community forestry as '...any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity' (FAO 1987: 1). The report describes interlinked crisis narratives in two story lines. The first story line argues that the loss of productivity of agriculture land in the absence of sufficient forests leads to a food gap. The second narrative claims the inverse relationship between population and environment, Keeley and Scoones (2003: 42) terms it Malthusian flavour. The report introduced the concept of 'good legislative framework' in which development of policy and legislation in the developing countries is the basis for successful CF development (FAO 1987: 24).

In the same year, the idea of 'involving people in forestry' was advocated at the 8th World Forestry Congress held in Jakarta led by a British forester, Jack Westoby (Joshi 1989; Gilmour and Fisher 1991: 7). Foresters attending the congress thus recognised the need to involve rural peo-

ple in the management of local forests to solve environmental degradation in the South (Hausler 1993: 85).

The global context influenced Nepal strategically. One of the major effects of these global institutions was the entry of multilateral agencies (Guthman 1997). Identified as one of 25 Least Developed Countries, Nepal became a major target for aid (Blaikie, Cameron et al. 1980 in Guthman 1997: 53). Donors' interest in the forestry sector increased. A forest officer remarked, 'Nepal's dependency on foreign aid and donors' interest to re-green the denuded hills heightened their interest to support the forestry sector' (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006).

Poverty and population-environment nexus has been a powerful global development narrative that increased donor influence in Nepali forestry; as a result, the policy discourse of CF emerged.

Emergence of community forestry in Nepal

Aid played a role in introducing CF policy in three ways (a) the dissemination of scientific facts, (b) donor policy and (c) involvement of science in the definition of local problems of forest management.

In 1972, the USAID-funded forestry project hired an Australian forestry professor to assess the performance of Eucalyptus species (Griffin 1988: 13). At the same time, an experiment involving people in forest conservation was taking place in some parts of India (Hobley et al. 1993: 64). The same type of experiment started in Nepal around 1973. The Australian forester began travelling to several parts of the country including the *Chautara* forest division to explore plantation sites and land use practices (see Griffin 1988). He identified a soil erosion problem and saw the scope for forestry work, as he observed plenty of land available for planting. He met a local forest officer, interested in forest conservation (ibid: 14). Interviews with forest officials illustrated that the foresters' role in conservation enabled them to take initiative in CF. A forest official recalled his experience as,

In the *terai* region, I had resources to perform my duty. I had armed guards, vehicle, and well-furnished staff house. I used to patrol forests with the guards. I was transferred to *Chautara*, which lacked forests and staff. While working in *Chautara*, I also worked as forestry coordinator with project X. Monitoring and evaluation of forestry activities were my roles. I found little progress in plantation. I recommended "plantation" as major strategy in the project's second phase. The people's participation in con-

ervation started since 1973. I asked Panchayat leader Mr Y to form a forest protection committee and allow a two-year forest protection [programme] on trial basis (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006).

Like foresters in India, the local forest officer in Nepal created a space for villagers to be involved in conservation. The local forester saw that the local community could take care of forests and help meet his professional interests. A visit from an Australian advisor to the *Chautara* region with the same forest officer in 1975 led to the identification of the *Chautara* forest division as a site for forestry development under AusAID (Griffin 1988; I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). Nursery and plantation activities with people's participation started to grow in the area along with the enrolment of three Australian foresters in 1976. Their key roles were advisor and planning, community forestry and silviculture, and nursery establishment and operations (NAFP 1977: 1).

Meanwhile, the USAID funded forestry project conducted a study on the land use system in two districts in mid-west Nepal in 1971. It proposed two strategies to manage forests: those forests distant from settlement would be managed as commercial forests while the forests in the vicinity of habitation as village forests (FAO 1972: 14) under the full supervision of the DoF staff. The FAO and UNDP agreed on a National Parks and Wildlife Conservation project to conserve and manage wildlife resources in 1973. In the same year, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife came online with aid from the FAO, UNDP and USAID (I. no. 11, GO, 3 May 2006).

In 1974, the World Bank produced a report providing information about the location and extent of Nepal's forest resources, forest industries, existing organisations and management capacity, the scope of forest use (subsistence and commercial), level of budgetary allocation for forestry and proposed development plans (World Bank 1978: 1). This report was instrumental in the strategic guidance of the forestry sector by national planners and donors. The forestry sector's 20-year vision for forestry development produced in 1977 referred to the World Bank report as the basis for the sector's vision (see IBRD 1974 in World Bank 1978: 1). The forestry sector's programme received top priority in the 5th five-year plan focusing on soil and forest conservation (1975-1980).⁴

In 1975, SATA (now SDC) organised a seminar on mountain and environment development, during planning of its 15-year rural development project. Fourteen experts attended; seven of them were doctorates

from fields of forestry, geography, agriculture, nuclear chemistry, ecology, engineering, political economy and history (SATA 1976). This conference became a reference point for understanding poverty from an ecological dimension within people's participation discourse. Papers presented at the conference highlighted the link between population density and the scale of forest destruction, claiming that subsistence-farming systems consume more forest resources. Scientific knowledge played out in the conference identified collective action and alternative technologies such as biogas, solar, hydropower, plantation, improved cooking stoves and charcoal as long-term intervention approaches to improve the well-being of rural communities (see Mauch 1976; Voegelé 1976). Again, because assessment came from an environmental perspective, issues of the poor never came up.

At the same time, the FAO led another conference to discuss the environmental crisis and deforestation in Nepal. Around 50 people from within the forest ministry attended the conference (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). The planned three-day workshop extended to 23 days because of contested agendas on advantages and disadvantages of people's involvement in forest conservation. The issues contested were measures to tackle deforestation, given the limited technical work forces of the forest department and unwillingness of forestry staff to work in the inaccessible hill region (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006; I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). Interviews with forestry officials show top-level forest officers at that time were not in favour of people's involvement, while the forest officers, engaged with forestry development with a close relationship to expatriate foresters, were interested in linking the DoF with people. Expatriates supported the idea of people's involvement in forestry.

The conference finally decided to prepare a national forestry plan (NFP) that would define directions for forestry development. The conference formed a taskforce consisting of three professionals to prepare the Plan. The taskforce was under the leadership of an influential urban Nepali forester who had close ties with the royal palace and direct access to senior forest officials in USAID and the FAO. This group prepared the National Forestry Plan (1976) in nine months. Their working office during plan preparation was at the inspection centre of the royal palace. The reason for working within the palace was to avoid influence from foresters with different interests (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006). Interviews show that high personal interest of the late King Birendra in conserva-

tion was an additional force in support of the development of the forestry plan. There is a close, historical relationship between donors and the King, his father the late King Mahendra requested assistance from the Australian government in the development of the grounds of the Palace (Griffin 1988). Interviews revealed that the role of institutional practice of the GoN facilitated ties between expatriates and the royal palace in the early forestry modernisation. For example, the expatriate chief conservator to the DoF in Nepal in the 1960s was recognised with NRs 900 per month salary and first-rank position on behalf of the Nepalese government (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

The national forestry plan became the first formal policy to conceptualise people's participation in state forest management (Gautam and Shivakoti 2005: 3). The Plan identified people as tools to re-green the denuded hills. The Plan viewed 'people's co-operation and participation' as an approach that would motivate people to protect the forest from fire, theft and abuse and encourage them to take part in plantation activities and to improve forest conditions on public land (NAFP 1982).

Defining community forestry

Not only did external actors play a major role in identifying the need to involve communities in forest management, they also defined what form this participation would take. Following the National Forestry Plan 1976, the GoN drafted CF legislation. The DoF hosted the FAO's 10th session meeting with the participation of more than 35 Directors General of the Asia-Pacific region, donor officials and Nepali high-level politicians. Within the theme of 'forestry for local community development', the conference encouraged the DoF to understand CF as an environmental project. A first-class retired forest official recalled his experience:

The 10th session meeting of FAO that my friend Y and I coordinated to convene on behalf of the department was an exciting moment. The conference recognised the role of community forestry in forest establishment and conservation. The Nepali forest department was the one that started community forestry project for plantations and mass awareness on conservation (I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006).

In March 1978, the World Bank released a forestry sector paper warning of the possibility of the disappearance of forests in developing countries without major changes in the forestry sector. It shifted its lending policy to afforestation (World Bank 2008). This policy of the

World Bank influenced Nepali forestry, as the Bank led the process of forestry sector's review in mid-1978.

The World Bank policy mission identified four key factors that resulted in the loss of 25 per cent of forest areas in the hills over a 10-year period. These included population growth, scarcity of farming land and livestock herds, which significantly exceeded the carrying capacity of mountain pastureland and increased pressure on forests to meet the basic needs of rural people for fuel wood, fodder and timber (World Bank 1978: i). The mission report shows that the mission identified three crisis narratives such as soil erosion, energy deficits and poor farming systems as development problems. These ideas led to the promotion of strategies like free supply of seedlings and material, people's voluntary role in plantation and conservation, grazing control, forest demarcation, and technical role of foresters, seen as requirements for CF success.

The review mission took a largely colonial approach to forestry, while defining the people's empowerment approach: community forestry was limited to people's labour contribution to conservation and plantation work (World Bank 1978: 13). The socio-political complexities of natural resources were overlooked; most attention went to ecological systems. The World Bank mission became another historical milestone within donor groups in a way that it defined the nature of donor assistance in forestry. It provided what Williams (1991: 25) calls 'integrative bargaining' situations, where both the sector and donors used aid to solve environment crises. As a result more than seven donors agreed on CF operations (see following section).

Following the World Bank mission, the GoN passed the CF legislation namely the Panchayat Forest (PF) rule 1978 and Panchayat Protected Forest rule (PPF) 1978 and made some amendments to the rules in 1980. As discussed in chapter 3, these CF policies valued scientific forestry in the management of community forests. These policies were instrumental in funding projects.

Projects in the early stage of CF

Once aid funded activities contributed to establish CF as a policy discourse, the policy enabled the forestry sector to engage in rural development in which donor-funded forestry projects were the prime movers in the CF implementation. Since the mid-1970s, nine donors agreed to start rural development projects (see table 4.2). The major objective was

to improve the socioeconomic conditions of hill dwellers through forest production.

Table 4.2
Entry of bilateral and multilateral donors in CF development

Donors	Year	Project name	District/ region
AusAID	1978	Nepal al Australia Forestry Project (NACRMLP since 2002)	2/central
SDC	1975	Integrated Hill Development Project (IHDP/SATA), now NSCFP/SDC	2/central
DFID	1979	Koshi-Hill Area Rural Development Project (KHARDEP/ODA) now LFP/DFID	4/eastern
WB/FAO	1978	Community Forestry Development and Training Project (CFDTP)	29/all five
USAID	1980	Resource Conservation and Utilisation Project (RCUP)	3/western
	1980	Rapti Area Development Project (RADP)	5/mid-west
ADB	1980	Sagarmatha Integrated Rural Development Project	1/eastern
GTZ/SDC	1980	Tinau Watershed Management Project (TWMP)	1/central
CIDA	1980	Karnali-Bheri Integrated Rural Development Project (K-Bird)	3/far-west

Source: Interviews 2006; Manandhar 1982; project reports

All those in table 4.2 covered two-thirds of total districts of Nepal. Up until 1984, some districts even had more than one forestry development project, with each going in a slightly different direction (Sharma et al. 1991; Roche 1990).

All donors chose the hills region as the site for CF intervention, except one ADB⁵ project. Donors' perception that projects would achieve more if they focused on areas where people were receptive and politics of resource use and bureaucratic complexities less influential meant that they avoided the *terai*. Moreover, donors were aware of the resource availability (productive forests) in the *terai* region. They believed that government would be involved in managing the productive forests in the *terai* for national income (Bajracharya 1983). A project respondent mentioned that it was also easier for donors to work in the hill region perceived as having a good social harmony (no problem with migrants and not much ethnic and caste complexities), poor quality forests near settlements, and little presence of the forest department compared to the

terai (I. no. 70, project, 15 June 2006). In discussion with government staff, three attributes of the *terai* forests that still exist today came up as reasons that CF projects are more difficult in this area: attraction of politicians, local contractors and forest bureaucrats (I. no. 85, GO, 2 May 2006). The priority of donors in the hills reflects that donors were not willing to engage in socio-political complexities of forests, which, as argued by NRM scholars (Leach et al. 1997), require different solutions.

In addition, donors focused on the hills with the understanding that backwardness and income-based poverty are pervasive in the hills and economic growth is a solution. USAID's report on its 50-year development contribution to Nepal explains the need to focus on the hills because of the lack of infrastructure, roads, communication and agriculture production technologies compared to the *terai* (Isaacson et al. 2001). Although targeting poor areas was positive because of limited resources, the choice to locate projects in the hills resulted in exclusion of the larger population of the *terai* from CF development in its early years. The *terai* has 53.9 per cent of total population in the country (Gurung 2007) and while the area contributes more to the national economy, they suffer more from social exclusion and poverty.

In the beginning, expatriates ran all the project administration (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006). Donors financed largely the development of the forest administration and often up to 100 per cent of the district forest office's infrastructure and development budgets (Robinson 2004). The combination of staff and money put donors in a powerful position.

As shown earlier, the FAO played a key role in conceptualising CF globally. It defined a CF project as a set of interconnected actions and work executed primarily by local community residents to improve their own welfare. Principally, it emphasised the involvement of people to design, implement and benefit from a project, given the external technical materials and financial inputs (FAO 1987: 19). In practice, people suffered exclusion from any consultations while planning CF projects. Planning took place between powerful donor actors and the forest ministry. A forest officer of that period explains the development of CF projects as follows:

I met Prof. B1 in 1977. I sent B2 to *Thokarpa* (where people participation was experimented) in 1978. B2 then wrote a proposal on CF development project and sent it to the Australian government and me as well. The MoU for Australian forestry project agreed in 1978 to support CF development

in the *Chautara* Forest Division. After three months, the FAO and World Bank designed its CF project. A team of 5-6 members were on the design team. I was one of the members. I wrote CF components for the project design. We introduced the idea of the establishment of forestry education centre in Pokhara to produce technical graduates for CF (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006).

Any community consultation was limited to the local elite. A senior forester explains his experience as:

After my MSc training from the USA, I became the head of afforestation division (now CF division). In 1977, a project design mission from donor X came. I took the mission to a village in *Nuwakot* district where Panchayat leader Mr XX had shown an interest in plantations. Mr XX had asked me to provide 2000 seedlings for community plantation. I was amazed. The initial project budget was about US\$ 8 million, as it had expected people's voluntary work on plantation. I raised a concern that the project should not expect the success of community forestry by voluntary support. I voiced that the project budget should increase to pay people so that their motivation in plantation and protection would continue. The team accepted the idea and the budget increased to about US\$ 17 million (I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006).

A very senior forester also reported that the influence of the head of CF division included the district in a CF project. He expressed,

In 1978, I was transferred to X district of mid-west Nepal. The FAO and World Bank jointly initiated a CF project in 28 districts. My district was not included in the project. People had begun forest protection. I was fascinated with it. I requested the centre office to include my district for CF development. I was considered (I. no. 1, GO, 8 March 2006).

The agency of forest ministry officials increased their influence to include or exclude people from gaining access to projects. Local communities were included in CF intervention in a functional way, and were not able to define their own priority in the intervention. Government and donors were active in shaping CF priorities and locations, much more than participatory processes.

In the early CF policy operation process, donors and government actors contributed to exclusion in two ways: (a) exclusion of the *terai* region and (b) focus on trees and conservation as development strategy of CF. People did not have a major role in project initiation. Donors and forest officials ignored the failure of aid claiming it was due to the domination

of external ideas already identified by scholars in the 1960s (Mihaly 2002). It has also been argued that outsider choices on the location of intervention lead to exclusion (Madeley 1991). Donor choices of the hills excluded people from other regions to benefit from CF aid.

Donor domination of CF policy operations from the start enabled forestry sector donors to change forestry policy in general and CF in particular. The subsequent sections discuss this dynamic.

4.3.3 Conservation and sustainable development

Following the environment crisis narratives, another discourse emerged globally. The idea of 'conservation and sustainable development' became the primary concern of forestry aid in the 1980s. In December 1983, The Secretary-General of the United Nations approached Gro Harlem Brundtland to establish and chair the World Commission on Environment and Development to address environment and poverty issues in the world (WCED 1987: ix). The commission produced the politically powerful report 'Our Common Future', which introduced the concept of sustainable development with the major focus on interconnected links between poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. It defines sustainable development as 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need' (WCED 1987: 8).

The report emphasised economic growth, which is socially and environmentally sustainable (WCED 1987). The belief is that population growth and poverty leads to environmental degradation (Wickramasinghe 1994; Hajer 1995). Although dominant perception of sustainable development was similar to the crisis narratives in the 1970s, the approach to tackling poverty and deforestation crises emphasised socially-oriented economic growth. For example, the commission introduced new ideas such as equity, citizen's participation in decision-making and dealing with population growth in order to assure equitable access to resources. The commission focused on meeting basic needs, population policy and the recognition of traditional rights of the indigenous people and their voice in planning policies about resource development in their areas to secure economic growth and ecological sustainability (WCED 1987: 1-41). The commission highlighted the need to reform policies and institutions and

have political will at the national and donor level to put the above ideas into practice.

Agendas such as poverty, deforestation and people's participation in environment conservation reappeared as priority agenda of forestry donors. The World Conservation Strategy (WCS) developed by international agencies such as the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) focused on the human impact on the environment as an issue (Wickramasinghe 1994: 27). The WCS was a comprehensive investigation of conservation issues and reflected the idea of ecological modernisation (Hajer 1995: 31).⁶ The Tropical Forestry Action Plans (TFAPs) introduced by the FAO and the World Resource Institute (WRI) with the support of the World Bank and the UNDP stressed conservation and sustainable development (Barracrough and Ghimire 1990: 1). The TFAP also aimed to institutionalise systematic planning in forestry in the developing countries to channel aid (Breyman 1993: 144).

The dominant view of CF was as a strong instrument of sustainable development. For example, a regional conference on 'forestry for rural development' organised by the FAO in Bangkok in 1985 placed a greater emphasis on community participation to respond to poverty and environmental problems (FAO 1986). In 1987, the FAO in collaboration with the Swedish University of Agriculture Science initiated a project called 'Forest, Trees, and People Program' to exchange knowledge about CF across actors in Asia Pacific (see <http://www.cof.orst.edu/org/istf/ftpp.htm>). In the same year, SDC and the ADB supported the establishment of a regional training centre in Bangkok to train mid-level forestry staff in CF (Sukwong 1993: 9).

Aid strategy considers basic needs, decentralisation and participatory development approaches to the success of development projects. For example, Aid's Blueprint for Development strategy of USAID (Isaacson, Skerry et al. 2001: 230) focused on policy dialogue and decentralisation process to achieve the development objective of meeting people's basic needs.

These global contexts shaped two main policies in the forestry sector in Nepal: (a) the National Conservation Strategy and (b) the Master Plan for Forestry Sector in the 1980s. A high-ranked forest officer remarked, 'The forest ministry had to develop the forestry Master Plan in order to adjust to the donors' requirements. We had to make the Plan to include

conservation strategies enshrined in the World Conservation Strategy and follow the demand of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan' (I. no. 6, GO, 27 August 2006).

As discussed in chapter 3, these forest policies ignored exclusion and gave priority to the role of people on maintaining natural system. While conservation and sustainable development were on the global agenda, the enactment of the Decentralisation Act 1982 in Nepal, with aid from USAID, and the success of community plantation in re-greening the denuded hills heightened the interests of donors in the forestry sector (I. no. 14, GO, 6 July 2006; I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006). A retired forester who served in the FAO in CF programme implementation in the 1990s informed the interest of the forestry sector working with donors as, 'We realised the advantages of tapping external resources if international communities are ready to provide aid' (I. no. 88, GO, 4 May 2006).

Similarly, another retired senior planner informed the high interest of donors for CF as, 'In the 1980s, donors were in queue for funding CF' (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

In the policy process, it is not only the global discourse that impacts on the local, but also the local setting reshapes the discourse (Keeley and Scoones 2003). In CF context, social interactions of donors with the forestry sector modified the CF policy model in the 1980s.

Change in CF model from Panchayat to user group

The original CF model designated the Village Panchayat (now VDC) as the local institution for forest management changed in the late 1980s. The current user group-based forest management CF model emerged with support from donors. The interest of key factors such as, the power concern of the forest department and the efficiency concerns of donors influenced the change in CF policy model.

In 1980, the Australian forestry project financed a study on the villagers' perception towards forests and forestry development (New ERA 1980). The study recommended 'village-based organisation such as *Ban Samiti*'⁷ as the potential structure to control people's management of local forest resources.

Following this study, another team from the same project and the FAO/World Bank funded project both put forth the village-based organisation as an alternative approach to the existing Panchayat model CF (see Griffin 1988; Bhattarai and Campbell 1985; I. no. 88, GO, 4 May

2006). The studies discussed the inefficiency of Panchayat model in the establishment of community forests, plantation and forest management planning. The studies recommended the need for structured organisations as an efficient means to CF development. Griffin (1988) discusses the views of the Australian project missions about the performance of Nepali government. The lack of efficiency and trust towards the Panchayat led government showed in the mission reports carried out by AusAID in the early 1980s (see Griffin 1988).

The power concern of the DoF was another factor that resulted in change in the CF model. The devolution of power from the central government to local government became problematic in CF for political reasons. Panchayat units operated through the Decentralisation Act of 1982 and Decentralisation Rule of 1984. These laws provided power to the district Panchayats, whose members are appointed by the Village Panchayat, in local development planning and budgeting. The laws put the district forest offices as branches of the district Panchayat secretariat (Joshi 1993: 105). The Decentralisation Act of 1982 introduced the user committee concept as an approach to plan and implement development activities including forestry through channelling of development funds via local government systems. The provision of user committee in the Decentralisation Act of 1982 caused contradiction with the original CF rules 1978 (Hobley et al. 1993: 60). Some literature observed institutional obstacles in the implementation of the decentralisation act in the 1980s. For example, internal analysis of donors, such as USAID, about Nepali development cited limited success of the decentralisation policy (Isaacson et al. 2001: 238). The centralised tendency of government and the donor driven development model reinforced the top-down structure by emphasising central planning and a persistent shortage of skilled human resources were some of the factors that hindered the application of the policy.

The political transition in the early 1980s had affected forest resource use. Forests were the vote bank of politicians (Gautam 2006). The late King Birendra sold large areas of *terai* forests to Indian contractors to raise the funds needed to secure victory at the referendum (Metz 1995: 178).

In discussion with forest decision-makers, political governance was identified as a problem for forest management. A senior forest officer explained his experience as:

In 2036's (1979) referendum, the Panchayat dominated the country. The Panchayat leaders started to prepare their power bases. Panchayat model CF was not able to impact as expected. Forest handover was slow. Monopoly of politicians on the selection of forest watchers and plantation grant mobilisation was a problem (I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 06).

Interviews also show that the informal relationships established between influential members of Village Panchayat and local forest staff was perceived as the problem of the Panchayat model CF. Stymne (1980) who looked at forest administration highlighted three organisational issues that would affect the translation of the CF policy. These included established informal networks between field staff and elite Panchayat members, between the timber extraction business and high-level forest officers and unequal distribution of forestry staff such as concentration of more staff in those areas with good forests and less staff in areas that had poor quality forests and CF had begun (Stymne 1980: 12).

To address the power and inefficiency issues, the Australian forestry project invested resources on the experimentation of 'user group model CF' in the mid 1980s. A project respondent informed that,

The interest of CF donors and government was to make CF "village oriented" so that a group of households would manage forests sustainably. The Australian forestry project initiated an experiment to develop the process of user group formation. The user group idea received high priority in the first CF national workshop in 1987. The workshop led the idea into the forestry policy - the Master Plan, which was under preparation in that time. It then was formalised in the forest legislation (I. no. 41, project, 5 June 2006).

The idea of a group approach recognised an instrumental form of participation. It aimed at removing institutional barriers such as the complexities in the delineation of community forests from private and tree stocked government forests, the lack of trust between the state and the community in conservation and the lack of cooperation between Panchayats and local users (New ERA 1980; Griffin 1988; Bhattarai and Campbell 1985). Interviews with government officials confirmed this interest (I. no. 75, GO, 7 November 2006; I. no. 88, GO, 4 May 2006).

Similarly, knowledge produced from donor-funded research validated the user group model as a viable policy option for sustainable development. A non-Nepali anthropologist in the late 1980s contributed to the understanding of the role of indigenous institutions and knowledge in

local forest management. Articles produced by an anthropologist from the AusAID project area introduced the scope of indigenous forest management institutions and argued FUG as more participatory institution than local Panchayat (Fisher 1989, 1990). The production of a famous book, *Villagers, Forests and Foresters: The Philosophy, Process and Practice of Community Forestry in Nepal*, sheds light on the concept of CF as ‘social process of change’ and the need of empowerment of disadvantaged and equity consideration (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). This study elaborates on the bureaucratic barriers (rent seeking behaviour, favouritism, disciplinary power, social relations) of the DoF in the smooth operation of CF. The authors developed the concept of ‘institutional incompatibility’ of the forestry sector as a hindrance to practice CF as a process of change. They also argued for the user group model as a means of people’s empowerment in forestry. Nevertheless, the concept of user group approach developed a ‘myth of community’ in the sense that community is better than Panchayat. While they saw the power relationships between elites and Panchayat, they did overlook the relationship of power of elites over ‘community’. The assumption about community did not account for social problems of the poor and socially disadvantaged groups to participate in CF.

‘Efficiency leads to change’ is another myth that changed the CF model. Efficiency catalyses social change, but it does not challenge the state’s power about local forest management (Majone 1993 in Gauld 2000: 236). Interaction between the sector and donors led to the depoliticisation of CF when the country suffered from political instability.

While donors were active in the definition of ‘community-based CF model’ in Nepal, their role was also significant in the development of a similar policy model in India and other parts of Asia such as the Philippines (see Gasgonia 1993; Roy 1993; Salazar 1993).

The sector with support of aid funded policy events and process legitimised the user group concept into the forest policy and legislation (more discussion in chapter 6). The introduction of the concept in the Forestry Master Plan heightened the interest of donors to provide aid for CF. Interviews revealed the competition between donors to flow aid into the sector (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006). The Plan acted as a political strategy for the sector and donors to negotiate with each other over the new global agenda: sustainable forest management for tackling deforestation and poverty.

4.3.4 Sustainable forest management: Agenda 21

Sustainable forest management through community-based institutions and participation became central to the agendas to address poverty and deforestation, when the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 ratified Agenda 21. The conference indicated the need for a wide range of disadvantaged groups to participate in the decision-making process of environment management (UNCED 1992). Agenda 21 recognises the protection of the citizen rights of the forest dependent groups in environment management and development (Principles 10, 20 and 22 of Agenda 21, UNCED 1992). With a shift in environmental and social focused global policy, donors increased their aid in Asia (Poffenberger and Stone 1996). For instance, between 1993 and 1996, the World Bank targeted US\$ 660 million a year for natural resource management in Asia (*ibid*: 208).

In Nepali forestry, the UNCED social commitment centred on the environment. Although poverty and environment conservation reappeared as the strategy of CF aid, the dominant thinking of national elites and donors defined poverty from an environmental conservation view, similar to the 1970s. For instance, a group of Nepali consultants in consultation with the national review committee prepared a country report for the Rio Conference (New ERA *nd*). This report re-stressed the technical and legal roles of forestry to control deforestation. The team perceived poverty as the root cause of environmental degradation, but it did not discuss the social concepts of poverty. While the report clearly mentioned the Rio conference as a good avenue for governmental pleas for aid in tackling deforestation and poverty in the country, it ignored the social strategy of poverty by focusing on bio-diversity conservation and plantation. The report discussed the scope of CF as a means to conservation and highlighted the progress of government in forest legislation process.

On the donor side, the Asian Development Bank (ADB),⁸ a key player among donors agreed to a proposal of the GoN to assist the MFSC in policy/legislation reforms process as outlined in the forest Master Plan. A mission team from the ADB in 1989 developed a project for policy reform and institutional strengthening of the MFSC (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006). The development view the team articulated conceptualised poverty in scientific meaning. For example, in the dominant understand-

ing of the 70s, persistent poverty and forest use by people were the main cause of deforestation. This project identified the formalisation of FUG through forest legislation as one of the key programmes. The project mission focused on the community's role in forest management and the fulfilment of their basic forest product needs as an incentive to cover their cost in forest conservation (*ibid*). This perspective of development did not focus on the importance of social differentiation in local resource management and its implication on the weaker sections of society.

When the ADB project began implementation, USAID also sponsored a forestry development project (US\$ 5 million grant) with the main objective of helping the sector in forest legislation design. Donors' involvement remained high during the legislation planning. A former forest minister remarked, 'Americans and Australians were active in the forest legislation planning. I came to know about community forestry policy by project staff. We considered forest management rights and responsibility of forest user group a good policy of community development' (I. no. 33, politician, 19 October 2006).

A former Director General of the DoF added that, 'Australian expatriates had greater influence to incorporate CF policy in the Forest Act of 1993 and the Forest Rule of 1995. The Australian forestry project was active in forestry intervention since the beginning. It had technical human resources and expertise' (I. no. 10, GO, 4 June 2006).

Following the UNCED conference, an NGO—Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies, in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) on 10-11 February 1993—organised a national conference entitled 'Environment and Sustainable Development: Issues in Nepalese Perspective' in Kathmandu. Given the participants, most were academics, forest planners and decision-makers, state planners and politicians, the workshop was an influential event to increase understanding about development and poverty issues in the environmental sector (Dahal and Dahal 1993). Like the 1980s, the workshop re-emphasised the idea of ecological modernisation in tackling environment and poverty issues, even when Agenda 21 recognised the right of the poor and indigenous people to the forests. Unscientific land and resource use, forest loss, demand-supply gap, population pressure on forests, inconsistent policies/laws, lack of monitoring and off farm opportunities by the poor were identified as problems for sustainable development (Bajracharya 1993: 52-4). Proper

land use, afforestation, family planning, empowerment of user groups in common property management, welfare, access to services by the poor, eco-friendly production process and products were the visions for sustaining environment and development in Nepal (Dahal and Guru-Gharana 1993: 180).

Actor-oriented research shows that the actors' interests, roles and relations in an intervention evolve (Mahanty 2000). In the CF context, global interest constantly shaped the role and interest. The dominant interest however overlooked social issues. The current focus of donors and the DoF, livelihood approach to CF development serves as an example.

4.3.5 Sustainable livelihood approach

By the late-1990s, the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) became central to the agenda of donors tackling poverty reduction globally (Brocklesby and Fisher 2003). The concept of sustainable livelihood is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty reduction and development (Ashley and Hussein 2000). The concept considers poverty in three ways. First, well-being is not only about increased income. Other dimensions of poverty that must be addressed include food insecurity, social inferiority, exclusion, lack of physical assets and vulnerability. Second, many factors determine household poverty, particularly access to assets and the influence of policies, institutions and processes. Finally, livelihood priorities can vary; outsiders cannot assume knowledge of the objectives of a given household or group. The sustainable livelihood approach to development and poverty reduction attempts to account for these concerns (ibid: 14). The key elements of the livelihood approach is the interconnected linkages between policy, institutions and process (PIP) and access to assets (financial, human, social, physical and natural). The approach is concerned with governance, institution, policy, social structure and process through which livelihoods are achieved (Scoones 1998 in Larson et al. 2007: 254).

In Nepalese CF, a single dimension such as access to income and services by the poor in FUGs receive priority neglecting other aspects of the livelihood approach. The DFID funded project became the lead actor to implement the idea. Donors and the DoF consider the approach instrumental to respond to the Millennium Development Goals (Kanel 2004). In mid-1999, DFID Nepal reviewed its CF project and defined the future direction of the project in line with the sustainable livelihood

approach envisioned by DFID (Shepherd and Gill 1999). This study became a reference for all donors in new project plans and strategies after 2000 (NACRMLP 2002; DFID 2000; NSCFP 2004a).

Some months after the mission, DFID funded CF project hired a Nepali consultancy team of three including a top-level forest official of the forest ministry to review the current status of the forestry sector's policy with reference to CF (Chapagain et al. 1999). The team re-emphasised the idea of income generation through community forests as a strategy for poverty reduction. In 2000, donors financed a new epistemic group: the Joint Technical Review Committee (JTRC) of Community Forestry comprising three senior officials from the forest ministry office and two expatriate foresters from two CF projects. In line with DFID's mission, the JTRC put forward the idea of FUG as an entry point for poverty reduction. It also emphasised the shift of community forest management from subsistence to market-oriented as policy response to address poverty (JTRC 2001). When the aid-funded policy mission of the sector recognised social inequity and poverty issues, the mission ignored power issues to conceptualise the livelihood agenda.

Following the JTRC, three policy events executed jointly by donors and the MFSC helped the forestry sector to legitimise income-oriented livelihood as a key approach to CF development. First, the DFID funded project played a role in including forest-based pro-poor income and employment programmes in the 10th five-year development plan, the PRSP (2002-2007) (I. no. 76, GO, 22 November 2006).

Second, donors assisted the sector to convene the 11th FSCC meeting of the MFSC in 2003. The chief of CF division of the DoF presented the areas in need of policy reform to guide CF towards economic improvement of the poor. In his presentation entitled, 'Second Generation Reforms in Community Forestry', he clearly pointed out the gender and social inequity issues in decision-making and forest product distribution. His perspective to tackle these issues however focused on access to resources and FUGs as responsible actors for dealing with social issues. He presented the required strategies for CF reform in three areas: FUG governance, livelihood and sustainable forest management/bio-diversity (FSCC 2003: 85). His idea of strengthening FUG governance excluded the social role of the forest department, as he asserted the technical role of the DoF while dealing with CF. The 4th national CF workshop organ-

ised by the DoF with the help of donors in 2004 formally institutionalised the livelihood approach (see Kanel 2004).

While the livelihood approach considered economic aspects, it ignores the social dimension of poverty. Because, key CF intervening actors define pro-poor livelihood strategy in ecological and economic terms with an assumption that FUGs being empowered by forest policy would decide policy and programmes for the poor. This assumption does not recognise people's differentiation within a community and the role of agency of an individual in social outcomes. Moreover, by focusing access on resources, the approach excludes institution and process aspects that would help the DoF understand social issues as part of sustainable forest management.

4.4 What Do We Learn From the Politics of Knowledge?

The above story shows that aid has been a prime mover in the translation of dominant global policy discourses about forest management to CF policy in Nepal. CF as policy discourse emerged and changed over time as global dialogue changed. Aid-funded activities played an important role in making the Nepali forestry sector understand local poverty and environment issues from the Western perspective, even though the context within which policy operates is different.

Despite the good intention of helping the poor through participatory forestry process, aid was involved in constructing knowledge about local issues of forest management and development that did not include the poor. Techno-scientific perspectives dominated articulation of forest management problems that viewed people as problems of deforestation and as tools to establish and protect forests. Although the focus of aid goals in the discourse evolves over time, dominant values and assumptions remain unchanged. Population growth, forest degradation and environmental crisis remained the concern of forest management issues.

Global actors engaged in defining local problems omitted the policy process in which local policy actors would develop knowledge about local forestry issues that largely related to the history of discrimination and power relations in gaining access to forests and forest uses. This finding concurs with others (Périn and Attaran 2003; Shiffman 2006) who identified that Western thinking and knowledge embedded in a policy discourse affects the understanding of local development issues and shaping priorities that in turn perpetuate social inequality in developing countries.

Donors as principle actors acted as ‘veto-holders’ in transferring global ideas into national policy. The sector had to make national policy to satisfy the aid agenda, royalists and forest bureaucrats. A convergence of national and global interests in choosing a policy model is apparent.

External forces such as project-based knowledge and interests of donors and the forestry sector depoliticised CF policy. As a result, most viewed the actions of village-based political institution (the Panchayat now VDC) in collective action as inefficient and non-participatory. The policy ideas donors recreated take power from Panchayat and reinforce disciplinary power of the DoF. The Panchayat in the Nepali context could have played a significant role in reaching inclusionary outcomes, as it offers the possibility of political empowerment by the excluded at the grassroots level. The concept of the FUG as a robust institution of forest decentralisation has two limitations in terms of empowerment of the poorest. First, membership in FUG is conceptualised based on resource perspective, not poverty dynamics and people’s rights *per se*. It focuses on simple processes of change that emphasise resource provisions to community with an assumption that everyone would benefit from CF. It avoids the concept of complexity and conflicting interests of people on forest use. Second, the perception of FUG is as a less political institution with low influence on Panchayat elites. This perception avoids understanding of power relationships between individuals over FUG government. In addition, the FUG concept neglects participation as political; a right to decide forest management activities by people.

A study from India demonstrates the failure of participatory NRM projects to practice participation concepts at the operational level (Mosse 2005). Mosse identifies the project operational process that caused exclusion of the poor, powerless and social disadvantaged groups. This chapter showed aid has a role at the policy level in maintaining exclusion. A key point is that global knowledge systems dominate the definition of local issues of forestry and development. The knowledge system in combination with the interests of state elites, powerful bureaucrats and foresters sidelined the transformative value and objective of participatory forestry. Donors’ ideas are taken as the truth for five reasons. These include the history of donors’ support in the sector, aid money, expertise/science, human resource and weak political governance of Nepali state. Apart from direct engagement in legislation planning, donors facilitated the sector in organising policy events that confirmed techno-

scientific ideas in the policy (see chapter 6). The aid argument that the government should take and own the policymaking process differs in the Nepalese CF case. The construction and transfer of policy ideas from the donors' side remained unchanged, despite changes in Nepali political scenarios, such as a shift from an autocratic to a democratic political regime.

Policy ideas and dialogues are important because they shape how people think about social issues, poverty and development. The next chapter examines how key actors in Nepali CF—donors, government officials, elected representatives, and non-state actors—perceive the problem of exclusion, the possible solutions, and their own role in this process.

Notes

¹ Administrative rationalism discourse focuses a nexus between science, professional administration and bureaucratic structure in public policy setting. This discourse can be defined as problem-solving discourse emphasising the role of expert rather than the citizen per se. It focuses on the social relationship of hierarchy rather than equality (Dryzek 2005: 75).

² Mihaly (2002) notes that aid programmes implemented under the USOM followed the development model conceived in donor policy such as Point Four. Point Four contributed to the implementation of many programmes using a small number of technicians and received tangible, quick results (Mihaly 2002: 42).

³ The 15 FAO tasks include forest policies, forest inventories, forest economics and statistics, education, soil and water conservation, conservation and improvement of pastureland, silviculture and forest management, forest protection, equipment, modernisation and integration of forest industries, chemical utilisation of wood, mechanical utilisation and standardisation, production and distribution policies, and stimulation of consumption.

⁴ Government of Nepal identified agriculture production, natural resource conservation, education, health, drinking water along with production of 15,333 technical workforces as high priorities in the 5th-year development plan. As a result, 20,000-hectare plantation and 8,080-kilometre demarcation of forest boundaries were planned in the period (5th five-year plan, 1970-80: 28; NPC 1975).

⁵ The ADB sponsored a forestation project for the *terai* region with the main concept of fulfilling fuel wood demand of urban residents, but it was not related to community forestry. The concept of the project was to introduce fast

growing tree species and encouraged the replacement of natural *sal* forests by plantations with fast growing exotic species.

⁶ Hajer (1995:31-3) explains the discourse on ecological modernisation as the positive approach to environment management policy. It emphasises techno-scientific approach to tackling environmental problems. It focuses on economic growth and environmental protection. It does not call for any structural change, but recognises the techno-institutional fix for the present problems.

⁷ *Ban samiti* (forest committee) refers to an informal social institution established to protect forests and regulate its use mostly under the leadership of village elites.

⁸ Bhattarai (1992) critically analyses the influence of ADB in Nepal's development process. About 80 ADB "missions" from headquarters involving more than 200 experts and administrators visit Nepal annually. The way their power works in local development can be understood by stating the views of a financial official, as 'most of the time, they have their way. They are after all the bankers' (ibid: 19).

5

Actors' Perception of Exclusion in Community Forestry

5.1 Introduction

CF development practitioners and researchers, the government and donors consider that managing forests through community forestry (CF) holds potential for rural development as well as poverty reduction in Nepal (Byrne et al. 2009; Chhetri 2006; Kanel 2004; NPC 2003; Pokharel 2002). There are also some concerns whether the quality of forests can realistically ever be of help for the extreme poor to escape from poverty dynamics. Some literature argues that forestry has a role in poverty reduction, but raises the need to shift the way forestry has been talked about and practiced. Hobley (2008) argues that forests are a source of wealth and power. They are also a locus of poverty. Therefore, 'poverty' should be the starting point for looking at forest policy rather than forestry and seeing how it can be made to accommodate a more pro-poor approach. 'Present day's forestry challenge is not just the restoration of trees or biodiversity, but the growth of a political and social landscape that facilitates people's ability to make choices to secure their livelihoods and to move beyond forests as a resource to sustain them in poverty to forests as a means to step out of poverty', argues Hobley (2008: 2). In these paradoxes, it is important to understand the perspective on exclusion, inclusion and social issues key actors in CF hold. As discussed in chapter 1, actors' perspectives shape the agenda of any intervention, which in turn determine what concrete action, if any, actors take to address specific poverty or exclusion. Actors' own understanding of exclusion/inclusion, their roles in creating and striving against it and that of the role of others who engage in intervention could affect CF intervention at the policy level.

To address exclusion would require common understanding among key actors about exclusion and managing interventions towards inclu-

sionary outcomes. Actors conflicting perceptions of exclusion and or lack of awareness of the problems or a willingness to overcome it limit the chances of successfully addressing exclusion. In the end, actors develop a vision for CF development of 'what CF should be as development approach'.

This chapter analyses the way different actors think about 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' in CF and about CF as a development strategy. The chapter examines perceptions about the role of CF in general and about the role of organisations in dealing with exclusion. The term 'perception' here refers to a viewpoint or set of ideas held by actors on a particular issue, which is broader than their interest *per se* (Tu 2004).

The chapter focuses on three key questions (a) what do actors understand by 'exclusion', (b) what do they see as causes of exclusion and who is to blame, and (c) how could exclusion be addressed and who is responsible for taking action?

This chapter derives from data collected through interviews with influential and very senior foresters, donors/projects and INGOs staff, politicians (forest minister, parliamentarians engaged in NRM issues) and non-state actors (NRM-NGOs, civil societies and professional associations).

5.2 Forestry Sector's Perception on Exclusion in CF

5.2.1 What is exclusion in CF?

The 32 current and former forest officials interviewed for this study exhibited diverse views about exclusion, but there was one dominant view. Table 5.1 synthesises the dominant and minority views of the interviewees. In general, foresters are aware of social issues but for a number of reasons they think that it is not relevant for the forestry to address inequality and exclusion in CF.

When asked how they define exclusion and inclusion in the context of CF, the majority of respondents raised three major points: inability of some community members to participate in community forestry activities, their lack of decision-making power in FUG and inequity in forest resources and collective fund use. This definition focuses on exclusion from project benefits and activities at the community level, due to community-level factors. However, a few foresters of low-rank position¹ and social networks look beyond the community in their definition of exclu-

sion: they see exclusion as lack of decision-making opportunity for women and *dalits* in the forestry sector. While the majority of foresters define inclusion as inclusion of women in the executive committee of FUGs, access to income for the poor and participation in forest management activities, a minority view sees inclusion as mainstreaming the excluded in decision-making positions in the forestry sector.

Table 5.1
Sector staff's perception of exclusion/inclusion in CF

Views	Meaning of exclusion/inclusion	Causes of exclusion	Solution/responsible actors
Dominant	Exclusion is - inability to participate in CF activities - inequity in forest resources and collective fund use - lack of decision-making power in FUGs	At the community level: - lack of wealth/income and education - social structures, discrimination - elite influence - weak capacity of <i>dalits</i> , women and poor to capture benefits	Measures: - access to services and resources - FUG development Responsible actors: - FUG/community - state politicians - donors, non-state actor
	Inclusion is - women in FUGs executive committees - access to income to the poor - participation in forest management activities	At the state level: - weak representation of the <i>dalit</i> and women in state structure	
Minority	Exclusion is - lack of decision-making opportunity for women and <i>dalits</i> in the forestry sector Inclusion is - <i>dalits</i> and women in the forestry sector's decision-making structure	At the sector level: - lack of interest at decision-making level in the sector - lack of trust towards women, <i>dalits</i> and the poor	Measures: - mainstream in forestry structure - access to social knowledge for forestry Responsible actors: - the sector, donor

Source: Interviews 2006

High-rank foresters and non-foresters who head the forestry sector and department think that there is exclusion, but claim that the sector is much more exclusion sensitive compared to other sectors and has done a lot in the field of CF. For example, a first-rank officer states that, 'Yes, there is exclusion of people in community forestry. Our social system is

a problem. More than 25 per cent of women are in FUG committees. Can you tell me which sector has such women's participation' (I. no. 3, GO, 30 October 2006)?

The decision-makers in the sector situate exclusion as outside of the sector's responsibility. They see representation in executive bodies of FUGs as proof of inclusion, while dismissing low or unequal involvement as an issue.

Likewise, 10 out of 15 first class foresters consider inclusion as access to forest-based income generation by the poor. A first-rank officer in a planning role said, "These days, everyone talks about "inclusion". The poor households lack access to income generation activities in community forestry. Forest user groups could run forest-based enterprises, but they do not have non-timber forest-management skills and plans' (I. no. 45, GO, 15 August 2006).

This perspective focuses on the physical dimension of exclusion and inclusion. Forest planners are concerned about the poor, but the major thrust of the argument has emphasis on the environment and forest resources.

Three out of 15 first class foresters see exclusion as a very complex issue related to the distribution of forest products and the income that FUGs generate. They claim FUGs are the actors responsible for fixing the problem. A first-rank forester in the forest department explains:

How to define equity or inclusion? People living at the centre of the valley [Kathmandu] may need forest for recreation while villagers living adjacent to forests may need forests for fuel wood, fodder and leaf litter. Then, how to tackle this issue? Another example is that there is a plantation forest in *Bardiya* district and pure natural forest in *Kapilvastu* district. How do you address inequity between FUGs in these two cases in which the nature of forest resource stocking is quite different? Equity is complex. I do not understand what it means or how to define equity, since the issues differ from place to place (I. no. 6, GO, 27 August 2006).

This respondent considers equity as a relevant concept locally specific, but also that inclusion and equity are much the same. He thinks addressing inequity from a practical perspective by arguing that each situation being different, no rules or regulations can provide a suitable answer as they are by definition blanket responses. He does not consider that rules/regulations and mechanisms could be introduced to facilitate addressing inequity at the local level, rather than come up with one rec-

ipe to address it uniformly. Moreover, he points out inequity between groups but not within groups.

Only two out of 32 officials focused on caste and ethnicity within the forestry sector while defining exclusion and inclusion. They argued that there is less chance of positive social outcomes without reducing caste and ethnic inequality at the organisational level. A former director general, high-caste Brahmin, remarked, 'The lack of decision-making opportunity for women and *dalits* within the forestry sector is exclusion. Brahmins dominate in decision-making in the forestry sector. How do you expect that the issue of *dalits* would become a priority in forestry administration' (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006)?

Likewise, another senior official thinks of exclusion as the lack of women foresters in decision-making positions and argues that the inclusion of women and the poor in the sector's structure would help to address exclusion. A second-rank officer remarked, 'Inclusion means access of women and the poor to decision-making position in the forestry sector. You [researcher] know how difficult it is for a woman researcher to have access to decision-makers in the sector who are all men' (I. no. 85, GO, 2 May 2006).

Seven of 30 relatively junior foresters explain the institutional practice of the forestry sector and projects while defining exclusion. They point out the lack of priority for the social agenda at policy level interaction, limited access of forestry graduates to social knowledge at the Institute of Forestry and male dominated forestry organisation as problems of inclusion.

An officer explained exclusion from a knowledge dimension as, 'In the 1980s, CF projects used to disseminate technical papers. These papers raised awareness about technical issues of community forest management. The projects did not focus on social concepts such as equity in benefit sharing and contribution and skills about tackling elitism' (I. no. 75, GO, 7 November 2006). This view, although in minority, gives another perspective. This officer recognises that exclusion issues are also embedded within the capacity of intervening actors.

Thus, the meaning of exclusion/inclusion varies across actors even when they work in the same organisation. The dominant views expressed on exclusion/inclusion focus on pragmatic rather than strategic, emphasising instrumental forms of participation and, in relative terms, it is possible to view forestry as inclusive. To the contrary, a minority view con-

siders exclusion/inclusion from transformation thinking. They feel the need to mainstream women, *dalits* and the poor in the sector and diversify knowledge.

5.2.2 What causes exclusion and who is to blame?

Perceptions about the causes of exclusion also vary across actors within the sector, but the dominant view considers exclusion a consequence of resource deprivation. This is consistent with what Mora (2000) calls a 'Welfare State's notion of poverty'. Most of the first-rank foresters and non-foresters interviewed see the lack of income, education, information, social structure, culture and social discrimination as causes for exclusion of *dalits*, the poor, and women in CF.

Forest decision-makers are fully aware of exclusion and inequitable practices within FUGs, but localise the cause outside the forestry sector's role. The head of the sector (who is from a high-caste and urban setting) reflects on the position of the forest ministry on social issues of CF:

I know there is an issue. In *Thokarpa* village, a FUG planned to sell 200 head loads of firewood outside the community at NRs 15 per head load. The firewood price becomes expensive to the poor who were not in position to pay even NRs 5 per head load. This issue is the community's issue (I. no. 15, GO, 21 June 2006).

This perspective clearly shows that foresters externalise the exclusion problem due to limitation of the excluded to participate. This respondent sees poverty as a cause of exclusion of the poor, rather than that exclusion is associated with CF or the sector's activities and practices.

Based on the perceived physical achievements of CF, decision-makers also argue that the forestry sector need not worry about exclusion. A first class forester expressed, 'Forests are improved. The forest ministry must feel proud of its achievement on forestry development with its limited resource. We have given communities "forests" to conserve, develop and use' (I. no. 15, GO, 21 June 2006).

Four first-class retired foresters who are still active through the donors' network as short-term advisors also offer a number of reasons why the sector does not have a responsibility for exclusion. These include traditional gender roles (e.g. household chores as women's role and economic production as men's role), the caste system, the patron-client relationships and social discrimination (e.g. wage, education). A retired forester, who has been working in forestry nationally and internationally

since early 1960s, did not believe that dealing with social issues is necessary in forestry intervention. He said,

There are high-caste “priests” and low-caste “shoemakers”. There are “*sinu kbane* (meat eaters)” and “vegetarians”. There are the rich and the poor. The poor take loans from the rich. People work together. How can we differentiate poor or low caste from others in such situations? It would create social problems if we focus on the social issues (I. no. 8, GO, 14 April 2006).

This view acknowledges and accepts the existing Nepali social system and claims that dealing with social discrimination would create social unrest. Patron-client relationships provide informal safety nets for the poor but essentially, are exploitative (Clarke and Sison 2005). In Nepalese forestry, many, including this forester, see the existing social system as a requirement for social existence.

Embedded within ‘capability’ (Sen 2000) rationality, 13 of 17 first-class, high-caste and advantaged ethnic group officers see the excluded groups as problems of exclusion. They consider the poor, *dalits* and women as a ‘socially and economically backward group’. They claim that the existing social position of the poor and *dalits* is necessary for Nepali society. A non-forester who served the forest ministry in top-level position explained that society and the excluded are problematic: ‘*Dalits* are not in position to assert themselves. Mother-in-law discriminates against daughter-in-law. Our society is complex. Consideration of social issues creates complexity in our day-to-day work. The issue should be addressed by FUG not the forest ministry’ (I. no. 3, GO, 30 October 2006).

This statement reflects that the forestry sector does not have any role to play in challenging social agendas. In the world view of this respondent, the forest administration is a state apparatus that should run efficiently with the belief that the inclusion of social agenda in the sector responsibility would create tension. In the meantime, social issues are local issues rather than institutional or structural issues of intervening agencies.

A few officials, mostly of lower rank, do think that the sector plays a role in creating exclusion for two reasons: internal inequality of the forest organisation and self-interest. A very senior forest officer who is in the second-class position for many years remarked,

Perspective of forestry decision-makers on social issues creates inclusion/exclusion outcomes. They do not recognise tackling social issues as the role of forestry. In the forestry culture, people in power do not have a belief that women also would work efficiently. Likewise, forest bureaucrats always predict the destruction of forests if people have access to forests (I. no. 85, GO, 2 May 2006).

The above quote accepts the existing institutional system of the sector as the cause of exclusion and argues that transformation at individual level within the sector would lead to change.

In contrast, the first-rank officials did not feel internal inequality within the forestry sector is a problem, even though they are aware of the sector as a caste and gender unequal organisation. Belief in competency is one of the norms of hierarchic organisations, as Hood (1998) points out. Forest policymakers consider 'competency' or 'professional capacity' as prime mover in efficient organisational management. They questioned the ability of women and *dalits* to act as decision-makers in forestry in the sense that they have inadequate capacity to respond to global markets.

Eliciting the feeling of forestry officials about affirmative action to include women and *dalits* in the sector, most of the high-rank foresters who have extensive knowledge of development projects and high social status made their preference for 'equality' rather than 'equity' in staff recruitment policies. Seven out of 17 first-class officers who joined the forestry sector between mid-1970 and mid-1980 argue that a 'reservation policy' would result in inefficient staff performance. However, they do not see themselves as part of the state when it comes to addressing exclusion through a policy.

Mainstream NRM literature claims that exclusion issues of natural resource management are part of the political process, linked to the understanding of power and its relation to institutional change (Buchy and Subba 2003; Buchy and Rai 2008; Nightingale 2002, 2006). Interviews reveal that 'party politics' and 'policy advocacy' of non-state actors are identified as problematic sites for tackling exclusion. Ten out of 17 first class officers explain that the state is the responsible actor to create and solve exclusion in the sense that the state excluded *dalits* and women from state politics (party cadres, state structures and monopoly in political power). This reflects the tendency of forestry decision-makers to blame the state as the lead actor developing inclusive policies or legisla-

tion as if the forest ministry was not part of policymaking or simply serving as one policy implementing actor.

The analysis of interaction held coincidentally between people and one government official during an interview provides evidence as to why the sector thinks 'state politics is a problem'. During the interview, two people (a VDC secretary with an MP) came in and asked the division staff for CF data of two districts in mid-west Nepal. The conversation held between them seemed very natural in the sense that the MP represented the VDC secretary and explained the reason for coming with the secretary (i.e. helping people who come from remote areas and accompany them when they are in Kathmandu). However, the secretary coming with the MP became a symbolic political issue in the eyes of the forest decision-maker and he felt the exercise of power by the MP. Once these people left, the forest officer expressed his feelings,

You see! How much political power work in Nepal. The MP came to show his power. Even the VDC secretary is very much connected with the power relation. They are the ones who ruin the country. CF is a small programme of the forestry sector. Why do people focus on studying the negative aspect of CF. Look at the Prime Minister and his kinship in power! Present situation of Nepal is the result of this power politics (I. no. 6, GO, 27 August 2006).

This respondent considers party politics as detrimental to CF. This perspective does not see CF as a political process where agency of individuals at all levels of forestry determine what actions are to be taken against the poor and excluded. This respondent does not think that identifying the problem associated with the government's work in CF would improve inclusion outcomes. There is a strong belief that exclusion is associated with others' actions, not the sector *per se*.

Foresters worry about 'the forestry sector' due to the inclusion of non-state actors in CF operations in the sense that actors with non-forestry organisational background are not helpful in scientific forestry. The majority of foresters interviewed were critical of civil society (i.e. FECOFUN), because of their engagement in policy lobbying and project funded programme implementation. They complain about the mishandling of CF by civil society. Seventeen of 30 foresters commented on the non-supportive role of non-state actors like FECOFUN. In their perspective, the role of civil society should be limited to the delivery of ser-

vices associated with FUG formation, awareness raising and social mobilisation.

The issue of disciplinary boundary constantly appeared during interviews. The old generation foresters feel that when the young, poorly trained in scientific forestry foresters and other actors take up the forestry role they threaten forest management. 'New generation forest officers trained in Nepal lack knowledge of managing non-timber forest products. They do not know soil and water conservation techniques' (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

In short, all forestry officials are aware of exclusion. The majority of them externalise the cause of exclusion outside of forestry for three reasons: (a) they claim that forestry as a discipline has nothing to do with social issues; (b) they argue that the excluded groups have their socio-economic limitations to participate in CF; and (c) they perceive the success of CF in terms of resources and do not feel the sector should worry about exclusion. They consider the non-political role of other actors in the implementation of CF would lead to success. This shows that people within the sector seem fixed within their own professional and social identity while looking at the cause of CF social problems.

5.2.3 What should be done about exclusion and by whom?

Views about how to address exclusion in CF differ among foresters. Those in decision-making positions argue that providing services such as awareness raising, training and forest-based income to the poor would reduce poverty. In contrast, staff with limited influence argue for change in the forestry system. For them, including *dalits* in the forestry structure and making social agendas in forestry interactions in order to conserve forests and help the poor would reduce exclusion.

During interviews with the heads of influential divisions of the forest ministry and the forest department, a lack of technical guidelines for non-timber, forest product management, the limited number of field staff in FUG formation, forest handover and the lack of technical knowledge of forest management were reported as barriers to addressing exclusion. A first class officer remarked, 'The poor are not benefiting from community forest management. There is no guideline for non-timber forest product management' (I. no. 45, GO, 15 August 2006). This respondent argued that the technical guidelines are an instrument to

solve exclusion but does not question whether the guidelines address the interests of the poor.

Technical activities as measures for solving poverty frequently appeared during interviews. Some first-class officers criticise the type of activities such as health and education programmes that non-state actors implement with CF aid, calling them 'unscientific'. Some also question the use of FUG funds on community development such as buying utensils, school infrastructures and health equipment as the possibility of misuse of common property resources and claim that these activities are not forestry's role.

Foresters want forestry to focus on the environment (Peluso 1992). A first-class forester defined the disciplinary boundary in CF as,

The role of forestry is to maximise the productivity of forests and balance ecological system. A long time ago, an expatriate showed me a social map for community forestry development, which was nothing to me. My concern is the technical management of the forest. I cannot go beyond the value of foresters (I. no. 15, GO, 21 June 2006).

The chief of the CF division repeatedly highlighted what he perceived the three roles of foresters: coping with political forces, managing land and regulating the forests. Interviews with the heads of key divisions that have influential roles in CF aid programmes confirmed the absence of conviction that dealing with social issues is the role and responsibility of foresters and the forestry sector. Some of them complain even about donor pressure to include gender and equity issues in CF, which they constantly point out is beyond the boundary of forestry roles. The head of the environmental division stated that, 'Facilitation on social issues is to be done by non-state actors. Forest scientists' work is doing technical things only. We cannot do everything. Social work is the work of organisations other than the forestry sector' (I. no. 7, GO, 29 August 2006).

Foresters distance themselves. An interview with the chief of the planning division of the MFSC office revealed the perception that donor-funded projects are dealing with social issues. He stated the position of the forest ministry 'Project documents are well stated about social mobilisation programmes. Donors support is important in community forestry. Activities carried out by CF projects do represent the forestry sector's role. It is not necessary to have social programmes in the sector' (I. no. 7, GO, 29 August 2006).

Even non-foresters in the forest bureaucracy see the environment as the first focus of foresters. One of the forest secretaries (non-forester) stated that the most gratifying moment in his work was when he made 22 decisions related to the environment. He emphasised that the role of the forestry sector is 'forests' and 'land resources' (I. no. 3, GO, 30 October 2006).

In contrast, seven out of 30 foresters who are relatively young and have a forestry degree from Nepal and abroad, but are low within the forest administration hierarchy, think that mainstreaming a social agenda is a role for forestry staff and that social knowledge would reduce inequality. They mention activities such as dissemination of social knowledge at the Institute of Forestry and in policy spaces, donor support to make the sector socially-oriented, social monitoring and incentives for staff in dealing with social issues as important activities to implement in addressing exclusion. However, they caution that decision-makers would have an important role in acting upon this idea, because they hold the power.

In general, it is clear that actors within the forestry sector take an instrumental stance on tackling exclusion. They propose actions such as sensitising the poor, access for them in forest-based income raising programmes and involving women in FUG committees. They locate the solution outside of the forest administration; it is not their responsibility to address exclusion and inequality. They view CF as a policy responsible for improving the ecological system, not people. The fact that the key decision-makers and implementers of CF policy do not see it as their responsibility to advocate on behalf of the poor and marginalised, present a clear challenge to advocates of social agendas.

5.3 Donors/Project Staff's Perceptions of Exclusion in CF

5.3.1 What is exclusion in CF?

The 41 current and former donor/project staff members interviewed for this study represent a wide range of development views and come from staff with policy to implementation roles in the context of CF development. As was the case with foresters, the donors and project staff interviewed also have diverse views on exclusion/inclusion. Table 5.2 describes the dominant and minority perspectives on exclusion and inclusion in this group.

Table 5.2
Donors/project staff's perception of exclusion/inclusion

Views	Meaning of exclusion/inclusion	Causes of exclusion	Solution/responsible actors
Dominant	Exclusion is - lack of participation in FUG meeting and decision-making -lack of access to resources Inclusion is - access to income generation activities and capacity development by the excluded - equity provision in FUG policies - include the excluded in FUG structure	At the individual level: - lack of wealth/income and education - inability to claim rights At the community level: - social structures - social discrimination - lack of village leadership on behalf of the excluded At the state level: - lack of interest and capacity at government level - lack of policy implementation	Measures: - access to services and resources - FUG development Responsible actors: - FUG/community
	Exclusion is - lack of decision-making power in intervening agencies Inclusion is - include in structure of intervening actors (government and projects)	Among donors: - lack of focus to make social agenda a concern in policy level inter-action - lack of trust for women, <i>dalits</i> and the poor	Measures: - policy intervention Responsible actors: - donors

Source: Interviews 2006

When asked about the meaning of exclusion and inclusion in the context of CF, the majority of staff focused on resources and capability. They defined exclusion as the lack of participation in FUG meetings and decision-making and lack of access to physical resources by the poor and other disadvantaged groups. They argued for more access to income generation activities and capacity-building opportunities, the inclusion of an equity provision in FUG policy and greater representation in the FUG committee as means to address inclusion. Only seven junior staff out of the 41 interviewed took a different view of exclusion/inclusion. For them, exclusion in national CF legislation was also a concern.

Discussions with donor staff in a policy role show that the instrumentalist view dominates in looking at exclusion/inclusion. An expatriate forester explains the meaning of inclusion as,

The elite deliberately exclude the poor. People are not able to participate in CF affairs, because they do not have enough land and time. Initially, the poor lost their access to the resource, now the situation is improving. Projects are helping to enhance their skills, knowledge and income (I. no. 58, project, 12 October 2006).

Thus, the physical resources constitute an important dimension while defining 'exclusion' and 'inclusion'. This respondent being familiar with the power of local elites in FUG functioning however has limited perspective on the ways of addressing elitism. For this respondent, capability matters for the empowerment of the poor.

Interviews with expatriates and powerful, local staff indicate many hold a physical perspective of exclusion/inclusion. The interview with an expatriate forester, who joined Nepalese forestry after a decade of CF experience in other parts of the world, reflects that 'equality' more than 'equity' becomes the concern of exclusion/inclusion definitions.

Equality when everyone faces the same price and has the same chance to buy should be first and then equity about resource distribution should be tackled. For example, the price of internal sale of *sal* timber is NRs 300 per cft. A FUG can internally sell 50 cft wood per family. Users who have NRs 15,000 can buy timber from community forests. They then sell them at higher prices and profit. But, the poor lack money and cannot buy timber. They have to be compensated by other resources such as fodder and firewood (I. no. 58, project, 12 October 2006).

While this respondent recognises the limitation of the poor to engage in timber business, this view limits the opportunity for the poor to become involved in commercial processes.

Six out of 11 senior advisors who have been in the sector since the late 1980s did not regard exclusion as an important issue to highlight compared to the progress CF made, given the state's weak capacity. They asserted that what they are doing is good. A very senior advisor situated the position of donors' role in CF as,

How do we say exclusion is a problem? It is improving. The state's role has been transferred to community level in forest resource management. People have gained access to forest resources and income generation opportunities. Social progress is seen, though the scale is small. The poor have access to credit/loans. Positive progress can be seen in project supported areas (I. no. 53, project, 1 June 2006).

Seven out of 19 professional staff consider exclusion/inclusion from a ‘citizen rights’ perspective. A professional staff remarked,

Exclusion/inclusion means the poor and *dalits* do not have an influence in FUG operations. CF policy and legislation are not explicit about how to include them in decision-making. We focused on FUGs, but not on the problem of the poor to enable them to participate in CF (I. no. 65, project, 18 April 2006).

In sum, donors and project staff interviewed consider physical dimensions an important aspect to define ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’. A few staff considered policy and institutional dimensions as crucial while looking at inclusion/exclusion. All staff interviewed were aware of local power relationships that affect inclusion. However, they do not see addressing power issues as an aspect of inclusion, even though mainstream participation literature argues that addressing elitism is essential to removing barriers to participation by the excluded in an intervention (Guijt and Shah 1998).

5.3.2 What causes exclusion and who is to blame?

The majority of staff interviewed explained the lack of income, wealth, food, awareness, education and ability/capacity as important factors that cause exclusion of the poor and *dalits* in CF. Like government staff, they questioned the ability of the excluded to assert themselves with local elites. In their views, illiteracy and the lack of self-confidence and private resources by the excluded and social structures cause exclusion.

An expatriate forester working in CF project in the 1980s and in a forestry project since 2001 sees the exclusion of the poor and *dalits* from the capacity perspective. ‘The rural poor and *dalits* do not have self-confidence to raise their voices. They lack education. The high-caste women dominate *dalits* women in FUG affairs. *Dalits* women do not have the capacity to run FUGs. Administrating a FUG requires capable people’ (I. no. 46, project, 11 September 2006).

While this respondent is aware of the high-caste domination in FUG affairs, he thinks ‘ability’ or ‘capacity’ is an important factor contributing to this domination. Likewise, another very senior expatriate technical advisor between mid-1970s and 1990 argued that the lack of village leadership capacity on behalf of the poor caused exclusion. He believes that the lack of physical resources blocks the poor to participate in CF.

Another non-forester advisor, who had been in CF since 1991, considered CF as a means of helping the poor, but he located the persistence of poverty in the poor people's actions. He said, 'You [researcher] highlight social issues of community forestry. Our project provides loans to the poor, but the problem is that they misuse loan money' (I. no. 53, project, 1 June 2006).

Some senior foresters see *dalits*, women and the poor as actors in CF, but argue that they do not act. A project decision-maker expresses his feelings about helping the excluded as:

CF is a diamond. It has plenty of opportunities for livelihood improvement. You [*dalits*] women are in worse situation. You should organise yourselves. Nobody [politicians or development worker] can work for *dalits*. You can come to my office at any time with a proposal related to livelihood programmes and leadership development (resource person, *Dalit* women's empowerment in NRM, national workshop, Kathmandu, 5 March 2006).

This dominant vision amongst high-level forestry officials sees the cause of exclusion within people because of their limitations such as lack of skills and resources, and inability to demand services. These views do not see anything wrong with CF policy. While this respondent recognises poverty amongst *dalits*, he sees the problems in the *dalits'* inability to act upon and lose the opportunity offered to them through CF.

The majority of senior staff mentioned the state's limited capacity to implement policy as another major factor limiting progress at addressing poverty and exclusion.

For a Nepali advisor, who has been with the sector since mid-1980s, the progress made in the sector is impressive given the state's weak implementation capacity. He remarked:

Only 22 per cent of the total 61 per cent government forest potential for community-based management is managed under community forests. Large scale villages are excluded from the benefit of CF development. Exclusion issues at FUG level is not a big deal compared to the issue at the state level (Field note, 22 November 2006).

This view focuses on the scale of implementation as the factor limiting impact, rather than on the dynamics that sustain exclusion in areas of current CF implementation.

Exceptionally, two CF consultants (one Nepali non-forester and one expatriate forester) who have in-depth knowledge about CF of India, Nepal and South Asia think the cause of exclusion relates to donors and the government system. They consider bureaucratic constraints while viewing the cause of exclusion such as the 'controlling' attitude of government, and the lack of social competency and equitable staffing policy at donor level. For example, NRM senior staff in donor offices in Kathmandu is mostly NRM specialists with limited skills and knowledge of social process. They think these processes impact on FUGs empowerment, which in turn affects the poorest.

Project and INGOs staff that have CF programme implementation responsibility at the local level see *dalits* or the poor as 'an active actor' but also see that they are at risk of further marginalisation. They pointed out resistance from top-level officials to consider an agenda other than the environment. A programme coordinator remarked 'I presented women and poor people's exclusion in community forestry, based on my master thesis results. The former planning chief of the forest ministry denied it and reacted negatively in the sense that community forestry has already empowered women in forest management' (I. no. 40, INGO, 5 September 2006).

Likewise, another project coordinator who works in the field of development in the NRM sector since 1985, considered organisational culture a problem for persistent exclusion. He considered power issues important when tackling exclusion. He however did not feel responsible to internalise power issues within the project because of his low position. He remarked that, 'Inclusion of the pro-poor provisions in forest management plan in FUGs does not solve the vicious cycle of poverty, unless project management integrates power relation issues in CF development' (I. no. 65, project, 18 April 2006).

When asked who was responsible for causing exclusion, the majority of staff interviewed identified the community and the excluded, arguing that what CF achieved is good. Four out of nine expatriate foresters interviewed strongly argue that 'exclusion' is a consequence of the socio-cultural system of the country, implicitly suggesting that the projects and policy are not a cause of exclusion. They claim that the economic backwardness of the poor limit their participation, which in turn leads to exclusion. For example, one respondent noted that 'For the poor, transac-

tion cost is high to participate in voluntary work. There is no incentive mechanism established in CF system' (I. no. 60, project, 23 May 2006).

The following statement by a donor representative in a policy meeting provides further evidence that exclusion and inequity are societal problems. 'We are aware that in the Nepalese society people with influence benefit more. Within community forestry, this is often also the case. But this is first of all a problem of the society and not the problem of community forestry' (FSCC 2003: 93).

The minority view argues that donors and donor projects are partially responsible for exclusion. Junior project staff tend to articulate this view. Two female officers, one with forestry background and the other with combination of forestry and social science, point out a number of ways their organisation contributes to the preservation of exclusion. The lack of senior donor staff from the low castes and ethnic minorities, gender inequality in project power, the lack of staff expertise on social issues, the lack of focus of project decision-makers on social issues while interacting with government policymakers and the dominant view at the project management level that perceives social issues as 'societal problems' are the causes for exclusion.

Aid actors externalise exclusion. They see it as consequence of the lack of income and other physical resources of the excluded and socio-cultural system, not of their own actions. This vision lends itself to a focus of aid action on reducing inequality in access to income and physical resources, but not to broader empowerment.

5.3.3 What should be done about exclusion?

Respondents have differing views about how to address exclusion, but they largely focus on the importance of increasing instrumental participation as a measure to solve exclusion, and they believe that the donor-funded project is a suitable means to implement policy leading to social change. They generally see the FUG as the appropriate actor for fixing the problem of exclusion. CF donors do not believe that the state can be responsible for fixing the problem for a number of reasons.

Senior staff respondents feel the weak Nepali state is a hindrance to achieving social outcomes. They cite hierarchy, technical interests, individual interest at the policy level and rent-seeking behaviours as constraints to implementing CF and see little potential for change at the policy level. As a result, respondents do not think the facilitation of a social

agenda by the forestry sector is possible. Some complained about donors for imposing the need to consider gender and equity in CF development with a conviction that the role of the forestry sector is exclusively technical. An expatriate forester said:

Donors are funding for gender and equity mainstreaming activities. What will happen is uncertain given the limited human resources and motivation of staff within the forest ministry. Forestry is a technical field. How do we expect that the social outcomes can be achieved by the forest ministry, which is a technical sector (I. no. 60, project, 23 May 2006)?

This thinking contributes to maintaining exclusion as aid staff with responsibility for assisting state actors have little conviction that dealing with social issues is or should be the state's role.

The majority of donors and project staff do not think that highlighting the problems of continued exclusion in CF will contribute to a more inclusionary outcome. For them, the existing CF policy framework has had a lot of success and will contribute to reducing poverty because FUGs have the power to develop and implement various development programmes for the excluded. An expatriate explains the success of CF as follows:

Compared to other countries, Nepal is advanced in community forestry, though a very large gap exists in society. CF has a good legal foundation. It focuses on a group approach rather than individuals. Excluded people do not know about the CF policy. Unlike Kirgizstan, Nepal has good experience with community forestry. Government actors are not stereotyped. They started to talk about social aspects and speak English (I. no. 50, project, 24 August 2006).

Respondents see response to exclusion at the ground level (rather than the policy level), and that projects are suitable tools or arena to reach the community. A Nepali advisor (a non-forester involved in CF since early 1990s mostly with policy level role) explained the success FUGs had in implementing a number of development programmes as a sign of social change. He constantly highlighted the pro-poor income generation activities in communal land, literacy classes for women and the use of FUG funds for drinking water and schools as indicators of CF success. He remarked,

Communities are able to plan and implement community development programmes. FUGs are using wasteland for income generation activities

for the poor. This is not stated in CF policy or laws. Thus, something has reached the village due to projects. We cannot expect this change from government side (I. no. 89, project, 12 October 2006).

Interviews with donor staff reflected clear dualistic influences. On the one hand, they see CF as a means to social change. At the same time, they protect the traditional value of forestry in the sense that it cannot do much for poverty and other sectors have to be equally responsible for it. Four staff with influence on three projects all expressed, 'forestry is a small sector with limited workforce, so it cannot address the whole issue of poverty'.

At the other end of the spectrum, seven of 41 respondents (four of them foresters) with programme coordination and implementation roles had deep feelings towards the excluded. They thought policy should address institutional and structural issues. They did not think the facilitation of pro-poor programmes or gender inclusion in FUGs' operational plan and constitution would support change unless the forestry system changes. For them, traditional forestry thinking, interests of senior forest officials, capacity and CF legislation are important. A professional staff working with a district-level project manager takes a structural stance as a solution to exclusion.

I feel sad seeing decision-making fora where women do not have any influence in decisions. The provision of 33 per cent women in FUG's executive committee, as stated in the Forestry Master Plan recognises women's role in activity level, but does not recognise their decision-making power. CF legislation undermines the rights to participate by *dalits* and women (I. no. 71, project, 16 March 2006).

This respondent sees the role of CF policy to recognise voice and influence of the excluded.

Like the forest officials, actors from donor and project organisations are also aware of exclusion problems, but for a number of reasons they do not think the issue is their responsibility. They use instrumentalist development thinking to address exclusion in the sense that the lack of resources lead to backwardness of *dalits*, but *dalits* or women have to organise to get it. This perspective supports exclusion, as it does not recognise facilitating 'agency' of the excluded as part of CF process. Actors did not recognise exclusion as consequences of institutional processes that constrain the use of 'agency' of the excluded in FUG functioning.

Actors have different perspectives about how to solve exclusion. Those with a policy role think problems are solvable at the field level and those with more social interactions at community level and a low power base think problems are solvable only at the policy level. Those in power claim FUGs are the proper location for poverty reduction. For them, capacity-building of the poorest, income generation and implementation of CF policy are major concerns. Some minority voices see the need to include structure as a major agenda in CF rather than capability, but they feel the lack of power to influence the agenda. The minority view also argues that decision-makers of the forestry sector and donors have a role in tackling exclusion.

Not only do perspectives on exclusion vary across donors and project staff, perspectives on exclusion/inclusion vary between donors.

Table 5.3
Difference of worldviews between donors

Donor	Meaning of exclusion	Meaning of inclusion
AusAID	Lack of resources and inability of women and <i>dalits</i> to assert themselves	Access of women to FUG committees, literacy, income, and forest resources
SDC	Lack of decision-making and resource opportunity by the poor, <i>dalits</i> and women	Access of the excluded to decision-making structures in different layers of community institutions (e.g. forest-based enterprises, FUGs, civil society), physical resources, and inclusion in FUG policy
DFID	People excluded from gaining access to resources and opportunities	Access of the poor and excluded to asset/services and FUG committees, inclusion in FUG policy
DANIDA	Lack of participation in FUG committee and forest management activities	Access of women to FUG committees and participation in forest resource management
USAID	Lack of participation of women in FUG committees and physical resources	Access of women to FUG committees, advocacy skills and income

Source: Interviews 2006; DFID 2005; NACRMLP 2002; SDC 2005; NARMSAP 2005

5.3.4 Different worldviews between donors

There are differences between donors in viewing CF and exclusion issues in CF. Interviews with aid staff affiliated with NRM and holding a livelihood advisory role in donor offices in Kathmandu, at the project level and review of country strategy papers and project design documents exemplify it. As shown in table 5.3, not all donors have the same views on the meaning of exclusion and inclusion. Some donors have a socially sensitive perspective while others do not. All the views however focus on 'the community' not the state as the site and cause of exclusion.

They looked at the community as potential site for poverty reduction from two perspectives: spatial and institutional. Spatially, communities are accessible to the poor. The state and its organisations (e.g. forest offices) are far from the poor. Institutionally, a community has organised institutions such as FUGs which are effective in delivering services and resources to the poor.

AusAID

A staff member from AusAID defined exclusion as lack of resources and, women and *dalits*' inability to assert themselves effectively. She felt it was less important to discuss the issue in the sense that *dalits* have their weakness to work collectively. She pointed out that exclusion/inclusion issues mostly relate to people's resources and the capacity to participate in FUG decision-making. She argued that social issues are not the responsibility of the forest ministry, given its technical identity. Like government foresters, she disagreed with the reservation policy for the excluded. She claimed that access of the excluded to income, literacy and FUG committees would minimise exclusion.

Although AusAID introduced social equity and pro-poor livelihood approach since 2003 (NACRMLP 2002), interviews with project professionals reveal that involving the poor in the process is still out of the main agenda. A staff with a business development role argued that enterprises could not be pro-poor oriented:

In enterprise development, capable people are more important rather than involving people who are not capable to do business. The forest-based enterprise requires capacity, skills, time and resources. Of course, big fish eats small fish! The poor do not have the capacity to network. We do not go directly to the poor households. The project's role is to facilitate local

leaders in FUGs, identify their areas of interest in forest-based enterprises for supporting the poor (I. no. 59, project, 30 June 2006).

Other professionals felt the need to consider social issues but they explain a number of reasons that limit them from translating social equity policy into action. The key issues mentioned were project's institutional history such as environmental interests, technical procedures and administrative resources, structured communication and reporting, dominance of staff with technical expertise, use of field staff in data collection and reporting and need to spend time with expatriate consultants rather than with villagers (I. no. 61, project, 27 February 2006).

SDC

SDC perceives exclusion and inclusion issues differently. The staff interviewed expressed a deep feeling towards the excluded and recognised 'exclusion' as a cause of conflict. They asserted that the lack of participation in decision-making and resources by women, *dalits* and the poor is exclusion. Providing them access to decision-making structures in different types of grassroots institutions, physical resources and FUG policies seems inclusive on the part of SDC staff. SDC sees education as an important basis for increasing access to resources and decision-making by the excluded in their FUGs (I. no. 47, project, 4 May 2006).

Most of the interviewees from in and outside SDC claimed SDC's approach to be relatively socially sensitive. Some examples cited are: (a) SDC's education scholarship for the excluded; (b) SDC created a special strategy to reach the poor and disadvantaged section of rural communities directly during the conflict due to the realisation that social exclusion problems are one of the reasons for conflict in Nepal; (c) SDC's inclusion of actors from CBOs, FUGs and civil society in national and international short-courses by giving them emphasis equal to government actors (I. no. 54, donor, 12 September 2006).

SDC believes in a decentralised approach and local level democratic process in development (Dürr 2002; SDC 2005). As a result, SDC recognises CF as one of the most successful development programmes with decentralisation principles and people's empowerment. However, SDC does not draw the link between poverty and values, structure and policy of government. For example, strategic objectives envisioned in the 'livelihood and inclusion' component of a country strategy plan largely focuses on empowerment of local institutions. The strategic objective re-

lated to improve government policy emphasises the decentralised sectoral policy (SDC 2005: 25). The objectives do not gear the role and accountability of the forestry sector towards the excluded. While the exclusion of the poor in CF is recognised, measures to address them focus on practical actions rather than strategic or structural change (ibid). Respondents from within the SDC-funded project reported the limited influence of SDC at the CF policy level and organisations inability to be self-critical. For political reasons, it refuses to raise CF weakness at the policy level (I. no. 50, project, 24 August 2006).

DFID

Interviews with staff with an advisory role on the livelihood theme reveals DFID sees exclusion as people's exclusion from gaining resources and opportunities. By extension, access to resources and services by the excluded and their representation in FUG's policy and committees are seen as inclusion (I. no. 49, donor, 29 May 2006). When asked whether exclusion is associated with government policy in the context of CF, the staff interviewed asserted that CF has given power to people and complained that government bureaucracy has difficulty responding to people's needs.

DFID's Country Assistance Plan for Nepal defined social inclusion as 'to help women, excluded caste, ethnic group to achieve more equitable access to resources and opportunities' (DFID 2004: 17). DFID developed three domains of change such as 'access to assets and services', 'voice, influence and agency' and 'policy as indicators of social inclusion' (DFID 2005). Although DFID focuses on the poor and excluded, the strategies are not explicit in terms of sectoral accountability for exclusion. For example, its four-year country assistance plan develops five strategic themes—peace building, governance, basic services, social inclusion and livelihoods. While governance strategy seeks the need for the democratic process to respond to the needs of the excluded (DFID 2005: 7-8), there is no strategic discussion on the way the forestry sector can be part of the democratic process. Staff interviewed in the DFID funded project argued that the FUG is the appropriate site of intervention, as the forestry sector has limited resources and capacity to tackle a social agenda.

Moreover, the way DFID conceptualises forest management reflects a continued focus on scientific forestry. For example, since 2000, DFID

began to support CF in the *terai* region, which has a distinct socio-political and natural resource characteristic from the hills. The *terai* has natural forests with high-economic value. Interviews with project staff reveal that they consider the management of public communal wasteland and off-farm income generation innovative approaches to pro-poor livelihood development. This strategy nevertheless gives little attention to methods of mainstreaming the poor and landless in managing valuable community forests in the *terai*. Reading official documents verifies the emphasis on resource-based intervention. For example, a DFID review mission pointed out the problem of encroachment as, 'Encroachment remains a big challenge to forest management. The land should gradually be converted into forest by allowing the encroacher to carry out agro-forestry with "quick impact programme" support as required. Forest ministry needs a clear policy for these encroached areas' (DFID 2006: 5).

Project staff interviewed identified many issues that constrained them from being pro-social. Notable examples mentioned were top-down project planning, lack of voice by field staff in project decision-making, lack of criticism on intervention process, confusion at work due to introduction of many development concepts over time and lack of attention to improve government's interest on social issues. The dominant view about the potential of CF resides in the provision of services to the poorest and does not link social outcomes to sectoral policy and actors' behaviour. An interview with a very senior project staff member revealed an affirmed belief that engagement of the DoF in social programmes would have little effect. According to him, a NGO-led social programme contributes to social change. He argued that the programme gained a lot of popularity, as it sensitised people about CF policy. He also pointed out the lack of ownership of the programme at the government level (I. no. 72, project, 6 September 2006).

DANIDA

For DANIDA, exclusion/inclusion relates to the representation of women in community forest management. Staff with an NRM role interviewed for this study believe elite influence causes exclusion, but the responsibility for tackling exclusion rests with the community. Like other donors, they point out that CF has good potential for development and think that the weak governance of the forestry sector would reduce the potential (I. no. 52, donor, 13 November 2006). A respondent men-

tioned his limitation to provide knowledge about social issues and referred project staff to consult. The involvement of the staff in grant delivery was one of the limiting factors to gaining familiarity with social issues.

According to project staff interviewed, the DANIDA funded project sees inclusion/exclusion as women's participation in FUG committees and forest management activities (I. no. 66, project, 14 July 2006). Within the project system, discussion on social issues confined to the number of women-only user groups formed per year, women's attendance in community training and their representation on FUG committees (ibid). Staff interviews identified a number of issues that have limited impact on social issues compared to technical aspects in project areas. They include focus of project programmes on training of government staff and forest users, domination of technical staff in senior positions and the mode of project operation, which follows the government system and it is difficult to change the technical interests of government actors.

USAID

USAID staff interviewed see access of the excluded to FUG committees and resources such as income and advocacy skills as inclusion. Interestingly, while the USAID respondent called USAID's role in forestry sector's policy design and the institutionalisation of forestry education a success of aid, he also claimed that technical expertise within the sector was a barrier to improving social outcomes (I. no. 69, donor, 28 November 2006). He did not believe in the possibility of change through the forestry sector due to domination of technical disciplines. When asked whether there is a relationship between exclusion and CF intervention, he said the problem lies in the community and with the excluded. He argued that the demand for structural change should come from the excluded themselves. He pointed out that the current 'right-based approach' of the USAID funded project would empower the excluded, as it focuses on advocacy skills and political awareness.

Difference in understanding a single problem

Apparently, the concept and approach to tackling exclusion and social issues vary between donors and staff within donors/projects. Their views are divergent on how to act to address exclusion and poverty. The perceived potential for change varies between donors. There is a differ-

ent understanding of these issues amongst donor staff in the same office depending on their disciplinary backgrounds. All donors and their staff are aware of the weak governance of the forestry sector and their vision of change focus on the community rather than the state, and instrumental form of participation. Donors seem non-critical in tackling institutional issues associated with government, although they are aware of the problem in dealing with development. The politics of aid, as described in chapters 4 and 7, influence the perspective of donors and government on CF development. The chance of critical reflection about CF progress from poverty and social dynamics is low because of actors' access to grant money and relational behaviours in CF aid politics.

5.4 Non-State Actors' Perception of Exclusion in CF

5.4.1 What is exclusion in CF?

The 17 non-state actors interviewed for this study represent a wide range of grassroots views and come from NRM-NGOs and civil society organisation. In Nepali forestry, civil society organisations include the representatives of community-based NRM groups. These include federation of community forestry user groups (e.g. FECOFUN), association of forest resources user groups (e.g. NEFUG), association of forest-based enterprise groups and association of grassroots women working in NRM (e.g. HIMAWANTI). These organisations have representative bodies (branch/chapter) at the community, district and national levels. When defining exclusion/inclusion in the context of CF, they focused on four major issues: rights of community to forest resources, participation in FUG decision-making and benefit distribution, access to external opportunities such as skills, materials and knowledge, and awareness of CF policy. None of the members interviewed mentioned 'inclusion' as a right.

All of the NRM related civil society chairpersons interviewed perceive exclusion/inclusion as the protection of 'existing CF policy' from the state. They did not feel the specific issue of the poor, *dalits* or women was important enough to bring up. They claim that the decentralisation of natural resource management responsibility created a space for community development and forest improvement, which they see as very progressive compared to forest policies in the past. A civil society chair explains the position of his organisation in terms of tackling exclusion as,

Yes, the poor and *dalits* are excluded from benefits sharing and decision-making. There is an unequal power relation at the local level. The poor have to rely on the local elites for their existence. But, the Forestry Master Plan and Forest Act of 1993 are good policies. Our organisation is a running policy advocacy programme to ensure that FUG's rights will not be taken back. This is a part of addressing exclusion (I. no. 22, civil society, 28 June 2006).

While this respondent recognises local power relation issues, his concept of inclusion is to advocate for the existing CF policy without looking at whether the policy provides space for decision-making rights by the excluded.

Those non-state actors whose organisations were established because of donors' perceived exclusion from community intervention do not see any problems at the policy level. A retired high school teacher working with CF since the early 1990s explained the success of CF claiming that 'FUG' is the right institution to decide policies for the poor.

Forest resources are improving because of community forestry. We gained experience about community forestry while implementing a development programme in 230 FUGs. Some members are rich and others are poor. Some have more resources that are private and others do not. Forest policies do not restrict the access to benefits by the poor and women in community forestry. FUG can decide policies for the poor (I. no. 18, civil society, 8 November 2006).

Exclusion in the eyes of this respondent relates to local society. Despite the awareness of class differentiation, he does not see that exclusion has to do with policy or forestry in the sense that CF policy has put the responsibility at the FUG level.

Likewise, another chair who came from a political background in a civil society organisation disagreed with the fact that exclusion is a problem because of his awareness of change happening in people. He focused on the material dimensions of exclusion/inclusion, equating the lack of access to resources by the poor with exclusion. He argued that people have gained rights to manage forests. He remarked, 'People are owners of the forests. They contributed to conservation and development of forests. The poor are getting firewood. Even a porter has free access to twigs on his way home' (I. no. 24, civil society, 22 February 2006).

In contrast, three out of the 17 respondents (one ethnic and two from high-caste) who work at a district level civil society organisation and implement a CF development programme at the grassroots focused on institutional process in their definitions of exclusion. A respondent remarked,

No one cares about the poor or *dalits*! We, with the support of aid, assisted FUGs in making pro-poor operational plans. We found it difficult to have participation by the poor because of their economic situation and social relations. Dealing with local power was difficult and cannot be solved by focusing only at implementation level. We run programmes for the poor, but our organisation lacks people who are concerned with and capable of dealing with social issues (I. no. 23, civil society, 22 August 2006).

This respondent feels concern for the poor or other disadvantaged groups. He points out that only focusing at the implementation level is not enough and agrees that the institutional processes of intervening agencies would contribute to exclusion.

5.4.2 What causes exclusion and who is to blame?

The majority of respondents interviewed identified social structure, ignorance, lack of private resources, education and capacity as causes of exclusion. Eleven out of 17 respondents who represent high-caste and advantaged ethnic groups, hold key positions, and came from a strong socio-political base also cited the ignorance of *dalits* and the poor about their rights in CF and their inability to claim rights over community resources as the causes of exclusion.

Those actors who developed their capacity and knowledge about forestry policies and organisations through personal networks argued that the lack of capability causes exclusion. They felt proud of building self-confidence to discuss with higher-level officials at national and international levels because of their ability to make contacts with powerful actors. They pointed out that the lack of such competency causes the exclusion of *dalits* and women.

Some respondents mentioned the role of physical strength in determining access to benefits. They questioned the capacity of physically disabled people and the poor to take part in forest-based enterprises and to benefit from it. A respondent who leads three different organisations associated with NRM-based enterprises and is actively involved in CF since the mid-1990s reported that his organisation achieved success with

forest-based enterprises with the support of aid. He pointed out the limitation of the poor to participate in CF. He locates the exclusion problem within the poor by saying,

Our organisation with the help of X organisation [INGO] is able to support the forest ministry in the development of non-timber forest product harvesting and marketing policies. Donors are emphasising the need to include poor households in FUG-based enterprises. It is not possible for the poor to participate because they do not have young literate members who can participate in forest products harvesting, collecting and processing (I. no. 27, NGO, 26 June 2006).

A national level CF activist with a lot of experience with CF who was able to develop her leadership base through CF project networks argued that the existing social system and FUGs' inability to include *dalits* are the main causes of exclusion. She cited an example of her organisation's success in which *dalit* households were included in the FUG. 'Our social system excludes *dalits*. But there are also cases where *dalits* are active. A high number of *dalits* are included in FUGs in those areas with high number of *dalit* households' (I. no. 17, civil society, 23 August 2006).

A respondent involved in CF since mid-1990s and operating an NRM-civil society organisation at national level constantly mentioned the personal limitation of women and the poor to take part in CF. He also externalises the problem by saying, 'In my FUG, the poor are unable to participate in CF affairs due to their economic situation. Women are also showing less interest, due to their workload. We had to include people who can give time to the executive board of the FUG' (I. no. 26, civil society, 22 June 2006).

While the majority of actors interviewed see the poor and women as the problem, some respondents pointed out the government actor as source for exclusion. They are critical of government behaviour, but they lack ideas of how they can improve government capacity. A civil society chairperson remarked,

Exclusion issues are associated with other issues such as our feudal state system. CF has been able to provide services at the grassroots that many sectoral ministries are unable to do. CF laws are progressive. Forest bureaucrats are trying to take CF back. *Kamis* (blacksmith) are not getting charcoal not because of FUG, but because of government attitudes (I. no. 18, civil society, 8 November 2006).

Another respondent with high social status echoed an article written by a CF expert that highlighted the role of CF in providing services that 16 ministries are supposed to provide. He felt that the FUGs' position as service providers at the grassroots was an indicator of CF success. His body language, focus of talk to his members and lack of attention to talk about social issues during the interview clearly reflected the need of CF to link on a global sphere rather than reflecting upon poor people's issues.

Those few respondents critical of the attitude and practice of their own organisation and its principles see their own governance system as the problem. They explain a number of barriers that hinder transformation towards social equity. These include lack of transparency in decision-making within their organisation, lack of social knowledge, lack of recognition of local knowledge in forest management systems, lack of time to reflect on the impact of programmes on the poor and lack of priority placed on social issues when members discuss development plans and policies.

Those civil society staff members involved in CF facilitation at the grassroots since the mid-1990s recognise the current CF development approach as contributing to exclusion. They do not think the situation of the poor will improve unless all CF actors feel the need to challenge local power issues. A respondent explained the problem as follows:

We have benefited more than the poor. We run policy advocacy programmes to empower the poor and invite the elites. There is a diversity of understanding and interests between members within our organisation. Donors are not interested in questioning whether the poverty reduction programmes they support really help the poor. Donor X funded us for a programme. The donor was not worried about the impact on the poor, but was concerned about whether we used aid money within the project period (I. no. 23, civil society staff, 22 August 2006).

When asked about whether donors bear the responsibility for exclusion in CF, non-state actors had two views. Those at the decision-making level and with strong ties to donor levels recognised the role of donors and their staff as important in the establishment of their organisation, capacity and grants for development programmes. They were not critical of donors. Some members who have relatively low scale networks with donors complained that donors did not fund them and asked for the completion of many procedures before funding.

In sum, all of the non-state actors interviewed externalise the cause of exclusion outside their roles. A significant number of actors with influence and high social status see government actors as the source of problems, and a minority view claims their own organisation contributes to the problem.

5.4.3 What should be done about exclusion?

Non-state members have differing views about how to solve exclusion, but the dominant views focus on continuity of the instrumental form of participation. They believe that the implementation of the CF policy and targeted programmes would benefit the poor and other marginalised groups in two ways. First, the existing CF policy allows FUGs to make pro-poor programmes. Second, direct access to external services would empower the poor with information and skills. They explained that activities such as income generation activities, skill-based training, CF awareness, health awareness and sanitation programmes would lead to inclusion outcomes.

Only four out of 17 (two staff members and two executive members) with relatively low social status and power focused on the need to improve the institutional process of donors and the organisational culture of state and non-state partners. Their concerns remained with the lack of social expertise and commitment towards the poor within their own organisation, and the lack of donor interest in changing the attitude of government about social processes. There is a lack of vision among actors about how to overcome the issue of local elitism. An NGO member expressed,

Inclusion is related to change in the perception and behaviour of elites and non-elites in FUGs. We are involved in pro-poor livelihood programmes supported by donor X. We deliver livelihood grants to the poor households for income generation activities. Village elites are not helping anymore. At government level, forestry officials do not like to talk about social issues (I. no. 35, NGO, 10 May 2006).

Although a minority view, three out of 13 executive members of non-state organisations mentioned the lack of staff interest in social issues in the forest department as a limiting factor to achieve inclusion outcomes.

To conclude, the solution to address exclusion in the mindset of non-state actors focuses on the provision of pro-poor services. They believe that access to forest products and other opportunities by the poor and

women would reduce exclusion. Their ideas about CF as development approach did not include 'inclusion' as rights. Dominant views stress continuity with the existing CF policy. In contrast, minority view that came from staff and members with low power consider intervention at policy level an important aspect for inclusion outcomes. They argue for the need to consider social issues from wider dimensions of capacity, knowledge and power in intervention processes.

5.5 Politicians' Perception of Exclusion in CF

5.5.1 What is exclusion in CF?

The seven politicians interviewed for this study cover a broad spectrum of political views and come from both urban and rural areas. When asked how they define exclusion and inclusion in the context of CF, the majority of politicians focused on at least one of two issues: rights of communities to forests and/or forest products, or physical participation (or presence) in forest management activities. In their explanations of exclusion, the politicians addressed exclusion of communities and of women, but not of *dalits*, unless specifically prompted by the researcher.

Politicians coming from the leftist and rightist ideologies addressed different dimensions of the problem of exclusion from forests and forest products in their answers. Politicians in the Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist (CPN/UML) talked about the rights to forests: communities that lack rights to forests miss the poverty reduction potential of community-based natural resource management. These politicians argued that decentralisation of natural resource management responsibility from the state to the community has been and is an important measure for reducing inequality in Nepal. They feel satisfied with their success in formalising CF policy, which they see as very participatory and progressive compared to forestry policies in the past. Moreover, giving marginalised communities the right to manage forests is a way to facilitate access to other resources. A high-caste MP who served on the NRM committee of the House of Representative (HoR) in the 1990s and is now actively taking part in NRM issues typified this view in his answer: 'Reducing poverty means providing access to decision-making power by communities in local natural resource management and their involvement in community development. Community's access to land, forests, and water resources would facilitate other opportunities such as access to education and infrastructures' (I. no. 30, MP, 25 June 2006).

All politicians interviewed, except one, mentioned guaranteeing access to forests as the way out of exclusion. Their concern remained with the community as a whole. One high-caste MP with sound knowledge of NRM advocacy explained:

State controlled forests in the past. Now, people have access to forests after community forestry. The choice of species according to the interest of local community is important. For instance, those forest plants that can provide fruit for people, foliage for livestock, timber for house construction and fuel wood for cooking should be given priority (I. no. 30, MP, 25 June 2006).

Likewise, an emphasis on 'community development through CF' rather than on social equity was clear during interviews with MPs belonging to the Nepali Congress Party with strong influence in the political sphere.

Only one out of seven politicians interviewed linked exclusion in CF with a lack of decision-making power by women or *dalits* in the state apparatus. Dominant political thinking in Nepal tends to perceive socially excluded groups as 'uneducated' and 'incapable' of doing management work.

5.5.2 What causes exclusion and who is to blame?

When asked to discuss the causes of exclusion in CF, some politicians known to be interested in and fight for CF issues mentioned the lack of policy implementation and increased recentralisation tendency of the forestry sector. Many politicians interviewed consider forestry bureaucrats a threat to CF. Two respondents, with strong ties to donors and part of the NRM-NGO and NRM committees in the House of Representatives (HoR), argue that it was a bad idea to discuss the shortcomings of CF because it could lead to a backlash and more centralised forest management. 'Forest professionals and mafia including politicians are affecting CF development. They are trying to limit devolution of forest power to communities by disseminating negative issues' (I. no. 32, MP, 10 June 2006).

Other politicians, who represent urban and prestigious social backgrounds, cited the FUG and problems of local elitism as the site and cause of exclusion. They felt that local elitism affects ecology as well as use of community funds. They argued that control over the FUGs by formal rules would support the poor because they think that this would

reduce the possibility of misuse of collective funds by local elites and ensure that they go for forest conservation (I. no. 31, MP, 2 October 2006).

The majority of politicians interviewed see the socioeconomic status of the poor and *dalits* and local feudal social system as part of the cause of exclusion. They view that the low income and low capacity of these groups limit participation in community forestry activities. Five out of 7 politicians interviewed also believed that the lack of policy awareness and literacy among the poor limit their participation in CF, which in turn excludes them from CF benefits.

On the question of whether donors and INGOs bear responsibility for exclusion in CF, the politicians are ambivalent. On one hand, the political economy of Nepal's development is such that aid accounts for the major resource and methods of development (Acharya 2004; Sharma 2001; Tiwari 1992) and politicians are aware of this fact. On the other hand, those politicians with relatively high level of awareness of local level CF and involved in CF policymaking process perceived donors and INGOs as barriers to an inclusive outcome because of influence of donors in development. Because of the strong influence of donors in CF and development policy in general, the politicians feel powerless to change anything even though they represent the poor. A former forest minister remarked, 'The deep-rooted donors and INGO culture has affected the poor. The development ideology of state and NGO is driven by donors/INGOs ideas. For example, many people talk about the poor, but their actions are confined to Kathmandu and workshop/meeting' (I. no. 33, MP, 19 October 2006).

Politicians who are aware of the role of donors in forestry think of CF as a source of international aid and think that FUGs should address exclusion. An MP remarked on the role of government as,

Community forestry in Nepal is very good. Many foreigners have worked with it. The concern of community forestry was how to attract international communities for development. Government gave 100 per cent share to FUGs in terms of income generated from forest management. It was one strategy to attract international aid. FUGs have the role to provide community services. Drinking water, schools and road services are very weak in community forestry. Time has come to look at these aspects to increase women's participation (I. no. 31, MP, 2 October 2006).

In short, all of the politicians interviewed externalise the problem of exclusion, either because they feel that other actors are responsible for exclusion or because they feel powerless to change the problems that they see. They focus instead on the positive role they played in CF development to date.

5.5.3 What should be done about exclusion?

Politicians have differing views about how to address exclusion in CF. Those with the CPN/UML political party argued that full autonomy of FUGs in forest resource management would lead to inclusionary outcomes while others with the Nepali Congress Party considered some degree of control over local groups by the state would result in benefits both for the state and the community. The chair of the national association of local government bodies gave two reasons for focusing on FUGs to reduce poverty. First, a full decentralisation of CF would help the government achieve community development because the current CF is mobilised through central government. Second, forest department staff is limited in regards to engagement with community development activities.

Another highly educated MP who is relatively young compared to other respondents and who has been involved in CF since the beginning of the 1990s saw an important role for CF project leadership in tackling exclusion, and poverty in particular. 'Poverty is the lack of access to services by the poor. Project X began to be pro-poor when project leader Mr Y came on the project. Pro-poor income generation programme is being implemented in the project area' (I. no. 32, MP, 20 June 2006).

In general, for politicians, social issues within CF are more or less limited to poverty reduction and increased access to drinking water, health services, information, schools and other services such as firewood, timber, fodder, leaf litter and forest income. While providing tangible services to poor families becomes a priority area of CF development in the mindset of powerful politicians, the approach remains very technocratic and instrumental. They do not recognise more intangible aspects of exclusion such as, social inequity in resource distribution and decision-making.

5.6 Actors Do Not See Exclusion as Their Fault

Actors have different views on definitions, causes and solutions for exclusion. Views differ not only between organisational actors, but also between individuals even within the same organisation and working on the same goal of poverty reduction. However, there is a dominant view that CF has already greatly improved the situation so why worry about exclusion/inclusion. Actors do not see that they are part of the problem. They tend to externalise the causes and the solutions to the problems outside of their roles and responsibilities.

The definition of exclusion/inclusion commonly focuses on access to resources and FUG committees. All actors are aware of the cause of exclusion, but they locate the problem of inclusion/exclusion outside of their responsibility with the understanding that what they are doing is good. The dominant (if not universal) perception is that the poor, *dalits* and women are not capable of more/lack of trust in them, and those who believe this do not see the point of working towards more transformative participation.

Actors' dominant approach to address exclusion tends to limit CF development to instrumental forms of participation. The perspectives do not see policy and structure as sensitive issues deserving delicate treatment. There are struggles and differing perceptions within each organisation about the appropriate focus and approach to CF intervention. People in power, experienced with forestry development have the most instrumental views, least trust of *dalits* and consider forestry a discipline and not the place to resolve social problems. They focus on maintaining the traditional role of forestry (i.e. dealing with technical and legal issues). People with low power, relatively new to the forestry profession however argue that a change in the forestry system would help address exclusion, and they focused on the need to consider social issues in CF.

Actors' perception on exclusion and their lack of feeling responsible to address it can be explained in large part via their vision of CF more generally and of their own roles and strategies in CF development specifically. Their perceptions on exclusion/inclusion affected their understanding and capacity to identify what CF should be as a development approach.

Table 5.4 presents actors' visions on CF development including the role of CF and their own roles and strategies to make CF a success.

Table 5.4
Actors' vision of CF development

Actors	The role of CF	Actors' perception on own roles in CF	Actors' perception on strategies (key to CF success)
Forestry sector	produce, develop, harvest, and market forests in sustainable way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regulation of resources - technical facilitation - authority and control over FUG mobilisation 	<p>Donors: funding for projects and dealing with social</p> <p>Non-state actor: social mobilisation</p> <p>FUG: tackling social issues</p> <p>Politician: make CF non-political</p>
Donor	produce, develop, harvest and market forests for poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assist the sector with policy processes - projects to support CF implementation 	<p>Sector: policy implementation</p> <p>Non-state actor: social mobilisation</p> <p>FUG: site for poverty reduction</p> <p>Politician: protection of decentralisation policy</p>
Politicians	environment conservation and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect decentralisation policy - maintain international relationships 	<p>Sector: forest decentralisation</p> <p>Donors: services to the poor/women</p> <p>Non-state actor: services to the poor/women</p> <p>FUG: implement pro-poor programmes</p>
Non-state actors	environment conservation and community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocate community right to forests - implement CF development programmes 	<p>Sector: more autonomy to FUGs</p> <p>Donor: funding for pro-poor programmes</p> <p>FUG: tackling social issues</p> <p>Politician: protection of CF policy</p>

Source: Author's own construction

As stated in chapter 2, there is poverty and exclusion issues in Nepali society and actors are involved in reducing poverty through CF intervention. However, actors do not have a shared vision that would help them to address exclusion. The actors' visions do not include mechanisms that challenge oppression and discrimination. While all actors recognise aid to be essential to drive their vision, their perceived role and strategies exclude the structural issue of CF that helps the excluded to be part of the CF system. Actors find it difficult to identify alternatives for addressing poverty beyond aid-assisted programmes. Actors recognise the community as site to address exclusion. None of their strategies recognises CF as a tool or process to address social injustice. The sector sees CF as about forest development, production and conservation. For non-state

actors and donors, CF is also a mechanism for community development and poverty reduction respectively.

Actors' perception on their roles in CF differs in two contested claims: 'regulation of resources' from scientific forestry point of view and 'more autonomy' or 'community rights' to resources. People from non-state actors and the CPN/UML political party see CF as an instrument of environment conservation and community development. They see the protection of 'community rights to forests' and 'implementation of development programmes' as their roles. Another group of people from the forestry sector and donors, and the Nepali Congress Party see CF mainly from conservation and economic benefits point of view. They see 'regulation of forest resources', technical, legal and aid support to CF as their roles.

Actors' contested perception of CF vision raises some issues at the policy level, which has implications for existing exclusion.

First, there is no shared vision within and between actors of how CF should contribute to development. Although some actors have shown an interest in reducing poverty in their official strategies, there is no consensus on how to achieve this or what barriers would have to be overcome.

Second, the actors' vision about CF supports asymmetric relations between natural and social issues in forest resource management in the sense that within all groups interviewed, there are many actors with instrumental views of the forestry sector. Many believe that tackling exclusion is not the responsibility of the sector. This vision increases the likelihood of alienation of the social agenda at the policy level when actors interact and negotiate in policy spaces.

Third, actors interlock *via* roles boundary, formal bases of power, experience and discipline while envisioning their own role and strategies for successful CF development. As a result, they are not able to conceptualise exclusion/inclusion as the outcome of their actions, CF policy or forestry. For example, data shows that members of civil society groups and NGOs have their own knowledge and value system gained through their many years of experience and interactions in the local social system. Many individuals working with non-state actors have a background in social work, policy advocacy, social mobilisation and community development. They also have experience as service agents and working with government actors on policy issues. For them, CF is a social policy with lots of potential for social development. For most actors, 'community'

represents 'people' in general, but not specific social groups and their differentiation. They overlook social relations and individual citizen's rights within the community. Less regulation, more autonomy to FUGs and the provision of development services to them are their strategic concerns.

In contrast, government staff have forestry training primarily. Forests are the prime concern of forest decision-makers. For them, CF is an approach to maintain ecological systems. They feel a close relationship and entitlement with forests. They do not trust others to be part of managing the forestry system and making decisions about forest management. They advocate participation as a means to make the job of the forest department easier and more effective, which is a more instrumental view of participation, as Mahanty (2000) argues. They see non-state actors and donor-funded projects as suitable organisations to deal with social issues; they however do not see the significance of sharing forest management planning and decision-making roles with non-state actors, political institutions or communities. Subsequent chapters of this thesis discuss why foresters hold this vision.

At donor level, actors see development as their role. They see CF as a strong tool to practice rural development. Although they are aware of exclusionary outcomes of CF, they see nothing wrong with the structure of CF or the policy for inclusive outcomes. Neoliberalism (Sunderlin 2005)² and 'capability' (Sen 2000) thinking dominates in their perception of CF. Donor staff, mostly foresters and few sociologists, economists and agriculturists, have in-depth experience about policy dialogue and project work. They are aware of the state's weak governance, the problems with a technical-oriented forestry sector and limited human resources to provide services. They do not think the sector can reduce poverty. As a result, they consider that the most effective ways to support poverty reduction through CF is to empower FUGs and support them in planning and implementing pro-poor livelihood improvement programmes. Donors have limited interests in looking at inclusion/exclusion as outcomes of policy or government processes. Limited interest of donors and their staff in challenging instrumental forms of participation links to the positions and historical relationships of donors in CF intervention as analysed in other chapters.

At the political level, politicians see CF as an instrument for maintaining international relationships in decentralised development process.

Like non-state actors, when politicians use the term ‘community’, they refers to ‘people’ in general, not to specific groups or sub-groups of people. In their world view, forest decentralisation and the provision of social services to the poor and women determine the success of CF. This vision indeed affects existing exclusion because it undermines understanding poverty dynamics from social and structural dimensions when state politicians interact with the government and donors in forest policy spaces and aid negotiations (see chapter 7). Perceiving social issues from ‘social service approach’ does not enhance the capacity of political actors in transformation process in development approaches.

Divergent views in NRM interventions often reflect deep-rooted beliefs and organisational cultural stances of various actors, embedded in their histories, roles, education, experience and untested assumptions towards the poor, *dalits* and women in natural resource management (Mahanty 2000). This chapter showed that many actors share a stated interest in poverty reduction and livelihood protection. Yet, as shown in chapter 3, the forestry sector has been dominated by natural scientists and technocrats for years. Eco-centric views continue to dominate implementation and policy development. The next chapter examines the role that aid and donor organisations have played in developing and maintaining this knowledge system.

Notes

¹ In Nepalese forestry, technical staff are categorised into two broad categories: officer (gazetted) and non-officer (non-gazetted) level. The staff with officer positions sub-divide into three ranks in hierarchical order: First-class, second-class and third-class. The first-class officer includes two tiers: secretary and joint secretary. The first-class officers are of high rank and the third-class officers are low rank among officer level staff. The non-officer staff include rangers, forest guards and field staff of the District Forest Offices. The rank follows the same in administrative staff.

² Neoliberalism prescription often assumes that economic growth will jointly alleviate poverty and readdress environment problems (Sunderlin et al. 2005).

6

Knowledge Production and Transfer

6.1 Introduction

Knowledge is important for tackling social issues in CF, but at the same time, it reinforces traditional views. Social interactions reproduce knowledge. Since knowledge acts as power and vice-versa (Foucault 1972), the development of a single body of knowledge affects policies and strategies that maintain the value and perspective of the discipline. Science and knowledge interact with each other. Knowledge is a set of organised statements of facts or ideas (Bell 1973: 41 in Knorr Cetina 1999: 6). The process of knowledge development affects the functions and the role of forestry staff in CF operations.

Based on data from official documents and interviews, this chapter discusses the role of aid in the process of knowledge development and its transfer to policy at the national and community levels. The aim of exploring these dynamics is to show why and how a certain type of knowledge is produced, becomes dominant in the CF policy process and is transferred at the community level. The chapter also discusses the consequences for exclusion/inclusion outcomes.

6.2 Content of Foresters' Training and Role in CF

The idea that foresters should be trained in forestry emerged through expatriates who came to Nepal with their Western forestry knowledge in the 1940s. When expatriates introduced forest utilisation techniques, the forest department realised that there was a lack of scientific knowledge among forestry staff. In 1948, the department sent an urban forester with high social status for formal training in India at the Imperial Forestry College at Dehra Dun for the first time (I. no. 8, GO, 14 April 2006). Nepal's association with the Colombo Plan increased foresters'

access to scientific training. Established in 1950, the Colombo Plan is a regional intergovernmental organisation. It is an institutional framework for bilateral arrangements involving foreign aid and technical assistance for economic and social development in the Asia Pacific region (www.colombo-plan.org). Human resource development in the region is its main objective. Nepal joined the Colombo Plan in 1952 (FACD 2005) when the training of the future forest department staff started in Dehra Dun.

A Western expatriate who advised on forestry policy frameworks for Nepalese forestry in 1954 defined forestry as a 'discipline responsible for the management of land and forest resources under the control of forest authority and technically trained foresters'. Technical training is required to manage a forest scientifically, which allows foresters to harvest forests on sustained yield principles. This resulted in training foresters as one of the key strategies of forestry intervention. Between 1961 and 1964, eight forestry graduates went to the USA for technical studies (Robbe 1965: 17).

The production of a professional body became a priority when donors started their intervention in CF. Higher education of government officials abroad became one of the major activities of aid. The forestry sector's policy review carried out by the World Bank in 1978 emphasised the need to train foresters locally and internationally. It defined the role of foresters to motivate people in plantation and conservation (World Bank 1978). This mission recommended a comprehensive review of the existing forestry-education training system and curricula. As a result, a joint mission of the Ministry of Overseas Development of the UK and USAID on forestry education developed strategies for forestry training.

In the meantime, a body of Nepali and expatriate forestry professionals involved in CF project planning in 1979 defined forester skills and knowledge as a requirement in CF. The definition of forester's role focused on helping villagers, but production and conservation dominate the perspective.

What is required is actually not training, but reorientation towards CF. The ranger and the foresters should be taught about the species most suitable for meeting the needs of the villagers for fuel wood, fodder, timber and how these species should be grown in nursery;...about the new legislation...and about public relations (FAO 1979, Appendix 6: 25).

In 1990, the USAID funded project that operated within the Institute of Forestry (IoF) Pokhara, Nepal, convened a conference on national forestry curriculum development. The conference intended to discuss educational needs of natural resource managers in Nepal due to new policy scenarios of CF. All actors recognised the need to change the forestry institution from its traditional protection-oriented role to that of people-oriented forestry. However, they argued for the need to enhance skills and knowledge about community-based forest management planning (IOFP 1990). The workshop emphasised the need to include social science knowledge and skills but without explaining the concepts. It focused on extension/communication, user group formation, conflict resolution, forest management plan writing and participatory approach as essential subjects to implement CF. None of them however specifically included gender and social relationships.

Similarly, donors explored the need for changes in the forestry role to address specific issues. However, the concept of change emphasised strongly the ecological stance of forestry such as ecosystem, educating people about the environment, integration of forestry with agriculture and animal husbandry and the promotion of eco-tourism (see Burch 1990). These ideas did not specifically address the social aspects of forest management.

The decision-makers and planners of the forestry sector shared these ideas. Maintaining control over forests was the major concern of the sector (Haque 1990; Bhattarai 1990). The officials pointed out the conservation and protection oriented attitude of forestry staff and lack of sociological knowledge as problems in the sector. Nevertheless, their approach to change in the forestry sector's role focused on research on community performance in community forestry, technical issues of CF, and monitoring and evaluation of development activities in relation to the biophysical landscape (see Bhattarai 1990).

The trend of ignoring the social aspects of inequality and exclusion continued in the curriculum. Although the current curriculum addresses some aspects of the decentralisation process in forestry, the way decentralised forestry can deal with socio-political aspects of forestry remains unaddressed (Buchy and Subba 2003). Reading the recent content of the CF curriculum for BSc forestry training shows that FUG empowerment, improvement in forest management planning, the role of multiple actors including women and disadvantaged, monitoring and evaluation in CF

are included (IOF 2000). However, the curriculum does not include social concepts such as poverty dynamics, gender, caste/ethnic relations, power relations and participation process. While the content of monitoring and evaluation focuses on the limitation of workforce in the DoF, it excludes the need to institutionalise social issues in the actions of the DoF. Moreover, the references included in the CF curriculum do not include literature on broader issues of CF such as transformative participation, gender, exclusion and policy process.

Aid, through its support to curriculum development, contributed to confirm a Western vision of the type of training needed. This differs from the official theory of aid, which is to enhance understanding of local actors about the local problems of development. Expatriate foresters defined the type of training required in CF development that produced scientific forestry knowledge.

6.3 Scientific Knowledge through Training Abroad

AusAID first sent a field level officer from the Australian forestry project area to the Australian National University in Canberra to undertake higher education in forestry in the early 1980s (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006). Other donors then followed by funding MSc degrees in forestry at recognised universities in OECD countries. To this day, funding for forestry training in OECD countries and India is a common practice for donors. The argument for aid support for scientific training abroad is based on three ideas: quality of education, point for promotion from third-class to second-class and networking (see Dearden et al. 2004: 45). As said in chapter 5, senior foresters questioned the quality of forestry courses at the IoF in Nepal. This is one of the justifications for district forest officers to undertake an MSc to carry out their duties (ibid). This strategy maintains social discrimination by offering training that, (a) largely is inappropriate to deal with social issues and (b) through the selection of who gets to go abroad for studies.

6.3.1 Actors in scientific training

Based on data collected during interviews, table 6.1 presents information on postgraduates in forestry training. High-rank and senior forest officers (first and second-class) outnumbered third-class officers in gaining access to opportunities. DFID funded the most scholarships followed by USAID, DANIDA, AusAID, SDC and FINIDA.

Table 6.1
No. of foresters trained at MSc forestry by donors (1980-2005)*

Rank	AusAID	USAID	DFID	DANIDA	SDC	FINIDA	Other^	Total
1 st class	5	8	1	1	0	2	1	18
2 nd class	9	24	23	6	4	8	11	85
3 rd class	9	5	21	21	9	0	15	80
Total no	23	37	45	28	13	10	27	183

Source: Field data 2006

* Those officers (all male) who worked and are working with the forest department, the department of soil conservation and watershed management, and the forest ministry office

^ Other includes GTZ, EEC, FAO, ADB and EU

Table 6.2 presents the location of training within the organisational hierarchy of the officers who acquired new knowledge.

Table 6.2
No. of foresters trained in MSc forestry by countries (1980-2005)*

Ranks	Aus- tralia	USA	UK	Philip- pines	Thai- land	India	Other **	Total
1 st class	5	9	1	1	1	0	1	18
2 nd class	13	22	24	16	3	4	3	85
3 rd class	4	0	10	24	20	17	5	80
Total no.	22	31	35	41	24	21	9	183

Source: Field data 2006

* Those officers (all male) who worked and are working with the forest department, the department of soil conservation and watershed management, and the forest ministry office

** Finland, New Zealand and Denmark (5) and Nepal (4)

First and second-rank officers outnumbered lower-ranked officers in gaining access to study opportunities in western countries. From interviews with government officials, prestigious universities such as the ANU, Duke, Michigan, Yale, Reading and East Anglia were identified as locations where the majority of senior and influential officials were trained. Since 2005, SDC, DFID and DANIDA funded further education in India and Nepal.

A number of forestry officials accessed higher education opportunities from development agencies other than CF donors. Between 1995

and 2005, 110 forest officers (including four women) obtained MSc degrees through funding from the respective countries where they studied—mainly the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, Thailand, Japan and some Asian countries (Field data 2006). As of 2006, there are eight women foresters in the sector. Five of them received MSc training by seeking funds on their own. The sector started recruitment of women foresters in 1985. A woman graduate belonging to a prestigious urban family received financing through forestry aid to undertake undergraduate training in forestry abroad in early 1984 afterward she joined the sector with an operational level role.

The forestry sector in Nepal stands as an organisation with highly educated staff in influential positions, most from high-caste/ethnic advantaged groups. Between 1970 and 2005, at least 23 officers (19 high-castes and 4 ethnic advantaged groups) received PhD degrees in forestry and related science mostly financed by Japan International Development Cooperation (JICA), USAID, AusAID and the UK government. Sixteen of the 23 doctorate staff are now in senior positions (first and second-class) occupying key divisions within the sector, the Ministry of Finance, and other government commissions.

The type of knowledge imported by the officers includes a range of technical subjects such as growing stock and tending to forest crops, vegetation analysis, forest inventory (biomass and yield calculation), forest planning, forest utilisation, forest harvesting, silviculture, land use and soil management, watershed management, wildlife management, resource economics and sustainable forest management. Some of the programs to which officers were sent for training involved other perspectives on forestry, but economics and social analysis were very limited parts of the curriculum. For example, forestry officials studied the analysis of environmental and natural resource problems from economic perspective at Michigan State University and Yale University in the USA. At Australian National University the forestry and forest science programs attended by Nepali officers included training on sustainability issues (sustainable forest management and planning), but not on social issues. Many of the officials who studied MSc forestry at the University of the Philippines in Los Banos did receive training in social forestry. Although the social forestry course included social aspects of forest resource management (e.g. sociology of natural resources, culture and society in tropical forestry, community-based approaches), the focus of learning remained on forests

(e.g. community-based forest management planning and evaluation for sustainable use of forests). Gender, power relations and equity were not considered as part of understanding communities and participation within social forestry. One officer who attended this program mentioned that his lack of background on social issues made it hard for him to focus on even the limited social forestry curriculum with which he was presented (I. no. 87, GO, 5 July 2006).

Officials who obtained MSc degrees from Reading University in UK studied two forestry sub-fields: management of natural resources and environment and development. They studied development perspectives, extension, participatory interventions in development, natural resource policy and livelihoods, environmental problems and policies, resource and environmental economics. The officials undertook short-courses on social analysis, but the officers stated that it was difficult for them to use this knowledge upon their return to Nepal because of dominant ideology within the DoF and the MFSC (I. no. 84, GO, 10 October 2006).

Donor funded postgraduate studies abroad may also have reproduced inequalities within the DoF. Non-officer staff members such as rangers and forest guards who make up a large percentage of the workforce in field level activities do not have the required academic level and language proficiency to enrol in an MSc forestry or related field, and hence miss the opportunity. Moreover, the majority of people trained belong to the high-caste and advantaged ethnic groups. Many of the senior officials of the sector trained in forestry education in India until the mid-1980s came from well-off and prestigious families, brought up in urban and semi-urban areas with a good scientific education base (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006; I. no. 11, GO, 3 May 2006). The selection criteria of the Colombo Plan favoured students who already had access to good science education before embarking on a forestry training opportunity.

During interviews, INGO and project field staff showed great concern about the amount of aid money being used for higher education compared to the limited change at the government level. They argue that it is a process of inequitable resource distribution adding 'disciplinary power of foresters'. For instance, the average amount of award for one forest officer that a CF project provides for undertaking two year MSc training in western countries is US\$ 36,000 (Field note, 14 July 2006), which is equivalent to five MSc degree holders in Nepal's Forestry Campus.

6.3.2 Scientific knowledge and identity

The scientific knowledge produced through aid funding has implications to establish the 'forester's identity' in which a forester symbolises men, high-castes and advantaged ethnic groups, oriented on trees, respect and demand organisational hierarchy, and trained as a scientist. A former Director General (DG) of the forest department pointed out the culture of the department in which interaction on forest issues is preferred. He remarked, 'It would be ridiculous if someone raised social issues in an internal meeting' (I. no. 10, GO, 4 June 2006).

In a policy discussion, the chief planning officer of the forest ministry evaluated the impact of CF on development that highlighted environmental and community development aspects. He examined CF as if it has no problems. He said:

The CFs are functioning very well. There are no problems so far. The FUG managed forests are growing and improving value of the resources. The FUGs do not need money for forestry development because the protection and silviculture operations are carried out by the user voluntarily.... CF programme brought a big impact, not only in environment conservation, meeting basic needs and economic development, but also other sectors (Joshi 1997).

The majority of the top-level foresters maintain traditional bureaucratic and professional norms and values (Pokharel 1997: 349). Institutional and professional resistance reinforced by traditional forestry training is one hindrance to implement CF policies effectively (Talbot and Khadka 1994). Meanwhile, the forest officials support a system in which professional actors with the same disciplinary background are preferred during social interactions. A non-forester project coordinator explained the frustration he had when frequently justifying his academic background to forest officials. He expressed, 'I was tired of explaining my background to foresters who were always concerned by my professional background when working with me' (I. no. 65, project, 18 June 2006).

The decision-makers of the forestry sector can only address deforestation by practicing traditional forestry, which gives primacy to nature. In a national daily newspaper, the DG of the DoF identified 'deforestation' as the burning issue of forestry: 'The encroachment continues. If it is not checked soon, it will have an ominous impact on ecology. We are going

to set up forest security posts...we have shortage of human resource and monetary means' (The Rising Nepal, 28 September 2007).

This perspective shows that there has still been no shift in the discourse at the sector policy level. Forest officials still see forest conservation through policing. When CF donors consider the production of forest scientists in the sector as recovery of "Shangri-La" (Cribb 2006), actors at the government level still believe that their knowledge is to improve the environment.

In the *terai* too, population growth and people are the cause of forest decline, grazing, fire, over-use and conversion into cultivation (FSCC 2000: 42). Some argue that deforestation is caused by social, political and institutional factors (Fairhead and Leach 1998; Hartmann 2001). Perceiving people's actions on local land use as a threat to ecology limits social outcomes because this understanding does not see the significance of the role of foresters as well as wider society in tackling people's issues. Eventually, forest issues are alienated from the political perspective, which scholars (Gauld 2000; Kumar 2007) point out as a problem of forest sustainability and social equity.

There is continuing resistance to debate and critique the knowledge system within the forestry sector for social outcomes. Parallel to decision-makers at the central level, foresters with power at the local level forestry institutions do not see CF dealing with social issues. The following quote from a district forest officer exemplifies this situation.

Since the beginning, handing over forests to communities has been justified for conservation and protection. But since past few years, all donors and the language of the ministry has changed. They are talking about poverty and gender now and asking forest officers to help groups for this.... If user group funds are spent on the poor, it increases conflict as everyone wants to control it.... Conflict in the community affects its effectiveness in forest protection and management (District Forest Officer, Kabhre Palanchok in Rai Paudyal 2008: 153).

Although donors push change from their side, there is resistance from DoF decision-makers from district to national level. Most departmental staff with decision-making authority seem ill-prepared to shift their disciplinary values, even if they engage communities for forest management. The reason why change is so difficult, is partly linked to the way the DoF interact with actors at the policy level, their primary

agendas (see chapter 7), and the role of donor funded research (section 6.5.1).

As observed in another sector (Mollinga and Bolding 2004), a technical organisation such as the forestry sector has limitations in understanding development issues from the social and political dimensions. The capacity of the Nepalese forest department seems inadequate in dealing with social issues and the facilitation of a participatory forestry process (Barlett 1992: 98; Lama and Buchy 2002; Malla 1994: 8). However, donors continue spending CF aid for scientific training. A specific institutional process on scientific knowledge development at the donor level interests them to continue providing suggestions for sector training.

6.4 Donors' Institutional Processes in Scientific Training

Although donors exercise power during the processes of knowledge production, they may not necessarily use it to challenge exclusionary outcomes. For example, donors exercise power in the management of MSc scholarships (see Jeddere-Fisher 2000: 11; Dearden et al. 2004: 44). Project staff choose the forest officers to send abroad for training and exposure visits. One of the issues of contestation between CF projects and the sector is funds allocation for higher education training (I. no. 70, project, 15 June 2006). Projects influence the selection of candidates and MSc courses (e.g. countries, universities and courses) with the intention of giving the opportunity to those foresters who are helping smooth the implementation of project work at the district level (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006). Some government officers acknowledge the role of donors in setting criteria for higher education to avoid bureaucratic influence and offering them the opportunity.

Donors' contribution in the knowledge development process has little influence on the organisational culture of the forestry sector. As donors manage training funds and processes, the benefits are seen as free goods over which the forestry sector has little control and the response is to ask for more rather than to consider the need and use of the benefits (Jeddere-Fisher 2000: 11).

For the first time in 2003, four donors (DFID, AusAID, SNV and DANIDA), sponsored a review of the effectiveness of human resource management (HRM) programmes and the development of an HRM vision and strategy for the sector (Dearden et al. 2004). The study analyses the institutional arrangement, HRM system and organisational culture of

the sector and suggests making the sector inclusive at both programme and organisational levels. The study defines the HRM vision of the sector¹ emphasising fair and equitable principles in training, incentives, recruitment, placement and promotion as indicators of a proactive, competent and democratic forestry sector. The strategies proposed by the report seem to point in another direction. Analysis of the strategies derives from a conventional concept of organisational management that stresses competency. Although the strategies frequently refer to gender and equity, there is no single specific idea that helps the sector to be inclusive at the decision-making level.

Analysis of the contents of the roles and required competency at the forest department and the forest ministry level shows strategic neglect of social roles/responsibilities. The study defines various roles such as legal/policy directives and services on forest management, coordination, institutional development and the technical coordination role of the DoF. The required competency for the DoF to tackle policy/legislation role included policy research, legal knowledge, NRM, advocacy and networking. The study also defines staff development and training requirements at the field and senior staff levels. While perceived requirements at the senior level focus on professional management and development, the field level emphasised the need for social and technical skills. The strategic need for social competency is limited to social mobilisation. None of the requirements mentioned includes gender or 'inclusive participatory processes' as needs of the MFSC, the DoF and the DFO. Rather, in terms of staff hiring strategies, the thinking on competency appears reinforced. For example, while analysing coordination issues between the knowledge producing institution (i.e. IoF) and the knowledge consumer (the sector), the strategy points out poor timing of recruitment as a problem in the sense that the sector must rely on less competent graduates as the private sector captures all the competent graduates first.

Donors such as DFID began to finance the training of sector staff in technical forestry and the training of NGO staff in social issues (LFP 2007). This division has not helped foster understanding of the relationships between CF objectives and sector capacity. While donors still perceive the lack of disciplinary knowledge within the sector in CF implementation, whether the accumulated knowledge and donors' perceived needs are appropriate to address relational-based social empowerment² processes of CF remains unknown. Importantly, human resource man-

agement strategies prepared through aid money do not recognise human resource management as a strategic tool for dealing with exclusionary outcomes or equipping people to take a more social view.

When aid assisted the sector to develop one type of scientific knowledge through training, it also supported the development of knowledge through donor-funded research that recognises science and scientific practice in CF.

6.5 Knowledge Development through Donor Funded Research

Research influences the policy process (Haas 1992), which has the effect of making certain perspectives dominant in a discourse. In Nepal, CF produced voluminous academic-based research over time. CF in Nepal is one of the most extensively studied fields (Tiwari 2002). Aid has had a significant influence in generating research-based knowledge about the management of local forests in the CF context, which affirms the scientific role, attitude and perspective at the government level. At the same time, the knowledge freed local power models. The key actors engaged in the donor-funded research include people from within the forestry sector, projects, project areas, academic and research organisations affiliated with the forestry sector and CF donors. This section discusses only the key research that had greater advantage in the direction of CF.

In early 1983, a research team consisting of project expatriates and government foresters undertook a study on the human impact on forests and the trend of deforestation in the central hill region of Nepal (Mahat et al. 1986, 1987a). This study was to become a milestone in the conceptual development of CF, understood foremost as a means to restore ecological systems. In other words, it helped to institutionalise the 'deep ecology' (Dryzek 2005: 184) ideology in CF. The study argues for the need to carry out afforestation and proper silviculture treatment for the sustainable supply of fodder, fuel wood and timber without ever considering people's differential power to access resources. The study carefully analyses the historical causes of deforestation considering social, political and economic dimensions and the influence of power relations to access basic forest products by the powerless. Nonetheless, it ignores these aspects when pushing forward ideas for CF. While the study shows the indigenous system of charcoal making by blacksmiths is unsustainable (Mahat et al. 1987a: 65), it does not analyse ways to improve the charcoal

making process. Likewise, this study pointed out the collection of firewood and fodder as a contributor to deforestation (ibid). The focus on afforestation and conservation activities became the priority for CF in the report.

The promotion of private forestry through CF was another idea. A study on 'the agriculture system in the hills of Nepal: the ratio of agriculture to forestland and the problem of animal fodder' by another expatriate forester (Wyatt-Smith 1982) influenced the understanding of forestry problems in ecological terms. This report quantified the minimum area of forests required to sustain a farm. For example, a family farm of 1.25 ha needed 3.5 of forest for fodder, 0.3 to 0.6 ha for fuel and 0.4 ha for timber (Wyatt-Smith 1982 in Westoby 1989: 139). While this study contributed to recognition of the importance of private plantations, it missed out on the way private plantations affect those who do not have land to do agro-forestry. The information about forest-farm ratio became a reference for forest policymakers during forest master planning (see MFSC 1988) and CF projects implemented in the 1980s and 90s (see DRCFDP 1991; Soussan et al. 1991). One of the perceived values of agro-forestry and private plantations is to reduce pressure on government forests.

Other influential knowledge is the institutional arrangement of CF. As discussed in chapter 4, the staff of the Australian Forestry Project in the 1980s confirmed the idea of user groups as robust institutions for collective action. Likewise, some research contributed to acknowledge the role of CF in forest marketing. In 1992, a staff member from the Australian project conducted his PhD research on the changing role of forest resources in the hills of Nepal in the project area. This research highlighted the scope of commercialisation of forest products from community forests, given the transformation of some agrarian societies from a closed subsistence economy to market (Malla 1992). Two years after this research, Malla, in his position as a rural development advisor in the same project produced a discussion paper on sustainable use of community forests in Nepal (Malla 1994). Malla analyses the economic potential of CF along with the challenges of equity in benefit sharing and forest department competency on social agendas. While he argues for the need to consider equity in future CF policy and programmes, he did not focus on the mechanisms to do so.

The Australian forestry project supported data on the tendency of marginalisation of social agendas as part of change. A discussion paper on the CF extension process clearly identified the exclusion of women in decision-making, but the paper conceptually clarified that dealing with power relations is out of the CF remit (Fisher and Malla 1987: 11). The paper considers mainstreaming social change in forest management ideology too challenging. Scholarly study in the area of the Australian project confirms the implications of the neglect of knowledge development in CF in dealing with social change. For instance, there is the lack of power for excluded groups such as women and *dalits* to make their own decisions and participate freely in CF activities (Rai Paudyal 2008).

Knowledge produced in donor funded academic studies contributed to understand CF development from three perspectives: institutional arrangement for common property resources, market and ecology. The knowledge recognised social issues, but was unclear how to deal with them. Knowledge produced through training and research eventually becomes forest policy.

6.6 Knowledge Transfer at CF Policy

Aid has played a role in shaping the knowledge base surrounding policy planning in three ways: (a) the use of forestry expertise and science in policymaking activities; (b) lobbying the powerful actors; and (c) emphasising actor-networks in policy webs. The section below discusses (a) and (b) while chapter 7 discusses (c).

6.6.1 Forestry expertise and science in policymaking

Haas (2004) identified the importance of interdisciplinary representation in policy dialogues in the sustainable development process. In the Nepalese CF context, forestry science had an upper hand in defining CF policy and legislation during Panchayat and democratic regimes. Donors' expatriates and consultants with natural science backgrounds were at the frontline to inform and push policy ideas in CF.

During the 21-year Forest Master Planning, a sub-group of Nepali and expatriate foresters who believed in 'fortress forestry' (Forsyth 2003) that stresses the command and control of forests by forest administration led to the Master Planning Project (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006). The project engaged 43 professionals including five support staff with 14 expatriates. Only two expatriates were women. The national professionals

consisted of top-level foresters and economists from within the sector and the Ministry of Finance (MFSC 1988a: 187-8). Social and political academics received little space in the planning. Only one social scientist came onboard for two months to look at the socioeconomic aspect of forestry. Moreover, the analysis underestimated social factors due to the emphasis on statistical data and the use of aerial photographs in identifying environmental problems (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006), which foresters trained in technical forestry often prefer as a resource analysis method (Fairhead and Leach 1998).

While the Master Plan was taking shape, in 1987, donors assisted in organising a national workshop to discuss CF progress and issues. Dominated by foresters, the workshop highlighted the scope of decentralisation and people's participation in forest management and legitimised the project created user group concept. In discussions with government staff, three papers: one from the MFSC office and two from district-level forest officials from two projects arose as influential to acceptance of the FUG model for CF (I. no. 75, GO, 7 November 2006; I. no. 13, GO, 26 October 2006).

The FUG model aims at maintaining scientific perspective in CF development process. A forest decision-maker in the master planning process argued,

The main idea of CF envisioned in the Master Plan was user group's participation in conservation and use of forest resources without minimising its annual growth. Two criteria: ability and willingness of community to manage government forests were the main basis while handing over forests to user groups. These criteria were important to ensure forest quality. People do not have technical skills and anytime forests would be misused (I. no. 15, GO, 21 June 2006).

Following master planning, the MFSC implemented a project for legislation planning. Foresters were dominant actors in the process, backed up by influential non-foresters from the donor community. Among foresters, those with a close network of project advisors and forest bureaucracy were mobilised (I. no. 81, GO, 11 November 2006). Instead of challenging power, project staff employed informal networks to reach forest bureaucrats.

A close network of people with the ability to exercise agency developed during legislation planning of the democratic regime in the 1990s. During interviews with non-state actors, it became clear that aid helped

organise an internal workshop between the forestry sector and donors to discuss the draft forest law. Two non-state actors (one Nepali journalist and one development expert) gained entry on the first day of the workshop with the support of the forest minister, but were denied access the second day (I. no. 91, project, 6 September 2006). The non-state actors on the first day commented on some articles of the forest rule. Their criticism on the first day may have been a reason for their exclusion on the second day (*ibid.*). Eventually, donors supported the practice of 'the hidden form of power' that interplayed between powerful actors. The hidden power results in the exclusion and devaluation of the concerns and representation of the other less powerful groups (Veneklasen and Miller 2007: 47). In the Nepali context, the use of hidden power reinforces exclusion, as it promotes the existing informal networks of elites that exist in society and state governance (see Bista 1991; Metz 1995).

Apart from giving high priority to the forestry profession, aid resources catalysed the process of lobbying with powerful actors to confirm project-based knowledge in policy.

6.6.2 Lobbying the powerful

Persuasion, contacts, making opportunities and educating people are all part of the process of constructing a policy idea (Keeley and Scoones 2003: 56). In the CF policymaking process, one may term the process, lobbying for validating the interest of global and national actors. Project knowledge provided donors the chance to exercise their power. They used project knowledge for lobbying efforts. They practiced lobbying to inform and persuade key political figures, influential parliamentarians and state bureaucrats.

The political context of aid-receiving countries affects the interest of donors (Lewis 2003: 158). The multiparty political scenario in the 1990s also supported donor interventions in forest legislation design (I. no. 10, GO, 4 June 2006). In the 1990s, the Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist (CPN/UML), as the major opposition party in the first parliament (1991-1994) and its nine-month government between November 1994 and September 1995 had relatively social policies and began to emphasise local development programmes based on planning and budgeting from village-based political units, the VDC (Hachhethu 2006).

The NRM Committee of the HoR established in 1991 was involved in the process of preparing the forest bill. In discussion with a CF expert,

it was evident that contacting influential parliamentarians through personal networks was a common way of lobbying politicians and government officials. 'We saw user group model community forestry as democratic in forest management. I approached Mr X. of the leftist party and another colleague approached Y of the rightist party' (Field note, 6 November 2006).

During the making of forest rules, donors exercised lobbying through three types of policy events held inside and outside of Nepal between January and February 1993. The first was participation of Nepali forest officials and forest ministers in the first regional level CF policy/legislation conference held in Bangkok in January 1993. The papers presented reveal that CF became a political tool for the Nepali government to receive international support (Joshi 1993; Khunjeli 1993). They criticised past forest administrations and policies as over centralised and non-participatory advocating efforts by the Nepalese state to make CF policy, which they considered a big shift, allowing people access to forests. Following the international conference, a team of high-level government officials attended local FUG conferences. In 1993, CF projects led by the British ODA (now DFID) provided financial and human resources for organising a national FUG workshop in which 40 FUGs from 28 districts participated. As quoted below the objective for organising the workshop was twofold: (a) to inform policymakers about the way the project induced CF model had been working in the field, (b) to validate the model in the forthcoming Forest Rule.

Policymakers from forest ministry and finance ministry had a nine-day tour in different CF project areas to observe user group performance. The tour ended up with the user group's workshop in *Dhankuta*. The intention of the workshop was to inform policymakers about the successful functioning of "user group community forestry" and persuade them to recognise the organisational status of the group in the Forest Rule of 1995 (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006).

A content analysis of the workshop proceeding indicates that the participants in the last day presented 46 recommendations to high-level government officials. They discussed concepts such as consensus in decision-making, proportional and needs-based forest resource distribution systems, criteria of user membership (e.g. those who have interest and ability to protect forests and are traditional forest users) and participation of the poor and women during FUG formation (Subedi 1993: 6-

17). While the workshop suggested many provisions on conservation, use and distribution of forest resources and management of funds, no session discussed issues related to social equity to access resources by the poor, *dalits* or pastoralists. Rather than seeking alternatives to ensure food security for the poor, the workshop considered squatters as the evils of CF by labelling them ‘forest encroachers’ (ibid: 4, 19). The workshop advised a solution against forest encroachment in which the DoF would take action against encroachers with the help of local administrations. Although hailing CF as the participatory process for the poor, by labelling the poor as the culprits of forest destruction, the powerful actors were morally harassing the powerless. Instead of assessing the poor’s situation in a social just way, donors facilitated the workshop in which community elites, government and project actors perceived the poor as forest problems. One scholar (Forsyth 2003: 46) discussed the way ‘environmental orthodoxies’ affects the poor. In CF cases, aid supported policy events construct the orthodoxy that sees the poor as a problem instead of a resource for sustainable forest management.

Most of the concepts discussed in the workshops were in the Forest Rule of 1995. Asked why social equity was not included in forest law, many forest decision-makers argued that they recognised the importance for FUGs to have decision-making power instead of individuals. A former forest secretary, of the high-caste, expressed,

We included the concept “consensus” in decision-making. This provision allows the participation of the poor and *dalits* in community forestry. Making *dalits* provision in law does not work. They do not have the capacity. What to do with making policy for *dalits*, when there are no capable *dalits* (I. no. 5, GO, 16 July 2006)?

The lack of trust by the high-caste officers in *dalits* insidiously influenced the legal framework, thus institutionalising social stereotypes and discrimination.

After the FUG workshop, the DoF with donor support organised the 2nd national CF workshop. The six taskforce groups (each consisting of project decision-makers and top-level forestry officials) presented many issues and recommended 79 points essential for CF implementation on the last day of the workshop (DoF 1993: 122-7). The recommendations related to the process of community-based forest management planning, FUG formation and its legitimisation in the forthcoming forest rule. A policy paper presented by the MFSC official discussed the scope of the

new forest legislation in forest management (see Kanel 1993). The paper identified six factors that determine the success of community forest management and sustainable use, none of them related to gender and social equity. The perception was that non-state actors were responsible for dealing with social issues, as if the sector was only meant for technical and legal issues (ibid: 4).

The primary focus of donors lobbying to practice CF in instrumental ways is the limitation of social scientists to challenge structural issues, despite their awareness of the problem. Eyben (2007) points out that social scientists are constrained by aid bureaucracy and are less prepared to accept structural issues in development. In Nepali CF context, social scientists and foresters from within projects pointed out inequity issues, but measures to address the issues focused on community as responsible actors.

6.6.3 Effect of policymaking on exclusion

As said in the introductory chapter, not all members of a system have equal footing in policymaking. Members have different positions, which range from framing ideas, setting policy agendas and lobbying the agendas for the benefit of the powerless or powerful actors. Foresters, the forestry sector and donors occupied all these positions when institutionalising project-based ideas in CF policy and legislation. Foresters dominated the policy events, donors reproduced ideas and the sector's decision-makers confirmed the ideas. *Dalits*, women, the poor and ethnic disadvantaged groups were excluded from the policy planning process because they were not thought of as, 'policy actors'.

Donor interests, knowledge, human resources and money contributed to reach the powerful elites excluding actors with limited power and different knowledge during CF legislation planning. Eventually, aid contributed to maintain exclusion through the policy outcome and exclusion of the powerless in the policy design process. As discussed in chapter 3, policy maintains unequal power relationships between people at the grassroots and recognises scientific values and power in policy manifestos.

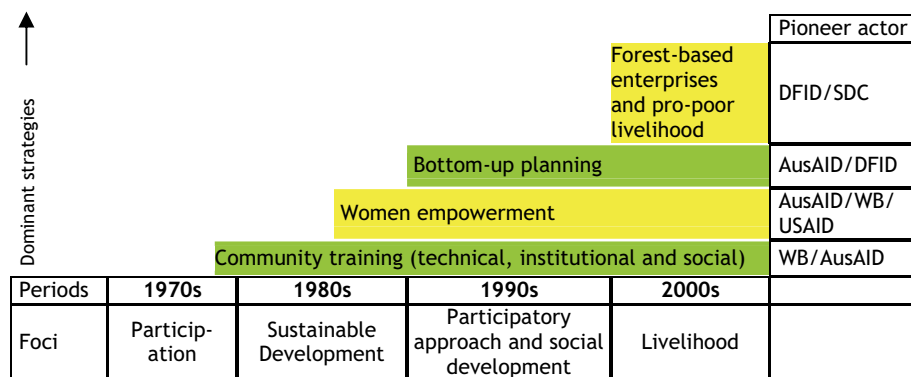
6.7 Knowledge Transfer at the Community Level

In a policy discourse, a range of knowledge can transfer from intervening actors to the community level. The types, strategies and processes of

knowledge transfer play a role in inclusion outcomes, as they create power relationships and opportunities at the grassroots level. Since aid supports CF development, it is essential to analyse dominant knowledge that the DoF transferred as process of community participation and empowerment to see whether they are supportive towards tackling exclusion.

The role of aid is to help government actors conceptualise and practice development strategies and processes that help them transform their practices towards challenging social relations, capacity gaps and institutional practices that cause social exclusion (Hinton and Groves 2004). In Nepalese CF context, analysis of knowledge transfer process is essential to understand whether the DoF has been able to transform its programmes and value from techno-scientific to socio-political. The knowledge transfer in this study refers to the type, objectives and processes of disseminating skills and knowledge at the grassroots level for people's empowerment and participation.

Figure 6.1
Evolution of CF aid foci and knowledge transfer at the grassroots



Source: CF projects and government documents; interviews 2006

Figure 6.1 represents the relationships between aid foci and key strategies of knowledge transfer for community participation and empowerment at the grassroots level. Strategies evolve over time as aid evolves its focus on development. The strategies however do not match

the foci *per se*. Since the mid-1970s and introduced through AusAID and SDC, only one community training package at the grassroots level received a priority agenda of CF intervention. Since the mid-1980s, women's empowerment programmes appeared with the support of AusAID, the World Bank and USAID. AusAID and DFID introduced the bottom-up planning or alternately, FUGs' networking as participatory planning process at the local level. Implanted by DFID and SDC, forest-based entrepreneurship has been the key strategy since 2000.

As these strategies operate in a patriarchal and unequal society, there may be a situation where the poor, women, low-caste and ethnic minority are further marginalised, even if they are included in some knowledge transfer strategies. The key factors that affect the excluded might be that (a) the knowledge transfer is incompatible to address existing power relationships; (b) exclusion from selective criteria; and (c) the process of knowledge transfer focus on doing rather than learning.

6.7.1 Reinforcing unequal power relations

Some knowledge-transfer packages help to maintain existing power relationships. One example is women's empowerment strategies of the DoF. The DoF implements five strategies to create a space for women's participation at the local level CF. These include membership in FUG committees, access to literacy programmes, access to training, formation of women's only FUGs and women's empowerment programmes (i.e. sensitise sub-groups of women about FUG administration, leadership and social networking through literacy and informal dialogue). These strategies view women's role in forestry from an instrumental perspective (let women take charge of forest conservation, use and management). An interview with a former chief conservator of the department, who designed the mass awareness campaign in the 1980s, sponsored by the World Bank, reveals that the programme identified and targeted the poor, women and schoolchildren as groups to inform about environmental conservation. The perception of these groups as 'forest destroyers', in the sense that their practice of forest products collection was understood as unscientific, is because their collecting of ground grass damages young forest crops (I. no. 2, GO, 6 May 2006). Critical theorists argue the need to see women's relationships with nature as a right and emphasise their productive role in environment and development (Harrison 1998; Harris 2000).

Women's empowerment strategies conceptually ignore class, caste/ethnicity and gender relationships in CF. Strategies such as women's only FUGs causes the exclusion of *dalits* and poor women in FUG decision-making (Buchy and Rai Paudyal 2008). Likewise, empowering women through literacy programmes does not conceptualise gender relations at both household and FUG level decision-making (Rai Paudyal 2008).

Although donors and the DoF perceive women's empowerment strategies as tools for enhancing the self-confidence of women to take active part in CF and building their leadership skills (NACRMP 2000; NAFP 1988), it has some limitations for inclusion outcomes. These strategies legitimise the women in development (WID) approach, which has been criticised because it reinforces women's traditional roles (Kabeer 1999, 2000).

Project decision-makers themselves understand the social agenda in a way that women's empowerment strategies were successful and women benefited more. However, programmes like Women's Empowerment Programme (WEP) have some limitations for social empowerment. Data shows that the WEP consists of a packaged programme of training on modular basis. The module focuses on women's skills and knowledge in a number of issues such as FUG organisation, women's participation in FUG administration and the process of subsistence income generation (saving/credit, vegetable and milk selling), sensitisation about health and sanitation, information about CF policy, government offices and services and the economic and environmental value of forests. These programmes empower those women with access to private resources and the ability to afford social activities. For the poor and *dalit* women, the programme is less helpful. They are self-excluded. The high-caste women dominate the low-caste women during training interactions. Poor women do not participate in the programmes because of their inability to implement learning, mostly constrained by a lack of money. For example, they were unable to buy vegetable seeds, even if the WEP imparted knowledge about how to do a kitchen garden and its relationship to people's health within households. *Dalit* women faced market problems selling products such as milk because of social norms. Milk is impure due to *dalits* untouchable social position within the caste system. Refusal to purchase milk produced by *dalits* in local markets is common in the project areas that run WEP (I. no. 56, project, 21 May 2006). A recent study cites the limited impact of donor-funded social mobilisation programmes

in Nepal on the empowerment of the poor and excluded groups at the grassroots (Jha et al. 2009).

6.7.2 Exclusion due to selection criteria and processes

Some knowledge-transfer processes such as bottom-up planning contributes little to reduce exclusion. The concept reinforces policy planning processes at the local level that support empowerment of local elites. Participants' selection criteria and the process of learning do play a role.

The bottom-up planning concept, introduced first by David Korten (1980), recognises the people and their participation to develop, implement and monitor their development plans (Chambers 1997: 189). Practiced since the early 1990s, the DoF and CF donors promote bottom-up planning in a normative way to increase upward accountability of FUGs. They conceive bottom-up planning to accelerate development programmes in cost-efficient ways and maintain regular contact between the FUGs and the DoF to review performance of FUGs in terms of ecology improvement, use of forests and implementation of community development activities (see Gayfer and Pokharel 1993; Nurse et al. 1993).

The bottom-up planning has been institutionalised as a strategy for preparation of 'annual CF development plans' of the forest department. The activity entitled 'annual review and planning workshop' alternatively 'FUGs networking workshop' represents the bottom-up planning in CF development. The bottom-up planning constitutes one of the largest CF development programmes of the DoF in CF aid (*Hamro Ban*, the DoF between FY 1998/99 and FY 2004/05).

On the part of donors and the DoF, the networking workshop tends to be participatory, as representatives of FUGs attend it at the range post level (the lowest community-based administrative unit of the forest department) and share their progress and issues. FUG information presented at the workshop becomes a source of knowledge for annual planning and budgeting of the DoF and projects under CF aid (I. no. 56, project, 21 May 2006; I. no. 78, GO, 10 October 2006). Donor-funded projects spent a larger proportion of aid resources to accomplish the workshop successfully than to discuss the shortcomings of the participatory processes of the workshop. The content of the workshop reveals that the intention is to inform the community about CF policy/legislation, review FUG's previous year's activities and issues encountered and plan development programmes for the following year (DoF 2000). From

a decentralised planning point of view, the workshop exemplifies social interaction between the CF intervening actors and the community where discussion of a multiplicity of agendas related to community development through CF takes place. Despite the decentralised dialogue, the institutional processes of the networking workshops exclude the excluded because of deeply rooted exclusive participant selection criteria and lack of critical reflection.

Box 6.1

Criteria of district forest office for local level planning workshop

- Participant who held position as chair, secretary or treasurer on FUG committee
- FUG should come with the following documents:
 - Meeting minutes, financial register, audit report of previous year
 - FUG's constitution and operational plan
 - Completed self-evaluation form
 - Proposed plan of action for the next year

Source: DFO, Dolakha 2006

The participant selection criteria of the DFOs are exclusive. As indicated in box 6.1, there is no chance for illiterate and disadvantaged groups to access the workshop. Only those members in key positions on FUG executive boards are preferred. The position-based participation enhances inequity and unequal power relations, as the presence of the poor, *dalits* and ethnically disadvantaged groups is nominal in key positions on the boards (Rai Paudyal 2008; Koirala 2007; Sharma 1991).

Moreover, the bottom-up planning workshop tends to focus on reporting FUGs status to forest officials rather than reporting forest office's work to enhance social and technical capacities of FUGs. This provides further evidence on the importance of legitimisation of actions on the community to ensure scientific values. As illustrated in box 6.1, forest officials' demand for different documents reduces the chance for the illiterate or people with low social status to participate in the workshop. It also increases their self-exclusion from participating in FUG executive boards. This situation ultimately enhances three major benefits for local elites—power, social prestige and personal development—as identified by Rai Paudyal (2008).

Looking at the trend of attendees between 1998/99 and 2004/05 in a CF project area, women's attendance did not increase (NACRMLP 2006). Issues such as exclusion of the *dalits* in the bottom-up planning space and the role of power relations in decision-making have never been on the agenda in the workshop, even though it intends to practice participatory development processes in CF.

FUG processes would not lead to equitable outcomes unless women and marginalised groups become capable of influencing decision-making in CF (Nightingale 2002). The bottom-up planning workshop constitutes one of the capacity-building opportunities at the grassroots. It however excludes the excluded because of participant selection criteria, the type of information government seeks from communities and the lack of concern for the participation process.

The control of ideas by powerful actors of FUGs exists not only at the FUG and the DoF interaction, but also among FUGs. For instance, an evaluation report of a woman run NRM-NGO in Nepal reports the neglect of women users' voice in the 'first FUG workshop' held in the Hindu-Kush Himalaya in 1998. Male FUG members dominated the discussions even though more than 30 per cent of total participants were women (Rajbhandari 2001: 5).

6.7.3 Exclusion from instrumental learning process

According to Mezirow (1991: 72), instrumental learning supports problem-solving processes that stress mainly 'how to do things better' rather than 'why are things the way they are'. In CF case, some strategies such as community training suffer from the lack of critical reflection or transformative learning, which help actors to reflect upon their values, assumptions and knowledge system for people's empowerment. The training strategy has an emphasis on establishing formal state-society relationships in managing forests and enhancing technical and institutional capacity of FUGs. Of course, this strategy supported some changes, but they are exclusionary in many respects.

Community training represents a strong tool to connect the community with the DoF. However, training is unable to address exclusion because of (a) the focus and audience of knowledge transfer and (b) the method of knowledge transfer.

The audience and focus of knowledge transfer packages evolved depending on the interest of the DoF and donors. The types of knowledge

transferred included technical, social and organisational management until the 1990s, shifting to forest-based enterprises and pro-poor livelihood since 2000. The major thrust of knowledge transfer goes to informing people about the economic and ecological importance of forests, how to enhance the capacity of FUG members in science-based forest management, community development, organisational relationships, training people about poverty and making FUGs' forest management plans pro-poor, income-oriented. The concept of power relations in the training contents and process has yet to undergo mainstreaming. Although community training since 2000 has emphasised the poor and *dalits*, the focus of knowledge remains with tackling their practical needs such as training them about non-timber forest product cultivation techniques (DoF 2006).

In the 1980s, Panchayat leaders, paid forest watchers, nursery *naike* and women were targeted in technical training such as conservation, nursery, planting, plant monitoring, seed collection and storage, and silviculture (I. no. 13, GO, 29 October 2006). The main reason for focusing on these social groups was twofold: (a) transfer technical skills and knowledge to local people with an assumption that locals lack knowledge about forest management; and (b) recognise the ability of local elites who act as efficient actors to persuade others in environment conservation. In the 1990s, training strategies aimed to enhance the organisational capacity of FUGs. It added new audiences (teachers, social workers, FUG members, NGOs, women, VDC leaders) with the intent to inform the locals about CF policy, FUG formation process, transfer technical skills on forest-management plan preparation, and organisational skills on record keeping, stakeholder coordination, women participation, planning and monitoring. Since 2000, information about forest-based enterprises, business planning, entrepreneur skills, pro-poor livelihood and FUG governance are included in knowledge transfer packages. Audiences such as the poor and *dalits* are included in the training strategy with the objective of enhancing their livelihood opportunities.

Largely, the method of training follows an instrumental learning process as the method emphasises problem solving instead of critical reflection. The training method revolves around the outdated one-way communication system with an emitter and receiver. As a result, the training event is a routine activity of forestry staff. A high-level official remarked,

Training programme in CF is a *magi kbane bhado* (Beggar's Bowl). We run many training both for field staff and community, but we do not know why we run the training and what is its impact. We do not have information on who are included and excluded in training (I. no. 10, GO, 4 June 2006).

A fundamental issue of training is that CF actors focus on the transfer of technical and social ideas on their part. Because of the nature of social hierarchy and its differences, it is not enough to deliver pre-defined knowledge to the identified poor. It is equally important to reflect on knowledge systems that assist implementing actors to look at training and its delivery processes from a local social system. Reflecting on training aimed at blacksmiths, a forest officer of the DoF explained:

The members went back to their traditional occupation—the metalwork. We focused on delivery of knowledge about the need to involve blacksmiths in income generation activities like selling bamboo handicrafts, but we did not think of the way blacksmiths can be skilled on goods for production and marketing (I. no. 77, GO, 20 July 2006).

Aid funded training programmes put weight on training as a means of economic empowerment of the poor but ignore what makes their new activity possible given the social, economic and political complexities that obstruct poor blacksmiths from initiating and continuing their businesses.

Box 6.2

Participant selection criteria for community training

- literate, active members of FUGs
- at least 50 per cent women
- active and literate women who can lead community forest management
- chair, secretary, or one active executive committee member of FUG having detailed information on his/her FUG activities
- active and respected formal or informal village community leaders
- interested individuals with little knowledge of herbs and willingness to do something about herb processing/planting

Source: DoF 2000

Moreover, DoF training norms support exclusion. Based on review of nine different types of community training, box 6.2 draws the key criteria

that the DoF focuses on while selecting the training audience in the DANIDA funded project areas that cover 52 per cent of 75 districts in Nepal.

The poor, *dalits*, ethnic disadvantaged group, pastoralists and the chronic poor are all disqualified from aid-funded training. Sixty-nine per cent of total rural women are illiterate (UNDP 2004). Education attainment differs between castes. For example, while 29.91 per cent of the hill Brahmin population completed secondary school education, only 1.32 per cent of the total hill *dalits* achieved an education (ibid: 174). Less than one per cent of total female *dalits* are literate (Shrestha 2007: 89). The relationship between literacy and training opportunities has never been the agenda of CF aid.

To mainstream the powerless in a learning space like community training, designers and facilitators of training must be sensitive about the power dynamics and morally support people with low power so that their social position becomes stronger (Douglas 1982). In CF, there is profound lack of interest to make training pro-social at the government level. As a result, social elites capture knowledge. A respondent remarked,

Community forestry is a tool of empowerment for village elites. In my district, a local elite, Mr X, is in leadership position in district level FECOFUN and FUG since the beginning. He is one who does not miss any event (training or workshop) from village to district to national level... I am concerned how much benefit the poor people would get out of CF development in which external resources are confined to elites (I. no. 35, NGO, 10 May 2006).

Scott (1998) shows that ignoring the local context leads to intervention failure. CF strategies that transfer knowledge at the grassroots level are instead maintaining exclusion, some of which are anti-poor. While the type and process of knowledge transfer aim to tackle problems of CF, they lack critical reflection on the existing values, assumptions and knowledge system of the DoF in order to enhance its staff capacity for dealing with social agendas.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter identified that knowledge is an important tool that reinforces scientific and technocratic views of CF at the government level

and its inclusion in forest policymaking process. Aid contributed to develop and institutionalise such views in three ways: scientific training, donor funded research and curriculum development. Aid supported the generation of knowledge about how to develop CF and the role of foresters and the DoF in it. CF policy, legislation, strategies, activities and identity of the DoF have all institutionalised the understanding that forestry institutions and foresters have to deal with forests. Actors' politics in the policymaking process ignored the participation process. Even in the democratic era, donors supported the policy design process that was selectively exclusionary: people with low status, different knowledge and limited power remained excluded. This resulted in exclusionary policy as shown in chapter 3. This finding complements studies (Keeley and Scoones 2003; Rap 2004), which in another context have shown the neglect of social issues of environment management due to domination of a single discipline and perspective in policy planning. The implication is that techno-scientific values have institutionalised the social objective and value of CF policy. This in turn makes it hard to change focus even when the sector has used development ideas of poverty, inclusion and participation.

This chapter provides evidence about intervention processes at the policy level that make it difficult to shift traditional ideology of the DoF (identified as barriers) to change in the government. The chapter also identifies the reason why techno-scientific ideology became dominant at the local forest offices when solving the problem of FUGs that Nightingale (2005) demonstrated as strong means to reinforce unequal power at the grassroots CF.

The process of knowledge development contributes to maintain exclusion in several ways. Knowledge facilitates processes of bringing global policy discourses to Nepal, which is not supportive to understanding local issues of forests as discussed in previous chapters. There is inequitable distribution of higher educational opportunities through CF aid among actors within government. Privileged groups that are already on top or have a good base of science received the opportunity. The knowledge imparted from higher education focuses on natural science, while CF aims for both technical and social issues of forest management. The finding contradicts the aid argument that asserts the need for building capacity at the government level in dealing with policy that has social objectives and values. The basis of the forestry curriculum is the tradi-

tional view of forestry. Moreover, most do not view human resource management activity within the government as a strategic tool for dealing with exclusionary outcomes or equipping people to take increased social perspectives. The type and process of knowledge transferred at the community level does not focus on the way illiterate and powerless people can benefit from knowledge and external services. This finding confirms other researchers (Rap 2004; Arce and Long 1992).

As discussed in chapter 2, Nepali society operates with patriarchal, unequal power relations, and gender, class and caste/ethnicity inequality. Knowledge transferred at the grassroots ignores these social fabrics along with the exclusion factors raised by earlier researchers. Some of the strategies and processes of knowledge transfer emphasised the excluded, but they reinforce exclusion. The knowledge does not facilitate critical reflection. Knowledge accumulated at the government level constrains the shift in the perspectives, assumptions, activities and behaviour towards a socially just CF. The development of a single science and views are contributing to exclusion. This finding confirmed others (Arce and Long 1992) who identified the institutionalisation of knowledge with a single ideology in dealing with complex issues of development results in unequal outcomes.

One argument is that institutional capacity of the state through development projects can lead to change (World Bank 1998). This chapter identified that it is not enough simply to develop the government's capacity. The process of capacity development itself influences the outcomes, because it shapes the knowledge base of key actors. In the case of Nepali CF, the development of technical knowledge received priority. The next chapter explores how this situation affects the dynamics within actor networks and policy spaces.

Notes

¹ The HR vision for the Ministry would then be 'to develop equitable, fair and transparent recruitment, incentive, placement, promotion, training mechanisms fostering a vibrant, capable, proactive and democratic forestry sector development' (Dearden et al. 2004: v).

² Empowerment is a process that helps marginalised or oppressed people to recognise and exercise their agency (Rowlands 1997; Friedmann 1992 in Cornwall 2004: 77).

7

Actors' Dynamics in CF Policymaking and Operations: Why is Change Difficult?

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 showed how actors look at the issue of exclusion and how aid had played a role in shaping the techno-scientific values and knowledge systems that underlie those perceptions. This chapter examines the complexity of actors' relationships with each other and the dynamics of the informal networks involved in the operation of CF and the creation of CF policy. These dynamics sustain techno-scientific values and knowledge and make it difficult for actors to promote or even understand ideas that would challenge this traditional approach to forestry. For CF, the implication of these dynamics is reinforcement of techno-scientific view of forestry and instrumental view of participation.

As Rocheleau and Roth (2007) noted, the effect of power is visible in the process of social interaction between actors and their ability to control ideas for change. In the context of CF policy, these power dynamics are especially visible in formal and informal policy spaces. The formal spaces are government-organised policy spaces which are observable by outsiders. Informal policy spaces operate through interpersonal relationships between individual actors. Both will be discussed in this chapter.

The power relationships and social interactions between intervening actors in formal and informal policy spaces determine the priorities and perspectives for change, which in turn affect government actions in the policy arena. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, a "policy space" consists of actors, objectives, structure and outputs. The structure of the spaces affects the inclusion of ideas and the participation process. As this chapter will show, the power relationships and knowledge interplay between actors in the policy spaces, and the nature of the donor-govern-

ment relationship, make it difficult for government and other actors to consider interconnected social, ecological, institutional and economic factors in planning for policy change.

Based on data from official documents, personal reports of aid staff, and interviews, this chapter begins with analysis of the type of actors engaged in CF operations. Next follows a discussion of policy spaces, actor's interactions and relationships, donors' strategies and actor-networks. This chapter will explore four issues: (a) actors' relationships within policy spaces and how these affect the process of dealing with social issues of CF; (b) actors' reliance on each other and their (in) ability to push for transformative ideas at the policy level; (c) donors' working strategies with the government; and (d) the process of networking between individuals at the policy level and how this affects the process of maintaining dominant ideas for CF development.

7.2 Actors in CF

The actors involved in the CF operation fit broadly into four groups (a) donors (donor agency, their projects and INGO), (b) the government forestry sector (the MFSC and the DoF), (c) non-state actors (civil society, CBOs, NGOs, private firms), and (d) politicians (local political bodies-VDCs, DDCs, MPs and forest ministers).

The forestry sector (including the MFSC and the DoF) is the hub of interactions between these actors. Donors and the forestry sector act as support agencies for non-state actors. For example, CF projects support partnerships with local NGOs to help the DFO in implementing CF development programmes.

Non-state actors are relative newcomers to CF operations. The involvement of non-state actors in CF started when GTZ included the local government bodies and NGOs as implementing actors in CF projects in 1992. Since 1996, SDC involves non-state actors as service providing agents, with the goal of assisting the DoF in the establishment and strengthening of FUGs. The role of non-state actors as agents for delivering project services (such as training, community development, CF awareness and facilitation in income generation activities) increased in 2001. The political insurgency, between 2001 and 2005, limited field visits made by forest office staff. The majority of donors mobilised non-state actors and changed their operational strategy during this period in order to provide services to poor households. More recently, non-state

actors retained an important role in project implementation. Donors and the government engage them. Ojha and Timisina (2008) found that the activities of CF non-state actors, particularly the FUGs' federation, are influential in policy processes.

7.3 Actors' Participation in Policy Spaces

In CF philosophy, the powerless have rights to participate in policy spaces, but their participation depends on the importance given by influential actors and these actors' agency to respect the rights and make the agendas inclusive. This section examines this issue in more detail by discussing the functioning of the different policy spaces in which donors, state actors, non-state actors and politicians participate.

7.3.1 Types of policy spaces

The forestry sector coordinates and organises several formal and informal policy spaces financed and facilitated with donor funds. For CF operations, six main types of spaces operate. As table 7.1 shows, these include (a) the Forestry Sector Coordination Committee (FSCC), (b) the sub-working groups of the FSCC, (c) the CF interactive group, (d) an issue-based taskforce, (e) the national CF workshop preparatory committee, and (f) the Gender and Equity Working Group (GEWG).

The policy spaces vary by structure, membership, objectives, outputs and date of origin, but are interlinked. Members and objectives of one space are associated with others. Forest officials with influence and high-position coordinate the spaces (see table 7.1). In two cases (the sub-working group of the FSCC and the national CF workshop preparatory committee), senior NRM staff of donors and project offices in Kathmandu assist the chair as member secretary. Since 2001, non-state actors have been included in the FSCC as observers. They have been included as members in the national CF workshop preparatory committee since 2008.

Table 7.1
Policy spaces in the forestry sector and their attributes

Policy spaces	Structure	Membership	Objective	Policy output
Forestry Sector Coordination Committee (FSCC)/The MFSC, since 1990	Chair- the forest secretary, the MFSC Member secretary: Planning Chief, the MFSC	MFSC, departments, donors**, NPC, Ministry of Finance, Parastatal organisations Observer: non-state actors (since 2001), donor missions	National forest policy, funding, donor-coordination, CF direction, Authorises sub-working groups	Setting policy planning process, donor commitment, forest legislation, and CF strategies
FSCC sub-working groups, the MFSC since 1993	Chair- 1 st rank official, the MFSC/ the Departments Member secretary: Kathmandu-based donors staff with decision-making role	MFSC, departments, Donors Non-state actors (since 2001)	Review, develop and submit policy to the FSCC in different themes	Institutional, incentive, training, policy/legal, biodiversity, monitoring, FUG support, financial
CF interactive group, the DoF since mid-1990	Chair: chief , CF division/the DoF Member: Kathmandu-based donor staff with decision-making role	The DoF, donors Invitees: non-state actor (since 2005)	CF policy, strategy coordination, problem solving formation and follow up of taskforces	Standardisation of FUG support project commitment planning for CF related national workshops
Taskforce group (issue-based)/ the DoF since mid-1990	Coordinator: forest officer, CF division/ the DoF Member: Kathmandu-based project professionals	The DoF, donors, non-state actors (since 2006)	Operational strategies for FUG development	Procedural guidelines for FUG formation and forest management
Five-year national CF w/s preparatory committee/the DoF since 1987	Chair: CF division chief/DoF Member secretary: Kathmandu-based donors staff with decision-making role	The DoF, donors Non-state actor (since 2008)	CF policy review CF direction decide themes, participants and methods for the five-year w/s	Plan and convene five-year national CF w/s
Gender and Equity Working Group/ The MFSC since 2003	Chair: 1 st rank official, the MFSC Coordinator: forest officer, the MFSC Member: Kathmandu-based donor professionals with social role	The MFSC, donors, Woman NRM-NGOs	Develop and implement strategy for gender mainstreaming in forestry sector	Gender and equity mainstreaming strategy and follow up

Source: FSCC 1993-2003; Interviews 2006

** Donors include donors, INGOs and projects that fund for CF and other programmes of the sector

The spaces have multiple objectives, such as establishing the process for the design of forest policy and laws, obtaining funding and donor commitments, donor coordination, problem solving and providing direction for policy change in CF. Numerous donor mission reports identify these spaces as important government spaces that can have a significant effect on forestry aid and on policy (Dearden 2004; DFID 2006; Gro-now et al. 2003).

While the FSCC is a formal space and meets once every two years, other spaces are mostly informal and meet when needed. The national CF workshop preparatory group begins its work at least six months before the national workshop, held once every five years. The nature of power relationships between participating organisations and individuals affects participation in the policy spaces, and in turn influences the production of ideas.

7.3.2 Power relationships in the policy spaces

The sector and donors are dominant actors in the structure and membership of these spaces. The nature of interactions ranges from principle-agent to facilitator and cooperation. However, the spaces mostly function with 'power over', and 'power with' relationships. Donors maintain significant control over policy agendas and processes and they are what Hinton and Grove (2004: 12) term as "gift-giving actors". They provide funds, human resources, ideas and argue for the inclusion of non-state actors in the spaces. Donors consider the non-state actors appropriate representatives of the community and believe they have the scope for providing better services for the communities. The government asks for donors' help. Donor staff feel it is their responsibility to solve policy problems. A project leader on his way to the DoF expressed that, 'I have been asked to mediate the *terai* forest management issue that is being contested between the sector and non-state actor' (Field note, 22 September 2006).

In a policy meeting, a donor representative stated that the responsibility of donors in the policymaking process is to raise issues of concern: 'as a representative of the donor community, I feel obliged to point to three continued concerns that must be included in our dialogue over the next 24 hours' (FSCC 2000: 81).

Likewise, the forestry sector as 'gift-receiving' actor appreciates the resources and facilities provided by donors for organising policy spaces

(FSCC 2000, 2001, 2003). In organising spaces, donors and the sector operate in ‘power with’ relationships in the sense that they are equally powerful in many respects. For instance, donor staff members fill the role of member secretary while a first-rank forest officer of the sector acts as coordinator in FSCC sub-working groups, FSCC and the national CF workshop planning committee. The power with relationship also operates in social interaction between the sector and the donors. For example, the sector needs money but donors need the sector’s approval to disburse funds.

The spaces are hierarchical. The first-rank and most senior officials of the MFSC and the DoF and power holders from donor offices and non-state organisations participate in the spaces. The chance of inclusion of field staff and community members with low social position is relatively low. The FSCC is the most important site to push and pull agendas for CF development. A thorough review of the meeting minutes of the FSCC between 1993 and 2003 shows that the criteria for selection for FSCC membership focused on representation of top-level officials from member organisations. Because men from Kathmandu generally head these organisations, the FSCC excludes women, *dalits*, ethnic groups and low-rank staff. None of the minutes discusses gender, castes/ethnicity, class or location issues while selecting members or inviting participants.

Table 7.2 shows the composition of participants in two FSCC meetings held in 2000 and 2003. Government and donors (including INGOs) constituted 94 per cent of total invitees. Foresters made up more than 90 per cent of these participants (Shrestha 2001: 64).

Table 7.2
Participants invited for the FSCC meeting by organisation

Meeting	Gender	GO	Donors/ project	INGO	Non- state	Total	
						No.	%
10 th /2000	Male	48	21	5	3	77	94
	Female	2	2	0	1	5	6
11 th /2003	Male	45	29	3	6	83	95
	Female	0	3	0	1	4	5
Total no.		95	55	8	11	169	
%		56	33	5	6	100	

Source: FSCC 2000, 2003

Only five per cent of invitees were women. Only one female forester received an invitation to the 2000 meeting. The other woman was from the National Planning Commission. Women foresters were mostly involved as support staff, not as members *per se*, and table 7.2 does not reflect this reality. As of 2006, the sector had five women foresters in the central office. None of them involved in any policy spaces.

As table 7.3 reveals, 97 per cent of total participants invited to the FSCC meetings in 2000 and 2003 were high-caste, advantaged Newar and expatriates. Expatriates included ambassadors, NRM head of Kathmandu-based donor offices, and project and INGO decision-makers. Representatives of non-state actors were from high-caste groups. This is due to the domination of the high-caste in the decision-making position of the NRM civil society (see Timsina 2003b), NGOs and professional NGOs (see HIMAWANTI 2009; NEFUG 2002; RAN 2005).

Table 7.3
Participants invited for the FSCC by gender, caste/ethnicity and nationality

Meeting	Gender	Low caste	High caste*/ Newar	Ethnic group	Expatriate	Total no.
10 th /2000	Male	0	51	3	23	77
	Female	0	3	0	2	5
11 th /2003	Male	0	60	2	21	83
	Female	0	2	0	2	4
	Total no.	0	116	5	48	169
	%	0	69	3	28	100

Source: FSCC 2000 and 2003

* High caste include Brahmin, Chhetri and Jha

The membership status of attendees varies. Donors are members and non-state actors (especially NRM civil society and NGOs) are invitees. According to Gaventa (2004), the 'invitee' position in 'invited spaces' does not necessarily involve the right to participate in decisions. In forestry policy spaces, the influential staff of the CF projects help provide the invited space through personal networks and provide it as a privilege rather than a right. 'Our participation in the FSCC meeting was possible

through project influence' (I. no. 24, civil society, 22 February 2006), remarked a civil society member.

The role of donors is influential in shaping the participation process in policy spaces. The increasing presence of non-state actors in policy spaces in recent years is the result of donor requests. Donor's influential staff asked the sector to make policy spaces more participatory (ambassador speeches; FSCC 2000). In 2001, sub-working groups of the FSCC included representatives of non-state actors as members, but arbitrarily in terms of whom to include in which groups. For example, the national federation of FUGs (FECOFUN) was excluded from key groups such as policy/legislation and training work groups while it was included in other groups (FSCC 2001).

Participating non-state actors feel the domination or control of the government. A respondent expressed, 'I attended the forestry sector's meeting in 2001 as "NGO" representative, but the meeting was dominated by government and donors. The forest ministry presented agendas. All papers were about bio-diversity, collaborative forest policy, and community forest handover in the *terai*' (I. no. 27, NGO, 26 June 2006).

Moreover, individuals from within non-state organisations are selected based on their personal relationships with government and project staff. They participate passively. A respondent from a civil society remarked,

I am the chair of the FUG in my village. I am also the chair of organisation X established for empowerment of local NRM groups. With the support of CF project Y, I was able to establish this organisation. I have a good relationship with the forestry sector. I know many senior people in the sector and project Y. I represent my organisation in several policy meetings. The role of civil society in the meeting however is a "witness". We do not have any power to influence policy agenda (I. no. 26, civil society, 22 June 2006).

Project staff plays a role in creating local elite-based civil society institutions by funding the elite to deliver community workshops and provide technical support in constitution writing (I. no. 26, civil society, 22 June 2006). The staff were also influential in making alliances between elite-based organisations and government senior staff. In theory, local actors who represent community-based forest organisations have the right to participate and raise their voices in policy spaces, but in practice, donors instead of government create their participation.

Spaces such as the 'CF interactive group' rely on the presence of the power players from within projects because of their decision-making power during meetings. A forest official of the DoF remarked, 'We have not considered participants' diversity in the meetings. There is a practice of inviting decision-makers of CF projects to the meetings because they can assure projects' support for community forestry development in the meeting' (I. no. 74, GO, 2 November 2006).

The CF division practices selective membership criteria in the CF interactive group. Position, knowledge and gender based participants are not seen as a resource that could provide critical information about context and project practice.

Not all foresters within the sector have the same influence. During interviews with DoF officers, power relationships were clearly reflected as one of the institutional barriers preventing lower-rank staff from participating in policy spaces like the CF interactive group. Even though they are represented in some spaces, lower-rank foresters do not have a voice. A forest officer stated, 'We feel insecure to speak up in meetings, as we are not sure whether our boss takes positively or negatively the issues we raise' (I. no. 82, GO, 3 November 2006).

Intimidation affects inclusion outcomes as power relations block ideas from actors with low power. Active participation in meetings is more restricted than attendance is.

One policy space is theoretically open to all—the national CF workshop held every five years. In practice, participation by socioeconomically disadvantaged groups is restricted. For the recently held 5th CF workshop, there was a prohibitive registration fee of NRs 500. Those who could not pay needed to apply to the workshop secretariat office. The criteria such as a maximum of 40 participants in the workshop on a 'first come first serve' basis resulted in limited access (DoF 2008).

Issue-based taskforces are the only policy spaces where community members and members of civil society groups, who are closer to the communities, are able to participate. Even here, participation is limited by what Crewe and Harrison (1998) call the 'professionalisation of development'. Project staff dominate discussions. A project member staff said, 'Civil society actors are offered this space to participate in guidelines preparation process. It is a good opportunity for them to raise their ideas and concerns. But, they are not assertive. We have to represent them' (Field note, 15 March 2006).

The representatives of community organisations are included in the space, but their agency is undermined. As actors in the taskforce were unequal with regards to power, the level of education and experience, there was no attempt on the part of taskforce organisers to consider these dimensions while facilitating policy interaction. Participating members of civil society groups feel inferior to project and government officials and do not feel confident enough to contribute to the meetings, despite their experience with grassroots issues and information on development options (I. no. 36, NGO, 21 June 2006, I.no.17, civil society 23 August 2006). CF project staff influenced the selection of members for the taskforce, the division of roles between actors, the venues and the process of guidelines planning (language, materials, facilitator, field trips and incentives). Differences in academic qualifications, position, expertise and gender, as well as the dependency of non-state actors on donors for funding, negatively affected the ability of non-state actors to contribute equally in CF related policy planning (ibid). As discussed in chapter 3, the field staff of the DoF showed concern that the process of CF development guideline planning excluded field staff.

Interviews reveal expertise as an important factor in shaping ideas. An interview with a member of the taskforce shows the limitation of sociological knowledge and interest among taskforce members. A project professional expressed the limitations of the taskforces as follows: 'Most of the members in the CF development guidelines taskforce are foresters. There is no member with expertise in social analysis and social interests' (I. no. 55, project, 10 July 2006).

Thus, the status of the sector and donors is clearly that of 'privileged insider' while that of non-state actors is 'secondary insider/inclusion' (Kabeer 2000: 11). The agency of people from within the sector and donors helps shape space. These actors also shape agendas and, as a result, influence policy outputs.

7.3.3 Instrumental agendas and policy outputs

The sector and donors influence the process of agenda setting in spaces. The agendas cover a wide range of issues but the priority remains focused on an eco-centric perspective of CF and instrumental forms of participation. The concerns of the sector frequently surround biophysical aspects of forestry. Donors also push many issues related to the improvement, management and marketing of forests. They also are con-

cerned about FUG governance, and participation of non-state actors as an approach to reduce poverty, but they do not challenge the structural issues of exclusion.

Although some spaces like the issue-based taskforce are potential places for bringing in new ideas not central to the sector or donors' agendas, the influence of new perspectives remains limited in practice (as shown above).

The various outputs of policy spaces range from procedural norms for FUGs regulation to strategic approaches to CF development. As the strategies of what Mezirow (1991) calls 'instrumental learning' dominate discussions in policy spaces, it is not surprising that the policy outputs emerging out of the spaces also have this focus.

One example is the CF operational guidelines discussed in chapter 3. These guide field staff in FUG formation, post-formation support and operational plan preparation, but say little about transformative participation and equity concerns in forest management and social change system.

Another example is the output of the preparatory committee of the five-year national CF workshop. The committee organised five national CF workshops between 1987 and 2008. The workshops varied in focus, objective and output over time (Acharya et al. 1999; Banko Janakari 1987, 1993, DoF 2008). Up to 2004, the number of attendees was increasing, growing from 35 in 1987, 49 in 1993, 130 in 1998 to 198 in 2004 (ibid). The number decreased in 2008 to 40 according to the limit stated in the workshop brochure. The workshops became more inclusive in terms of organisations represented. However, they remained exclusive because foresters, senior staff, high-caste and advantaged ethnic groups, men and forestry organisations (government, donors, projects, INGOs) dominated the workshops in numbers and roles.

The workshop proceedings between 1987 and 2008 showed that all the workshop agendas focused on FUG development and involvement of non-state actors as an approach to sustainable development. Social issues raised in one workshop do not appear in the next and thus, no policies to address the social concerns develop. For example, a government field forester in the second workshop raised the issue of elite control over decision-making in FUGs (see Baral 1993). Likewise, gender inequality in decision-making at forestry governance was raised in the 3rd workshop in 1998 (Acharya et al. 1999). But these issues were ignored in

the action plans. The third workshop resulted in a shared vision of CF, which states that ‘community forestry contributes to poverty reduction with the application of sustainable forest management’ (Acharya et al. 1999). This workshop’s vision seems socially sensitive compared to the previous ones. However, the social concerns remain vaguely defined (Upreti and Adhikari 2006).

The CF workshop in 2004 focused on the idea of second generation¹ issues. Donors and the sector consider CF as a means to achieve the MDGs and poverty reduction. As discussed in chapter 4, donors (especially DFID) pushed the Sustainable Livelihood Approach. The strategic focus of the workshop was on FUG’s income and governance (Kanel 2004). These discussions did not result in any fundamental change to policy because the focus was on creating economic opportunities for the poor just through normal CF operations, but it ignored the structural constraints to secure opportunities.

The 5th CF workshop held in 2008 introduced new agendas such as participation, grassroots democracy, state restructuring, climate change and carbon trading. Participants shared learning and challenges in three broad areas: governance, environmental services and financial contribution of participatory forestry programmes to development (LFP 2009). Gender and equity issues were considered overarching themes, but were not given as much attention as climate change at the government level. According to a paper presented by a non-state actor, the lack of gender skills and awareness of gender among forestry field staff and a lack of implementation of social policy were blamed for the difficulty in addressing these issues (Acharya 2008). All papers highlighted the lack of CF policy implementation as a problem affecting livelihoods of the poor. None of them considered exclusion as a consequence of CF policy/legislation and the institutional dynamics of intervening actors.

7.3.4 Implications of policy spaces for inclusion

The spaces allow the government and donors to understand and negotiate a number of development ideas. The spaces also act as a site for demanding and accepting donors’ role in CF development. Although the spaces share the goal of reducing poverty, the instrumental way of dealing with social issues dominates policy discussions. Little if any attempt is made to raise a more transformational view in discussions, and when fundamental issues arise no one pursues them.

Analysis of the policy space confirmed the argument that the targeted actors and their concerns become invisible in policy spaces when intervening agencies ignore inclusion of actors with multiple knowledge, disciplines, positions and institutional backgrounds in the space (Landau 2007). The aid-supported policy spaces operate in a hierarchical and non-participatory way in dealing with social agendas. The spaces are not designed to help actors reflect on their actions and values from a socio-political perspective, which scholars (Buchy and Ahmed 2007) argue is an important element for social transformation. As a result, structural issues of exclusion are dealt with from an instrumental perspective.

Scholars argued that active deliberation of non-state actors in policy processes is one successful achievement of CF (Ojha and Timsina 2008). However, non-state actors participate in invited spaces in which the selection of non-state invitees relies on the influence of powerful actors from the sector or donor funded projects. This makes non-state actors dependent on actors with more power; not only for operating funds, but also for a seat at the policy table, and thus affects the extent and independence of their participation in policy spaces (see also 7.4.3). This finding questions the argument that non-state actors have become central players in the forestry policymaking process.

To understand better the influence that forestry sector, donor and non-state actors have on each other, it is important to understand the roles each actor plays and how they rely on each other. The next section explores these relationships.

7.4 Actors' Roles and Reliance on Each Other

7.4.1 Donors

Donors interact with government, non-state actors and politicians mostly in a principle-agent relationship,² dominating and controlling CF development. They mostly manifest a 'power over' relationship with these actors. Donors exercise their agency through their money, membership in project planning and implementation, policy spaces, meetings and consultation with government officials that represent their interests with the senior staff of the MFSC and the DoF. *Dalit*, women and ethnic minorities from non-state actors historically suffered exclusion in the consultation of forestry project design and planning in Nepal (see Griffin 1978; Hill 1999; JTRC 2001; Robbe 1965; World Bank 1978).

Interviews reveal the inability of donors to break with the traditional approach to forestry, even as they start to address social inclusion in their projects. Project respondents described a case in which inclusion of a social equity approach in project programmes led to a conflict between government and the project management staff. The main issue was the power relations between the DoF and the FUGs, as the project provided services to FUGs to develop and implement ‘pro-social livelihood improvement plans’ that were broader than normative forest management plans and focused on community priorities. The project staff concerned could not challenge the government and eventually the conflict resulted in a situation where one project management with high expertise and interests in technical forestry replaced a team interested in the social approach (I. no. 61, project, 4 May 2006). The new project management team developed a concept called ‘integrated operational plan’, which the pro-poor livelihood improvement programme of FUG required the approval of the DFO. A forest officer defined this change as: ‘Forests should come first before livelihood concept when FUGs work on translation for pro-poor programmes. If FUGs implement pro-poor livelihood programmes without detailing in forest operational plan, there is no guarantee that FUGs would invest for forests’ (I. no. 86, GO, 24 February 2006).

Ironically, as described in chapter 6, the approach to forestry training and knowledge production supported by aid reinforces the traditional view of forestry that is a barrier to some of the newer project approaches. Preserving the traditional values of forestry is a constant theme in the donors’ relationship with the government.

There are other examples of donors deferring to government. For example, expatriates who denounced corruption were asked to leave their project. Donors prefer ‘keep quiet’ strategies while working with government. A project staff remarked, ‘I was asked to shut-up when I raised the issue of inequity in the use of a human resource development funds for government officials’ (I. no. 70, project, 15 June 2006).

In their analysis of the policy deliberation process in Nepali forestry, scholars (Cameron and Ojha 2007) cite a case where donors do not want to make project problems public: ‘A FECOFUN activist was offered a grant by a bilateral forestry project if he would stop publicly criticising the project approach’ (ibid: 82).

When donors hire project staff with a non-traditional background, these staff often encounter problems interacting with their forestry sector's counterparts. Donors value senior project staff familiar with the culture of forestry that have good relationships with senior staff of the sector and are able to maintain good bureaucratic relations (I. no. 47, project, 4 May 2006). In contrast, senior project staff that were new to the forestry culture and had weak links with senior officials in the sector have difficulties working with their counterparts. Some advisors reported that the forest ministry labelled them 'Maoist supporters' when they argued for human resource opportunities to forestry field staff (I. no. 61, project, 4 May 2006).

Donors' emphasis on maintaining good relationships with government officials may increase trust and efficiency, but at the same time, it contributes to exclude those actors who cannot have close relationships with local bureaucrats. Nevertheless, Law (1991) argues that situating staff in weak relations can achieve more outcomes, as they can challenge power relation issues, nepotism or corruption and social injustice practices.

7.4.2 Forestry sector

The decision-makers of the sector interact with donors around an agenda driven by production and conservation interests. For instance, a respondent shared his experience as: 'Donors X showed interest in supporting the forestry sector. Mr X and I decided to give [to]...districts of Nepal with the main interest of managing forests with approach other than community forestry' (I. no. 57, GO, 9 November 2006).

Decision-makers of the sector feel the respect of donors in CF intervention. They interact with donors mostly in 'agent-principle' form. Donors are 'principles' for sector officials. The officials rely on donors for financial, human and material resources. The interaction of the sector with a single donor in two districts supplying techno-scientific knowledge for more than 30 years is an example of dependency (I. no. 61, project, 4 May 2006). Although forest decision-makers feel the need to continue projects for poverty reduction, their priority remains on scientific forestry-based intervention.

The sector interacts with non-state actors mostly as controlling and sometimes with friendly relationships, which it establishes when it deals with an agenda influenced by donors and government policy, and it in-

volves non-state actors to assist district forest offices in social facilitation. The sector interacts with controlling relationships with non-state actors when it comes to sharing power. For example, FUGs cannot implement forest management plans unless the forest office approves, although they prepare the Plan with the help of non-state actors or FUG. The sector officials can ignore the voice of non-state actors in policy interaction when they feel the idea would be a threat to their work. A civil society member reported the negative reaction of forest policymakers when he raised the question of multi-actors' participation in forest management in an important policy event. 'We three members attended a policy workshop financed by donor X in 2001. When I put views on the need of multi-actors participation for better management of forests in the *terai*, a forest policymaker pointed out to me "you are shouting here with donor's money" (I. no. 24, civil society, 22 February 2006).

A project respondent explained a case in which the sector refused a project proposal because of the inclusion of social programmes. According to one respondent, the donor's many years of association with the sector (mainly technical interests, hierarchical culture of communication and administration of projects) were the cause of resistance from the sector (I. no. 55, project, 10 July 2006).

In the progress review report, IUCN reported that with SDC support, it started to sensitise NRM actors about gender, poverty and social equity (GPSE) in conservation programmes, but they faced resistance from the forestry sector. A government official during a meeting with the Secretary of the MFSC suggested that 'IUCN should focus on plants' (Jingfors and Robinson 2005: 5).

The sector interacts with politicians in a 'power over' relationship in the CF context. The forest decision-makers decided the role of local level politicians in CF operations. For example, a policy paper discussed by the MFSC official in the 2nd national CF pointed out the support role of the local political bodies such as VDC and DDC during FUG formation (see Kanel 1993). Historically, CF national workshops in 1987 and 1993 were the key policy moments that shaped the current CF legislation. VDC and DDC in the Nepalese context are the political institutions that represent people. Their representation was absent in the famous policy workshops (see Banko Janakari 1987, 1993).

7.4.3 Non-state actors

Non-state actors are subordinated to the donors and the sector. Non-state actors depend on donors for business and jobs. They interact with donors in 'agent' and 'subordinate' relationships. The guidance and controlling attitude of project staff was apparent when assisting an NGO to organise a national workshop for women activists. The NGO leader totally relied on the project to decide the content and process of the workshop (Field note, 4 March 2006). About 85.5 per cent of the annual budget of FECOFUN comes from donors (Timsina 2003b: 69). A recent study cites this dependency relationship as a limiting factor that prevents NGOs from being more proactive in influencing change at the grass-roots level (Hobley and Rai 2008).

Sometimes non-state actors interact with government in 'power with' relationships, when they, with aid support, protest against government's decisions about CF. Donors provide financial support to these organisations to bring the local perspective into national policy processes (Ojha and Timsina 2008). When their agendas were consistent with donors' objective of increasing participation in the policy dialogue, they did not raise the issue of exclusion. For example, a national organisation of FUGs published a calendar in 2006 with an appeal to the Prime Minister, the deputy prime minister, the ministers and the MPs about CF (FECOFUN calendar 2063 BS/2006). The appeal claims that the Nepali CF was one of the most democratic and participatory in the world. None of the 31 issues raised related specifically to the exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, women and indigenous people. The calendar called for a participatory and democratic inclusive process in the forthcoming forest master planning, but it did not talk about or propose a strategy to make the process participatory (*ibid*). Their motive was to obtain a seat for themselves at the table.

Elite members of non-state organisations acknowledge the importance of donors' support in establishing their organisations. They have been able to establish connections with aid staff and demand aid on a personal basis. A respondent who represents a highly renowned NRM civil society expressed, 'Donors supported the establishment of our organisation. I asked a friend in donor X to give aid not as donor but as support institution. The reputation of NGOs in Nepal is negative and our organisation would be blamed for not mobilising resources for people's development' (I. no. 18, civil society, 8 November 2006).

The elites non-state actors make alliances not only with state bureaucrats (Abdelrahman 2001), but also with donors' staff in the Nepali context of CF. They are aware of the effect of power relations in CF intervention. As a result, they include influential aid staff, politicians who are in the network of the donors and influential forest bureaucrats in their advisory boards and policy advocacy groups. For instance, in 2007, a civil society organisation formed a national policy advocacy group to implement a public policy advocacy campaign programme supported by donors. The group consists of 21 representatives from development professionals, politicians and civil society members. Nineteen of them belong to the high-caste group (FECOFUN 2007).

Thus, the literature that discusses the successful role of non-state actors in policy deliberation in Nepali forestry is incomplete without analysis of the source of actor's interests, relationships in the policy deliberation process and focus of their agendas. A full analysis of this issue is beyond the scope of this research, but it is clear at least that civil society actors are embedded in the CF policy web in ways that undermine their independence in policy dialogues.

7.4.4 Politicians

Politicians interact with donors and the sector mostly with friendly relationships and mostly in the context of aid negotiation. Their interest is obtaining aid assistance to sustain CF as a model for decentralisation policy. As discussed in chapter 4, politicians consider CF a source of international support for community development. A study about the role of communities in the protected area management in Nepal highlights limited access to knowledge space by politicians as contributor to the domination of scientific ideology in community-oriented protected area management (Jana 2008). In the CF case, politicians obtain knowledge when lobbied by donors and project staff during the legislative process (see chapter 6). Political leaders see CF as an example of community control over resource management and as an inclusive policy. This understanding developed through personal networks.

Politicians interact with the sector and donors in a 'client' relationship. They are a voice for more aid (FSCC 1999, 2001, 2003). Perhaps Nepal's reputation in the aid relationship as 'an easy partner for making aid agreements' because of weak governance (Khadka 1988) might still influence politicians to be the passive actor of aid.

Politicians' subordination to the forest bureaucracy was apparent when they interacted within the sector during politician's tenure in the MFSC. They represent a view consistent with the sector's objective of environmental sustainability. Although they use social terms in their speeches, they do not analyse the mechanisms that would support the sector to address the issue. In a CF policy and legislation paper presented by a forest minister in an international conference, it says:

The present legislation is more liberal... The act also specifies the role and duties of user groups.... Nepal is a multiethnic society, and equity issues are very important in any development activity including community forestry.... The new forest management system is moving towards a participatory mode where foresters are supposed to provide technical and other advisory services to the local people.... This is a good opportunity for the ministry to implement the Forest Policy of 1989 and Act of 1993 (Khunjeli 1993: 192).

Politicians in the networks of project staff interact with government and donors with agendas driven by donors' interests. For example, one former MP, engaged in CF since the mid-1990s, provides services to projects through his NGO while he represents the members of NRM sub-committee in the HoR (I. no. 36, NGO, 21 June 2006). Another former MP is an editor of a Nepali journal that disseminates NRM issues. He included 20 people with high professional status such as scientists, development experts and journalists with good experience in CF as advisors on his publication committee. All of them are from high-caste and ethnically advantaged groups (Pokharel 2005). The composition of the committee reflects this politician's awareness of the power relationship within CF aid and his interest to fit into the network. The type of information the journal disseminates includes CF issues and ideas that advocate the role of CF in community development, establishing democracy, decentralisation, social equity and transformation practice in forest governance. This dynamic reveals that politicians with influence at donor or government level can exercise his/her agency to make donors and government happy rather than challenging development issues on behalf of the powerless.

7.4.5 Actors' interactions constrain inclusionary outcomes

The dynamics of actors' interactions reveal that actors in the CF context interact with different forms of relationships, but rely on each other for

meeting their interests in CF development. Donors' identity as 'principle actor' has been established and maintained through giving resources such as money, human resources, expertise, knowledge and materials, as explained in previous chapters and earlier sections of this chapter. The giver always has the upper hand when interacting with the taker and the relationship thus becomes one of domination and oppression (Eyben 2003). Donors want to keep others happy for political reason.

The sector's identity seems as an agent while interacting with donors, but it has an identity of 'principle' or 'controlling' when interacting with non-state actors and politicians. Non-state actors and politicians stand mostly as agent because of aid dependency. Supported by aid, non-state actors act as defender against the forest sector, instead of giving a solution to improve the sector's behaviour and attitude. Politicians feel the importance of CF policy for aid. Thus, power is complex. Different actors use power to their own interests. This context shows that power plays between power players can affect inclusion outcomes, as power players negotiate with agendas that concern them. This finding provides reasons for the dominance of bureaucratic power, culture and traditional scientific forestry ideology in the forest organisation that earlier research pointed out as a problem for social outcomes. At the same time, the finding on actor's reliance with each other at the policy level showed that it is not enough to claim an increased role for civil society and community as the prime movers of transformation in the lives of the poor and socially excluded groups. It is important to consider how non-state actors develop their understanding about change (chapter 5), their development interests and the power relations between people within their organisations and with others. In Nepali CF, actor's interactions has maintained exclusion and continued existing power at the policy level. The interaction pattern orients CF actors to maintain a traditional development culture, which limits inclusion of power issues in CF development agendas.

Table 7.4 summarises the actors' interactions, power relationships and the effect of the relationships (outcomes) to reflect the pattern of interests emerging out of the interactions in CF setting at the macro level.

Table 7.4
Pattern of interaction and power relationship between actors

Organisation /actor	Interact with	Nature of interaction	Type of power relationship	Outcomes of power effect
Donors	Forestry sector	- principle-agent - cooperation	- control over - commanding	- sector as key actor of CF aid - donors as prime mover in CF development
	Non-state actors	- principle-agent - facilitators	- controlling - sometimes power with/friendly	- projects involve non-state actors as agent - fear of losing opportunity if critical to projects
	Politicians	- bilateral relationship	- controlling - sometimes power with/friendly	- donors feel happy with development partnership with Nepal - politicians are in the network of CF power players
Forestry sector	Donors	- agent-principle - equally powerful in many respects	- subordination - power with most	- projects for CF implementation - no change in sector's culture
	Non-state actors	- agent-principle - friendship	- domination - cooperation	- the sector enjoys working with non-state actors at operation level
	Politicians	- friendship - principle-agent	- cooperation - commanding	- sector participates as political representative in policy meetings
Non-state actors	Donors	- agent-principle - look for assistance and guidance	- subordination - facilitators	- weak ties with the sector - non-critical assessment of CF aid from social justice point of view
	The sector	- agents-principle - equally powerful in some respects	- subordination - power over in some respects	- non-critical assessment of CF policy and sector - protest against government decisions that shadow CF policy
	Politicians	- friendship - cooperation	- power with	- non-critical assessment of CF policy and sector - politicians are in the network of non-state actors
Politicians	Donors	- bilateral relationship - ask for aid	- power with - subordination	- support government to practice decentralisation policy - elite politicians are in the network of project elites
	The sector	- representation	- subordination - power with	- politicians represent in forest policy meeting - relying on donors knowledge
	Non-state actors	- friendship	- power with	- non-critical assessment of CF policy and sector - weak ties with the sector

Source: Interviews 2006; FSCC 1998-2003; *Akhijyal* (No. 574)³

7.5 Donors' Working Strategy with Government

In the preceding discussion, the major perception of donors was singular and unified. In fact, donors make different strategic decisions about how to interact with government. These strategic differences received much attention in the aid literature recently. The Paris Declaration, for example, calls for increasing government ownership of aid and moving it out of a project-based mode of operations. The Declaration recognises aid system in which donors need to change their behaviour with partners for aid to be effective (see Eyben 2008). In Nepali CF, donors are split between those who operate through the DoF and those who operate through projects. The aid modality affects patterns of interaction between actors.

A very heterogeneous process can be seen with regard to interaction between the forestry sector and donors in CF project operation. Two types of working modality appear in CF aid: 'government owned' system and 'project owned' system. Table 7.5 shows some key differences between these working modalities. The government owned modality has a project operation structure that follows government values and norms. In this system, CF projects do not have separate project offices, but the project staff work with government counterparts from the centre to the field level. The project team leader and advisors become counterparts of the head of CF division/DoF and regional forest office respectively. In contrast, the project owned modality has a project structure independent of the government system. This system allows donors to have project offices from the centre to the field level independently. The counterpart relationship varies between donors in this system. Some donors like AusAID and DFID have the first-rank forester in the MFSC office as project team leader's counterpart and others like SDC has a second-class officer in the DoF office to act as the project's focal person. These differentiations in everyday social interactions and coordination with government actors affect the process of collective efforts for change, as focal persons have different power positions and roles.

Table 7.5
Differences between two aid modalities in CF

Dimensions	Government owned system	Project owned system
Project's counterpart relationships	Project leaders counterpart with the CF division head/DoF and advisors counterpart with the head of regional forest directorate	Project leaders' counterparts differ: some with 1 st rank officials of the MFSC office, and others with senior officers in the DoF office
Office and location	Project offices within government office premise at the centre and regional level (no district level)	Separate project offices at the centre and the district level (field level)
Focus of interactions	Mostly technical issues	Technical and social, but some projects largely focus on technical issues
Projects cooperation with the MFSC	High cooperation	Relatively low cooperation at the policy level and strong at the field level
Projects cooperation with non-state actors	Relatively weak cooperation	Relatively strong, except with those projects that focus on technical issues
Focus and flexibility regarding social programmes	Focus on women's physical participation and less flexibility to implement social programmes	Focus on FUG development along with physical participation and more flexibility to run social programmes
Influence of government staff in policy change	Relatively low	Relatively strong

Source: Interviews 2006

Some fundamental differences can be observed between these working modalities.

First is the relationship between actors. Donors following the 'government owned' system have relatively strong cooperation with the sector in project implementation, but weak cooperation with non-state actors. The sector officials see the donors as 'kin members' in the sense that they rely on project staff and resources from policy level activities to field implementation. The projects operated in this system have limited and selective networks with non-state actors. Those actors who are critical of government are less likely to be included as agent or service

provider. For example, the decision-makers of the forest ministry denied a proposal submitted by a national NGO with expertise on gender issues to review forest legislation in 2000 (I. no. 28, NGO, 7 November 2006).

The projects following the government system had a project structure with senior project staff acting as counterpart of high-rank staff of the DoF. This contributed to social interactions between actors within the project, which are technical and hierarchical. Deeply rooted institutional practice of projects contributed to the hierarchical and technical social interactions. One project following the government system focused on a structure of communication and reporting mechanisms, which were very hierarchical and technical. The project operation modality put the top-level forestry officials at the centre as the controller of development work, and gave an advisory role to expatriate foresters. A project respondent working within the system commented on her experience as: 'Senior professional staff in Kathmandu office prepare policy and guidelines and command field staff to implement them' (I. no. 66, project, 14 July 2006).

Government owned systems contributed to establish technical and hierarchical culture of social interaction for CF operations and reinforced it. There are no incentives or mechanisms to change the system, even though donors are aware of the lack of government interests to deal with social issues. Another project respondent expressed, 'We contributed to improve forests and establish forest user groups, but could not address social issues. Our role is to assist government counterparts and follow government systems whose concern always remains with technical issues. Our focus of interaction with them automatically goes to technical matters' (I. no. 55, project, 10 July 2006).

One project following the government owned system had begun to deal with social issues by hiring field-based 'rural sociologists' since 2000 but their access to policy level is restricted. A project respondent described the barrier as follows: 'The idea of recruitment of rural sociologists emerged to deal with wider social issues in NRM sector, but their role is limited to the field level. Government foresters accept only those non-foresters with high power and personal relations' (I. no. 66, project, 14 July 2006).

In contrast, donors following a 'project owned' system have relatively strong working relationships with non-state actors. Donors believe that working through non-state actors is an effective way to meet the

demands of communities; given the limited human resources of the government vis-à-vis, the potential of FUGs to buy services from non-state actors through FUG funds (I. no. 47, project, 4 May 2006). The majority of the projects in this system have flexibility to include non-state actors in project programmes.

In the 'project owned' systems, the government's cooperation with projects is relatively weak at the policy level, but strong at the field level. One reason for strong cooperation at the field level is that non-state actors often help local forest offices, although there are differences across donors. For example, in AusAID and DFID funded project areas, non-state actors are involved mostly from a service-oriented point of view. According to interviews with non-state actors, the donors do emphasise timely services from non-state organisations and pay little attention to the organisational structure and capacity of non-state actors in transformation process. An annual report of the DFID funded CF project shows that it engaged 74 consultants (local, national and global) in a single year (LFP 2005). In contrast, the use of global and national consultants was very nominal in SDC areas until 2003, with an exception of external missions. The trend began to increase post 2003 with the recruitment of a forest official from the forestry sector as project manager, who connected increased external consultants with the community (I. no. 47, project, 4 May 2006).

Another difference between the two modalities is the level of influence of individual state actors. While government field staff have greater informal power in project owned systems, their influence is low in government owned systems. Field-based government foresters influenced CF policy and legislation planning due to their strong friendships with project players and their engagement in policy experimentation (details in section 7.6).

A third difference is the relationships between the geographical coverage and intervention focus. Donors following the government-run system have large geographical coverage, but the nature of interventions emphasises only technical issues and FUG formation activities. In contrast, donors that follow the project-based modality work in few districts but integrate multiple activities combining technical, social mobilisation, policy advocacy, FUGs formation and FUG institutional development. Even in the project-based modality, facilitation and mobilisation of activities suffer from the limitations discussed in chapter 6.

Donors would suggest that working separately from government in the project owned modality would result in innovation and new ways of doing things, which could ultimately lead to changes in policy. While the project-owned model facilitated diversity in project activities, ideas, organisational networks and skills in CF, it reinforced informal power relationships because it focused on individual-based social interactions at the government level. There is less incentive for change when following the government owned system. Change is unlikely to happen in Nepali CF unless the government initiates it because the traditional way of doing things is deeply rooted in the government system.

Local development research in other contexts points out the need to redefine the role of government from traditional service delivery to a developmental government⁴ in participatory development processes (Kanothi 2009). Political ecologists argued for shifting the working style of science instead of abandoning it in natural resource management (Leach 2008; Nightingale 2005; Peet and Watts 2004). Aid scholar (Eyben 2008) argues that aid instruments should enhance not only the capacity of citizens to make claims, but also the capacity of the aid recipient state to respond. In the CF case, donors' perspective on engaging government in development reinforced the traditional role of government. For example, the project-owned modality has innovation impacts, as it inspired field-based government officials for change in government policy. The policy became instrumental to sustain projects. The modality has limited impact on the capacity of government to understand social problems and their roles, values and understanding beyond science. As a result, decision-makers maintain instrumental views on CF policy.

Finally, donors' operational strategies and their pattern of interaction at the policy level supported the development and operation of private networks between individuals. The networks act as the foundation to maintain instrumental perspective and ideas in CF policymaking and change.

7.6 Role of Actor-Networks in CF Operation

The essential way to address human-ecological problems for justice, equality and autonomy is to cross traditional boundaries of actor networks (informal spaces) between disciplines, perspectives, positions and locations (Rocheleau and Roth 2007). Aid relationship theory highlights the fact that actors will have difficulty challenging power issues when

they make informal relationships with actors who carry the same perspective, position and professional backgrounds (Eyben 2006). This section analyses the way individual actors within the donor-government interface to establish their relationships and examines whether the resulting networks are helpful for tackling exclusion. Actors in this section refer to individuals or social groups with the capacity for agency, for decision-making and action (Hindess 1988 in Mahanty 2000: 1375). Their networking implies the process of alliance building between them and their influence to generate and validate various ideas in CF institutionalisation.

Table 7.6
Actor-networks and ideas in the CF institutionalisation process

Network types	Process of networking	Ideas emerged out of networks
Profession-based networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involved in the experimentation of conservation techniques, 60s - engage in project funded policy review, project design and evaluation - foreign academic training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plantation, pasture management, conservation and silviculture techniques - trees on private land - institutional set-up of forestry - women's role in CF - income-based livelihood
Position-based networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - recruitment in project decision-making roles - engage in project funded policy review, project design and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocate FUG as site for tackling poverty - forest management - income-based livelihood
Caste and ethnicity-based networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participate in policy taskforces - foreign academic training - government's representation in local and global policy spaces - recruitment of powerful actors in CF policy experimentation - use of elite members of non-state actor in policy review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gender and equity - village-based CF - household level intervention for poverty reduction

Source: Interviews 2006; project reports; Griffin 1988; Nepali CF articles

As table 7.6 reveals, three types of private networks are operating at the policy level in the CF context. The networks run in one organised circle each reinforcing the other creating a tight inclusive network

between them. Informal institutions of donors and the forestry sector establish the networks. The process of networking links actors in a way that actors with the same profession are involved in position and caste/ethnic-based networks. The networking process strengthens the dominant ideology of forestry and instrumental participation, leaving little room or reason to challenge structural issues in CF.

As shown in table 7.6, the first actor-network is that of Nepali and expatriate foresters. Donors valued the good friendship between foresters as an indicator of project success. Griffin (1988) for example assessed the Australian aid to Nepal's forestry sector in the introduction of numbers of Australians to tackle Nepalese forestry problems and their ability to establish cooperation, trust and friendship. The expatriates relied on local foresters with high social class to identify conservation measures in the hill region.

The friendship began to strengthen with the involvement of donors in CF in the 1970s. In discussions with senior Nepali foresters, it became clear that their ability to link local and global forestry issues was possible due to their friendship with expatriate foresters in conservation experimentation, recognition of their knowledge in conservation work and academic training abroad. Some government foresters with close ties with aid staff also joined international jobs (I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006).

On the government side, the preference of the forest bureaucracy for expatriates familiar with Nepali forestry enhanced the symbiotic relationship between foresters. These expatriate foresters became important actors in creating structures, actions and processes of government. For instance, in a letter from the forest ministry addressing a donor, 'The short work of Mr X, a forestry specialist, who had a background of long experience in the forestry sector in Nepal, will contribute to the understanding of real problems as well as the confidence of the donor in the institutional set up of forestry sector in Nepal' (letter from the MFSC to a donor head office, 20 April 1993).

At the donor level, the alliance of project foresters with government foresters was established in four ways: conducting joint academic research in the project areas, pursuing higher degree training in the same universities, positioning foresters in project level decision-making positions and hiring top-level national officials for policy review processes (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006; I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006). General trends in the local donor community were to engage those expatri-

ates with prior experience working with the Nepalese forestry and have relatively good friendships with the officials. An expatriate forester recalled his experience as:

Mr X, the head of the forest ministry, was my friend when I worked with the forestry sector in the 1980s. Mr X and I used to work in a forestry research programme. I feel that the presence of my friend in senior level helped me to work with my counterpart Mr Y in the sector in friendly way (I. no. 63, project, 21 March 2006).

Those expatriate foresters who joined the sector as volunteers or field-based staff in the 1970s and the 1980s with technical roles rejoined as team leader/advisors in CF projects, NRM advisors in local donor offices and the directorship in environment related INGO in subsequent decades (I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006).

A second network is the alliance of donors' staff with the top-level and influential forestry officials. The network developed through the projects' preference to hire the forest decision-makers to review government policies and project activities. Project staff with power also feel respect when engaging forestry power players in knowledge generation and dissemination process. For example, a project manager said, 'Mr X of the forest department prepared a community forestry report for a forestry organisation Y through my recommendation' (Field note, 22 August 2006).

Interviews with six of nine retired officers show that bilateral and multilateral donors at some point in their careers offered jobs to those foresters who served the key divisions of the forest ministry, including CF division. A career path of one high-ranked officer interviewed shows that in his 43 years of forestry profession, he spent 13 years in consultancy with forestry planning and project evaluation roles offered by donors (I. no. 14, GO, 6 July 2006). Likewise, another high-ranked officer worked as a technical advisor in a prestigious donor-funded social forestry project in several countries of Asia prior to his retirement (I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006). Nepal's perceived success in involving people in conservation and CF's legal status were the driving forces for donor decision-makers to offer Nepalese jobs in forestry projects in other countries such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, Burma, Surinam, Thailand and Sri-Lanka (*ibid*).

Donors also provide funds for high-ranked officials to represent government in global policy spaces. Those officials involved as consultants

on CF projects in Nepal often appear in the spaces. Project reports and conference proceedings show that between 1987 and 2008, one top-level forester represented the government in eight policy spaces locally and globally.

While local senior aid staff consider powerful forest bureaucrats as important actors for policy idea validation, the bureaucrats involve them as epistemic advisors and members of policy taskforces, as discussed earlier. A close alliance between powerful players could be the reason why same actors repeatedly become involved in aid-funded policy reviews. The politics of knowledge can be observed in reading the composition of an influential policy event, the Joint Technical Review Committee (JTRC), which envisioned marketing of community forest resources for poverty reduction in 2001. Those officials who provided consultancy services to CF projects in previous years were hired as epistemic members of the JTRC. The JTRC, sponsored by DANIDA, aimed to review CF policy and provide policy direction for CF development (JTRC 2001). An independent consultant who had leverage to influence the sector was hired as leader (I. no. 55, project, 10 July 2006).

The third major actor network is the network between officials of the forestry sector of the same caste/ethnic group and their network with similar groups. Interviews with government foresters reveal that officials who began their career path in the district level forestry administration successfully came to govern CF at the national and international levels. Their personal ties with the same caste/ethnic group was strengthened in five ways: academic training at the same university, their social relations (kinship), representation in global conferences, transfer to the prestigious divisions in the DoF and the MFSC that have a role in coordination and planning of aid-funded forestry programmes, and access to project jobs based on kinship.

During interviews with senior foresters of same caste/ethnicity group, the importance of caste relationships in forestry administration became clear. For example, staff of same caste groups occupied the leadership in the CF division of the forest department in 1980 and continued until the 1990s. A senior retired officer remarked on his experience as: 'In our culture, we feel comfortable working with professionals who belong to our caste group' (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006).

The role of caste is important in selecting actors to attend formal meetings. Participation of junior staff of a particular social group in-

creases in the meeting when the superior is from the same caste/ethnic group. 'Our presence in CF meeting depends on the interests of our boss. There was little chance of information exchange when we had the division head from other social backgrounds' (I. no. 82, GO, 3 November 2006).

Caste-based social relationships in the forestry sector are crucial for promotions/performance evaluation, employment and commercial contracts (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Pokharel (1997) also notes the influence of social relationships in everyday decision-making of the forest department. As discussed in chapter 3, a single caste/ethnic advantaged group dominates the current structure of the forest department and forestry education institute in the decision-making level. It will affect the performance of forestry to learn from actors with different caste/ethnicity, as people from the same caste group are likely to take the leadership position in the sector.

Donors promote caste/ethnic ties. Donors relied on the knowledge of a sub-group of actors with same caste/ethnic groups. Government officials representing the high-caste and ethnically advantaged with prestigious urban family backgrounds were in the policy web. From the beginning of the CF policy implementation, these officials received preference when donors, consultants and missions held interactions with the government on CF development issues (I. no. 9, GO, 10 September 2006; I. no. 97, GO, 22 February 2006; I. no. 8, GO, 15 April 2006; New ERA 1980; IoFP 1990).

The entry of ethnic group development experts with non-forestry backgrounds in the donor community contributed to maintain caste/ethnic-based alliances. Reading the mobility pattern of forest policy-makers in the donor-funded international and national knowledge exchange events, senior government officials of same caste/ethnic groups represent the government in events in which experts participate. During interviews with government staff and non-state actors, the name of one consultant frequently came up as an influential actor in directing CF in the democratic regime. 'CF is evolving...I knew about Mr X when I was working in the community forestry division and became counter part of the World Bank funded community forestry project. We used to meet regularly and discuss CF process' (I. no. 92, GO, 12 April 2006).

As actor network theory states, it is not only in the decision-making capacity that individual agency appears. People who are not in decision-

making positions in CF projects can also exercise their agency through other strategies such as independent consultants or advisors in international NGOs. Authors, facilitators, participants of local and global CF policy events and sub-groups of foresters and sociologists from within projects and non-state actors belong to the same caste groups.

To conclude, members in the actor-networks identified in Nepali CF development have been changing and adapting. Individual actors within a system can be 'in' actor networks depending on their social identities, power and professional interests. Since membership to the networks are based on position, profession and caste/ethnicity, those with different values, experience and positions are outside of the networks making it hard for them to influence policy. Caste/ethnic-based relations in Nepalese society resulted in the exclusion of the low caste from public services, in general (Bista 1991). In CF case, networks established within the same caste/ethnic groups constrained self-evaluation and introspection. The caste/ethnic system in itself is exclusive because people belonging to the same caste/ethnic groups feel social responsibility to maintain their kinships. A micro level CF study shows that people belonging to the same caste groups fear breaking social harmony even if they are aware of inequity issues (see Buchy and Rai 2008). The networks of people in similar positions, caste/ethnicity and profession play a key role in raising and promoting ideas but to date, the ideas raised in the networks do not address or challenge power relations in CF operations or policymaking.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter explained the complex dynamics of relationships between actors at the policy level and its implication for shaping and promoting ideas for change. The chapter revealed the significant role of certain powerful actors in the mobilisation of CF discourse. As a result, instrumental agendas of change received high priority, and policy discussions did not help transform the role of the government in dealing with poverty issues. Nor have the discussions prompted an examination of how to make the policy spaces and dialogue participatory and inclusive, in terms of views, discipline, experience, position and social status.

The chapter showed that the actions of key players at the policy level maintain the knowledge system, which is not conducive to generating inclusionary outcomes. Actors interact with analytically poor agendas for understanding organisational practices, culture, and social empowerment

processes. They rely on each other for financial and institutional support. Power relationships between them have limited their ability to reflect upon their actions, roles, responsibility and behaviour towards tackling exclusion issues in a socially just way. Non-state actors are included in the government and donor relationships, but as 'client' to donors and the forest department. Non-state actors do not question poverty agendas from local perspectives. This confirms the findings of a recent study by Namara (2009), who found that NGOs had a limited role in challenging power issues in the development agenda in Uganda.

The argument that donors are pushing government officials to recognise the importance of the participation process does not apply in the case of CF in Nepal. Donors assist the government in the operation of a number of policy spaces that are exclusive, hierarchical and non-participatory. Actors with limited power, different experience and social background suffer exclusion because of selective criteria. High-caste and ethnically advantaged groups, males, foresters and social elites dominate the spaces. The power and perspectives of dominant actors influence the content and process for dealing with social issues in the policy spaces.

Donors' working strategies at the local level vary. The diversified project operation modality contributed to develop different bodies of knowledge about the way CF can be mobilised. But donors have not generated knowledge about ways to change traditional roles and the culture of the forestry sector.

The CF policy process is characterised by tight inclusive networks of individuals. These networks are fed by interpersonal relationships and by the institutionalised relationships between donors and the government. The operation of actor-networks largely maintains exclusion because people with different perspectives, power and experience are unable to enter the networks. It makes it hard to introduce new ideas unless they come from within. This finding echoes observations of others (Coelho and Favareto 2008) who found that institutional practices of participatory policy implementing actors reinforce unequal relationships and omit conflicting perspectives, even when they are organised in dealing with poverty and environment issues in Brazil.

These actor-networks cannot be broken unless people from within the network challenge the social order and their own beliefs (chapter 5). Within the government, forest decision-makers and planners are not able to change their social relationships. At the donor level, powerful actors value social interactions with influential forest bureaucrats with high so-

cial status and similar professional values and perspectives. This institutional behaviour helps sustain policy models and systems of knowledge and beliefs that are seen as 'true'.

In general, actors' relationships and networks operating at the policy level reinforce ideas and perspectives that maintain a techno-scientific view of social issues and eco-centric ideology of forestry in policy. This in turn limits the capacity of government to be accountable to socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The next chapter reflects upon the main research question of this study: why does exclusion continue in CF, despite increasing attention to people and poverty within CF discourse over the past decades?

Notes

¹ The Department of Forests in Nepal conceptualised good governance, sustainable management of natural resources and livelihood as fundamental dimensions of CF in order to contribute to poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals (Kanel 2004). The problems of social inequity, gender exclusion in resource distribution and decision-making constitute part of the second generation issues taken into account

² Originated from business management science, 'Principle-Agent Theory' attempts to understand interactions between two actors: the principal and the agent. Structurally, the principal has power over the agent, and the agent has to work according to the principal's decisions and interests (Milgrom and Roberts 1992).

³ Akhijhyal No. 574 is a documentary organised by Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) for broadcast by Nepal TV on 12 August 2008.

⁴ A developmental government works with its citizens to find sustainable ways to meet their needs and improve the quality of their lives (Nel and Binns 2001 in Kanothi 2009: 19).

8

Conclusion: Why Does Exclusion Continue?

8.1 Overview of Key Findings

The main research question of this study is to examine critically why the exclusion of the poor, women, *dalits* and other socially disadvantaged continues in CF, despite the increasing attention to people and poverty within the discourse. CF policy in Nepal developed as a response to deforestation which expatriates thought was the result of high population density driven by poverty and to prevent an ecological crisis. The policy's philosophy emphasised the participation of people, especially the poor, in defining problems and objectives of forest management at a grass-roots level. Nevertheless, as this study shows, CF policy and the associated policy process still do not fully embrace the value of participation and instead contribute to continuing exclusion in CF processes and outcomes. Social issues in forest management have been institutionalised in instrumental forms. The poor, *dalits* and other socially disadvantaged groups are sidelined in CF policy structures and policymaking processes.

The main argument of this study is that the exclusionary outcomes of CF are not only a community-level, or micro level, phenomenon. It is necessary to look beyond communities to understand why exclusion continues despite the fact that most actors recognise that exclusion and poverty exist. Previous research about exclusion in CF in Nepal started with the basic assumption that CF policy was participatory and looked at the FUGs to understand inequalities in access to and control over resources by the poor, women and *dalits*. This study has shown that CF policy and operational processes still have elements that contribute to exclusion. Thus, exclusion is not only the outcome of poorly functioning FUGs or problems in particular communities. This study shows that the policy itself contributes to exclusion.

The political ecology approach, which has been the basis for most previous research on exclusion in CF, looks for the cause of exclusion in the relationships between formal and informal institutions at the grass-roots level; it overlooks the policy process. In contrast, this study provides empirical evidence about how knowledge, ideas and power relationships between actors, supported by aid, can lead to the emergence and advancement of a policy discourse at the national level that promotes the maintenance of existing exclusion.

This study revealed that actors in Nepal recognise exclusion, and that they see it as a community or FUG issue. Actors' perception of exclusion in CF and of their vision of their own role and strategies do not include any ideas that challenge oppression or social discrimination. There is little willingness among the actors interviewed to do anything about exclusion. They do not see that they are part of the problem and the solution, although official discourse indicates that they care about poverty reduction. This helps explain why, despite growing evidence of exclusionary outcomes in CF, there is a tendency for actors to locate the problem and solution within the community and why interventions focus on changing behaviour and practices of the local community. The results of this study suggest that efforts like these will never be enough to overcome exclusion. This study highlights a number of problems in the policy process at the macro level that key actors will also need confront if persistent exclusion is to be successfully addressed.

8.2 Policy Level Problems Sustaining Exclusion in CF

8.2.1 Institutionalisation of an eco-centric and techno-scientific knowledge system

A first set of problems relates to the knowledge system that underlies CF policy and the policy process. Central to this is the dominance of an eco-centric view of forestry and a techno-scientific view of social issues. Although state bureaucrats, decision-makers, policy designers and donors in the forestry sector constantly emphasise poverty in policy discussions, they define social concepts in a techno-scientific way.

The dominant view is that people and their forest use systems are a cause of deforestation. This view persists despite the fact that many studies in NRM have shown that people's knowledge about forest landscapes is not detrimental to the environment. Because of the eco-centric view,

policy agendas give low priority to the analysis of social, institutional and power issues, adopt only an instrumental view of participation for the sector, and overlook many key issues.

For example, while the poor and women are included in official poverty and environment discourses, *dalits*, ethnic and religious minorities, indigenous people, pastoralists and people living in chronically and extreme poverty often do not come up in discussions. The more powerful actors interviewed for this study perceived these social actors as ignorant and incapable. This makes forest decision-makers suspicious of their capacities to be change agents. Another major oversight is that the policy discussions focus largely on access to material benefits and representation of disadvantaged groups, whereas the causes of exclusion identified by earlier CF literature in Nepal relate to non-material issues, such as power relationships and fairness in influence over forest management and community development at the grassroots forest institutions.

The formal institutional arrangement of CF has two effects: one institutional and another ideological, both of which limit the possibility for the poor, *dalits*, ethnic groups, indigenous people, pastoralists and other socially disadvantaged groups to increase their bargaining power in collective actions. Institutionally, the structure maintains existing power relations at the local level. Early in CF history, donors and the forestry sector changed the CF policy model from management by local political institutions to management by FUGs because they thought that working with local political institutions for environmental management would reduce participation quality. There are two problems with this change. First, it undermines a key element of participation—the structural transformation that would address the reasons for exclusion of people with little or no voice and influence from participation at the grassroots CF. Second, although this view recognises the problematic power relationship between elites and local political institutions, it ignores the power wielding capacity of local elites over FUG management. Ignoring this important problem at the local level helps propagate exclusion.

Ideologically, the structure of participation in CF depoliticises CF, leaving the power to mobilise FUGs in the hands of the forest department. The concentration of technical processes, bureaucratic powers and procedures through a single forest authority is not conducive to helping the poor and other socially disadvantaged groups take on decision-making roles on FUG executive committees. The depoliticisation proc-

ess strongly emphasises upward accountability by FUGs. Depoliticisation alone does not enhance technocracy, but reduces the scope of discussions for changing power relationships in policy practices.

8.2.2 Monodisciplinarity and the dominance of the caste and ethnic system in forestry institutions

Powerful actors within the forestry sector believe in competency, position, discipline, hierarchy and social relations. In their mind, there is a close link between these concepts and the discipline of forestry as well as the caste and ethnic system. When the sector's decision-making process lies in the hands of few forest officials who represent the high-caste and advantaged ethnic groups, who are of prestigious socioeconomic background and believe in technocratic scientific value and roles, the chance of inclusion of actors without these attributes in policy negotiation processes is low.

Interviews for this study show that actors with little power and a relatively junior status in the forestry profession are starting to see exclusion issues differently than their superiors. They want to do something to promote social change, but power relationships obstruct their voices. Foresters have a strong identity that influences the working culture. Previous CF research argued that the quasi-feudal culture of the DoF, bureaucratic hierarchy, power and procedure and traditional professional values are barriers to smooth implementation of CF policy. This research goes further to say that the process of networking between individuals and actor-networks in CF aid has blocked or discouraged new ideas that would help transform CF policy and the nature of CF development programmes.

8.2.3 Aid as prime mover in the policy process

Many of the structures, institutions and processes set up with the support of aid serve to institutionalise techno-scientific values and the dominance of forestry in CF development. For example, the training of government staff, forestry curriculum and donor-funded studies reinforce these values and roles. This makes it hard to change focus, even when the sector begins to adopt new development ideas like poverty, inclusion and participation.

Nor are the aid-supported discussions of CF policy conducive to producing inclusionary outcomes. Donors provide labor, money and ad-

visory support to the forest department and forest ministry to plan and convene a number of policy spaces and activities. Nonetheless, the processes of actor invitation and agenda setting and the environment for expression and negotiation in these policy spaces are hierarchical, exclusionary and non-participatory. Donor-supported policy events exclude people of low status, with different knowledge, experience and limited power. The spaces may include actors from different organisation, but organisers do not seek differences in the views of attendees, their knowledge, or their social status. Actors with different views and limited power are rarely considered resources for policy discussions.

8.2.4 Non-recognition of the ubiquity of power

The forestry sector and donors recognise inequity and gender issues in CF development. Nonetheless, the dominant strategies and processes implemented to solve the problem largely focus on instrumental forms of participation and resource-centred approaches to poverty reduction. While the government and CF projects provide some benefits to the poor, *dalits* and women, this does not mean that these services empower them and remove social barriers to participation. Providing better services – which is a major strategy in CF projects – would help excluded groups build skills, wealth, information and physical assets. Better services alone, however, do not challenge social orders or the relationships that prevent the excluded from recognising their capacity for planning and participating in forest management and community development activities at the FUG level. Moreover, focusing on material benefits and representation in FUG committees as strategies of participation by the poor or other disadvantaged groups ignores the important problem of power wielded by influential actors at the grassroots level.

8.2.5 Complex power interplay between actors in CF aid

The complex power interplay between actors involved in CF aid does not help change dominant views or the exclusionary institutional system. In CF aid, the government and donors mostly operate in an unequal relationship. As argued by De Haan (2009: 107), aid-receiving governments rarely have reasons to say no to offers of aid, when they engage in development with grant money. For the Nepali government, grant money and donors' knowledge drive the process of CF policy operation. This has led to the lack of policy ownership at the government level. At the same

time, the influence of donors at the policy level has limited the opportunity for the government to understand development issues from Nepali perspectives. Donors seem non-critical in tackling institutional problems at the government level, although they are aware of the fact that institutions have not been supportive in dealing with equitable development. In CF aid, little importance has gone to the idea of changing forestry's organisational culture, which scholars (Dove 1995; Hobley and Bird 2001; Hobley and Shields 2000; Thompson 1995) argue is necessary for the implementation of forest policies with social objectives.

This study showed power not only as a resource but also as a process. The forestry sector and donors interact with each other in 'a mutual relationship' in the policy advancement and operation process. The sector's power players do not passively follow the ideas of donors, but actively interpret and transform CF policy models from the perspective of science. This finding provides macro level reasons why the forest department has been as effective at controlling and manipulating the operation of FUGs in forest management activities at the grassroots, as earlier scholars (Nightingale 2005; Ojha 2006; Rai Paudyal 2008) pointed out. For their part, donors discourage criticism of actual practices and the effect of government actions on social outcomes. There are few independent voices in policy debates, or at least few with much influence. Because of the lack of strong ties to powerful actors, those who try to speak up or disagree with the policy direction get sidelined or suppressed. This finding supports the theoretical argument that a discourse can maintain exclusion and poverty when powerful players follow a policymaking system that confirms the dominant knowledge they introduce in the operation of the discourse.

The relationships between non-state actors, donors and government have constrained policy changes. One would expect non-state actors to raise a different perspective on social issues, to bring a different voice to the policy table, but they do not do this for several reasons. They participate in the policy processes, but their vision of CF development does not go beyond the ideas they received from donors and government actors. Their agendas emphasise enabling FUGs to participate in local forest management and community development rather than questioning how people within FUGs participate and how social relations affect the ability of certain actors to have influence on discussions and decisions. The elite members of non-state organisations participate in informal net-

works with the powerful staff of government and CF projects. This, and the participation of non-state actors in donor-funded projects, limited the capacity of non-state actors to be self-critical. Non-state actors are dependent on donors and the forestry sector for their business. Moreover, non-state actors are excluded from real participation in policy spaces. The members of non-state organisations who belong to the high-caste and ethnic advantaged groups and come from high social status are chosen to represent ‘the community’ in government-organised policy spaces.

8.3 Implications for Policy Development

This study provides evidence that a national policy can affect the poor, *dalits*, women, indigenous people, ethnic minorities and other socially disadvantaged groups negatively, even when it has a social, not just an environmental focus. The policymaking process influences how social problems can be constructed and tackled. The process is very informal and relies on the agency of powerful members of the government and donors. Making a policy process inclusive depends on the extent to which decision-makers in government, donors, state politicians and non-state actors are sensitive to power relationships between people and to their role in including or excluding social perspectives in policy discussions.

This study also shows that improving social outcomes in participatory forestry will involve not only policy change, but also changes to the institutional dynamics. Currently actors’ dynamics, structures and social interactions in the forest ministry and the forest department are not conducive to implementing participation in a transformative way because their social agendas do not involve looking at participation in this way. Aid-supported CF development programmes lack attention to the need to change conventional values and thinking at the institutional level. The likelihood of further marginalisation of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups is high, even if the current development agendas of the forestry sector are changing towards the poor. Transformation at three levels—individual, professional and institutions within forestry—would help improve the relationship between the government and excluded groups at the policy and operational levels.

The ability of internationally assisted interventions like CF to promote economic, social and ecological sustainability in non-egalitarian Nepali

society depends on the extent to which influential actors of national and international organisations own and commit for challenging local issues of poverty and exclusion. This study has shown that the forest department has largely relied on outsiders or donors for everything from the generation of policy ideas to the implementation of CF policy. Government decision-makers do not own social agendas as part of development, even though the forestry sector has been implementing participatory development approaches since the late 1970s. A policy practice that recognises constructive criticism of an intervention as an opportunity for a socially just change would also enhance policy ownership by decision-makers of the government. Criticism does not obstruct development but could help national actors assess the quality of development they implement.

Instead of viewing weak governance in Nepal (e.g. inadequate staffing, poor monitoring, limited skills, expertise, corruption and hierarchy) as limiting factors for social change, a different vision for the role of government in the implementation of aid-assisted government programmes and policy would help improve governance. Focusing on FUG as a panacea for socioeconomic empowerment of the poor and other disadvantaged groups, as seen in the recent past, supports the continuation of exclusion because it misdirects attention away from macro issues. Creation of an enabling environment at the policy level, with actions such as emphasising critical perspectives and engaging critical professionals in the evaluation and planning of forestry programmes or policy activities, would enable the government to understand exclusion and poverty problems from a Nepali context. Importantly, ‘epistemic diversity’ at the policy level, emphasising inclusion of actors with different perspectives, expertise and social status, would help the government understand and tackle socioeconomic causes of deforestation and ecosystem imbalance.

Donors can assist the government by making policy spaces conducive to actors with different thoughts, experiences and social status. Focusing on organisational diversity in policymaking spaces does not support inclusion outcomes, unless attention goes to power relations and the discipline, expertise and social status of invited participants. Donor support for conducting and disseminating CF issues from diverse schools of thought would also help actors recognise the important role that knowledge plays in shaping policy and programmes and would build govern-

ment's capacity to deal with social issues of natural resource management and local poverty issues. Importantly, a shift in donor culture—mainly in the mechanism of relationships and the politics of knowledge—would support Nepali government and non-state actors in assessing their values and methods of intervention. This is important because CF projects in Nepal, since the 1980s, continue to learn from their actions but the style and content of learning have not helped government decision-makers, policy planners and politicians become accountable to the extreme poor. Rather, they maintained a policymaking system in which it is difficult for the powerless to enrol and be recognised as citizens. Donors recognise the problem of social inequities and exclusion, but their approaches to tackling the issues are not appropriate for addressing the issues in a meaningful way. For instance, donors' approach to knowledge development focused on biophysical aspect of CF. Donors' approach to CF development in general and social empowerment in particular emphasises 'doing things' rather than questioning how actors do things and why they do them. Donor assistance in the development of inclusive knowledge in forestry would assist development actors, policy planners, decision-makers and non-state actors to orient their development efforts towards addressing interconnected issues of deforestation and poverty in socially just ways.

If one accepts that the mono-disciplinarity of forestry is a problem, then the solution would be to build capacity to look at forestry in a different way, not simply to build capacity at the government level to design and implement programmes. Capacity needs to be increased, but a different capacity than what currently exists.

8.4 Contribution of the Study to the Literature

This study fills a number of gaps in the literature on community forestry, and on the role of aid and actors in dealing with exclusion and poverty issues in an agrarian society like Nepal.

The study provides knowledge about the politics of CF in one particular country context. Available literature on Nepali CF discussed exclusion and inequity problems from the perspective of community institutions and structures. This study, in contrast, provides an empirical understanding that persistent exclusion in CF is also linked to the interests, structures and institutional process of the key actors who develop and implement CF policy, processes and programmes. A comprehensive

analysis of the causes of exclusion of the poor, *dalits*, women and other socially disadvantaged groups in CF will have to go beyond local social and institutional factors.

This study also helps fill a gap in substantive literature on the role of aid in the policy process. Available literature on aid in natural resource management and rural development in general looks at the negative effect of aid at the operational level. This thesis showed that, in many ways, the influence of aid *at the policy level* has been to maintain exclusion, by discouraging deeper reflections on the macro-level causes of exclusion and the role of CF policy in maintaining exclusion. This analysis helps explain why the excluded groups are not benefiting from CF, despite interest of global actors in the natural resource sector and poverty reduction for more than three decades. Moreover, aid literature provides knowledge about the influence of social, economic and political interests of international actors in development. This study goes further to argue that knowledge systems and actor-networks developed through aid influence the interest of donors and government to engage with a participatory policy discourse.

Previous CF literature in Nepal recognised the importance of donors in advancing CF policy, by bringing ideas, providing money and educating more actors. However, this is the first study to examine how aid shaped the structure, functions and policymaking spaces in which a single knowledge system and people with power and high social status dominate. To understand the relationships between participatory forestry policy and social outcomes, it is essential to understand the way a particular type of knowledge, actors and development thinking became dominant in a particular institutional setting. This study showed how aid and the politics of aid contributed to creating and sustaining these dynamics.

This study also addressed a conceptual and methodological gap in previous studies, which prevented them from looking beyond the actions and behaviours of 'groups' or 'communities' for the causes of exclusion. The framework used in previous studies overlooked the analysis of participation as a transformative change that could break the socio-political barriers that prevent the extreme poor *dalits*, women and other socially disadvantaged groups from engaging in meaningful participation in common property resources. The previous framework recognises CF policy as people-oriented allowing the community access to forests and forest

resources and a role in forest management. This study adds knowledge about the role of policy in creating or addressing exclusion.

The actor-oriented approach used in the study helped identify the role of actors, power relationships and knowledge in the policymaking process. Application of this framework is unique in the CF literature. It is an important contribution because it helps understand why it is so difficult to make policy processes inclusive and change the traditional modes of operation at the government level. The concepts of actor-networks, perception and learning used in this study also offer useful tools to help understand institutional complexities within a system, which either block or facilitate the entry of new perspectives that would challenge social and political problems of sustainable forest management.

The methodology used by this study is not limited to CF. This framework could be used to look at other natural resource management sector programmes that follow a participatory approach to development. Contemporary literature on protected areas management, water and irrigation highlight the need to make government institutions more socially oriented. The methodology of this study can be useful to explore whether and how policies in other sectors that share a participatory philosophy have contributed to addressing poverty and problems of participation by the poor and other disadvantaged groups.

This study demonstrated how global environmental governance change spurs the emergence and advancement of policy discourse at the national level. The methodology used by this study may apply in other sectors to generate knowledge about the history of a policy idea with particular emphasis on the source of ideas, dominant policy beliefs, and perspectives of national and global actors.

Addressing poverty and environmental issues in developing countries requires empirical knowledge about people and development in those countries. Aid providers in the North realise the shortcoming of the asymmetric knowledge that northern scholars produce about development in the South: scientific knowledge produced in and transferred from the policy sphere in the North has limitations when it comes to driving development from the Southern perspective. This observation made by policy players in the North encourages Southern scholars to study development issues from different perspectives.

This study adds to this critical literature on aid and participatory approaches to natural resource management, a literature that emphasises

the need to shift the understanding of social transformation and development practices in the minds of key intervening actors in order to assist the poor and other disadvantaged groups. This study focuses on the forestry sector in Nepal, but the central question of this study deserves attention in other natural resource sectors and other contexts. Focusing on power relationships between people as an agenda of change at the policy level may enhance the ability of the government and community-based institutions to produce positive social outcomes. More studies of particular policy processes in the natural resource sector would be an essential step towards drawing more lessons and expanding the understanding of development and poverty debates in natural resource sectors. This study provides a model for doing so.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Data Collection Matrix

Research questions	Themes/types of information	Sources of data
How has aid influenced the emergence and development of CF discourse? How and why does (or not) the exclusion agenda gain priority in the policy agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - most important policy decisions and events in relation to CF policy development and change over time - policymakers' concern on policy - source of ideas, information for a policy need, philosophy behind the idea (definition of policy problem and the condition that defined the problem) - influential actors in policy design and their role (knowledge/expertise, information providers, financial, materials, idea experimentation, setting the agenda and process of participation in policy design) - influential factors to push/pull) the exclusion issue into/from agenda such as ideology of the sector, donors requirement, personal value of forest decision-makers and policy designers, professional knowledge and awareness of social issues among policy actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviews with 15 experienced forest officials of the MFSC and the DoF, 3 members of parliament, 2 forest ministers, 3 expatriates and 2 Nepali experts involved in CF policy planning processes - forest policy, legislation, forest directives and CF development guidelines - expatriates' personal reports to the government of Nepal - donors project impact study and project design documents
How have actors' relationships and structures affected the inclusion of exclusion issues in the policy agenda?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relationships between policy agencies (forest ministry/GoN and donors) - role of donors in policy design and operation processes (influence of project-based ideas, expertise, type of disciplines and the weight on social issues during policy design and actors within projects) - events where contestations between the sector and donors/projects did take place with regard to deciding programmes for the poor, women and <i>dalits</i>. Or disputes on any decisions for CF implementation process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviews with 9 forest decision-makers, 10 non-state actors, 2 forest ministers, 5 projects decision-makers, 10 professionals, and 5 non-state members - government and project reports - annual progress report of the DoF and CF project reports - project funded research reports and personal reports/success stories of expatriates - CF related national meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - actors' interactions in participatory policy spaces (membership criteria, dominant ideas and actors, roles of actors and outputs) and their influence on their ability to tackle exclusion and poverty issues - donors operational relationships with government - organisational structure and actors dynamics of the forestry sector and key CF projects - actors within the sector and production of actors from the Institute of Forestry campus, Nepal 	<p>and workshop reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policy meeting minutes and proceedings of the MFSC and the DoF - progress reports and institutional briefing notes of non-state actors - authors of CF policy articles/report - IoF student lists, project staff list
<p>What are the perceptions of actors of CF on the persistent exclusionary outcomes in community forestry?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - understanding 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' outcomes of CF (meaning and causes) among actors - actors' response to exclusionary outcomes in relation to CF policy/structure, approaches and programmes - actors response to solve exclusion that would benefit the poor, <i>dalits</i>, women, transhumance, ethnic minority and indigenous people - motivational factors for actors to work with community forestry - donors' sensitivity to political rights of the excluded groups in forest governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviews with 32 staff of the MFSC and the DoF, 11 donors/INGO, 30 project/donors staff, 15 members and 4 staff of non-state actors involved in CF - donors/projects' official documents that explain strategies and approaches for inclusion outcomes
<p>Does the aid supported knowledge development process help reduce exclusion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - type and location of knowledge, actors gaining access to knowledge in the forestry sector - donors strategies on human resource development of the forestry sector for CF implementation - role of aid in making knowledge viable in policy design and actors interaction process at the policy spaces - process of networking between individual actors - tools and processes of knowledge transfer for FUG empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - interviews with 9 forestry decision-makers/planners, 7 forestry officers in the DoF and 3 project professionals - articles and project funded policy review papers - donors' mission reports, project discussion papers and staff personal reports - views of the MFSC and the DoF in the media - annual reports, impact study of the MFSC and the DoF

Appendix 2: Actors' Dynamics within CF Projects

2.1 Actors' divide between castes/ethnicity/nationality and positions

Table 2A
Staffing in four key CF projects by castes/ethnicity/nationality and position, 2006

Position	Low caste	High caste/ Newar	Ethnic group	Expatriate	Total no.	% of high caste*	% of expatriate	% of other**
Senior level	0	24	3	12	39	62	30	8
Middle level	3	67	8	2	80	84	2	14
Support staff	10	86	61	0	157	55	0	45
Total	13	177	72	14	276			
%	5	64	26	5				

Source: NACRMLP, LFP, NARMSAP, NSCFP offices, 2006

* Percentage in position, ** include *dalit* and ethnic

2.2 Actors' divide between gender and positions

Table 2B
Staffing in four key CF projects by gender and position, 2006

Gender	Senior level	Middle level	Support staff	Total	
				No.	%
Male	33	62	110	205	74
Female	8*	16	47	71	26
Total	41	78	157	276	100
% of female in level	20**	21	30		

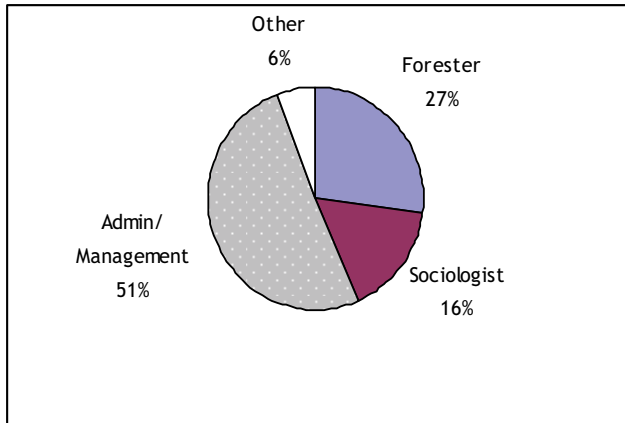
Source: NACRMLP, LFP, NARMSAP, NSCFP offices, 2006

* 5 of 8 senior women staff are expatriates

** 12% of total 20% senior women are expatriate women

2.3 Actors' divide by professions

Figure 2A
Staff composition in CF projects by profession, 2006



Source: NARMSAP, LFP, NSCFP and NACRMLP offices, 2006

Appendix 3: Example of Data Coding

3rd level coding (conceptual)	2nd level coding (analytical)	1st level coding (descriptive)
Eco-centric	conservation and environment	forest, soil conservation, flooding, deforestation, pasture management, plantation, expatriates, farm-forestry, squatters, oil price hike, working plans, accessible forests, forest use, women's role, family planning, land productivity, king,
	scientific forest management and forester's boundary	forest management techniques, market, sustainable harvesting, forest rules, service providers, technical skills, working plans, scientific training, extensionist, policy contradictions, expatriate foresters, seedling, people's contribution, Panchayats, Panchayat elites, political context
Externalisation of exclusion issues from actors' roles and responsibility	cause of exclusion (dominant view): ignorance, negative attitude, somebody else's responsibility	nothing new, poor, gender, forest bureaucracy, mafia, social services, benefit sharing, elites, misuse of loan, equity, equality, patron-client, feudal, CF success, CF cover, projects, political crisis, politicians, loans, progressive policy, incapable of grasping opportunity, <i>muluki yen</i> , access to forests and forest products, gender roles, more talk than work,
	cause of exclusion (minority voice): positive attitude, own responsibility	interests of 'boss' monitoring, skills and interests of staff, target fulfilling, committee, legislation, policy level, power between people, castes, positions, institution of forestry,
	solution of exclusion (dominant view): communities, forest user groups, the excluded themselves, NGOs, projects	policy implementation, bureaucratic process, rent-seeking, forest handover, non-timber forest products, operational plans, forest scientists, scientific management, social services, access to resources (skills, income, forest resources), FUGs' autonomy, decentralisation
	solution of exclusion (minority view): organisational structure, power relationship, knowledge/skills, social concepts in policy	policy level, professional domination, interest of staff, time constraints, donors system, forest bureaucrats, decision-makers, social skills and knowledge, monitoring, caste and ethnicity in organisation

Appendix 4: List of Respondents

SN	Interviewee No.	Position	Gender	Caste/Ethnicity	Date of Interview
Government					
1	GO 1	Planning Chief/MFSC*	M	EA	8 March 2006
2	GO 2	Director General/DoF*	M	BC	6 May 2006
3	GO 3	Forest Secretary/MFSC*	M	EA	30 October 2006
4	GO 4	Deputy Director General/DoF	M	BC	5 July 2006
5	GO 5	Forest Secretary/MFSC*	M	BC	16 July 2006
6	GO 6	Deputy Director General/DoF	M	BC	27 August 2006
7	GO 7	Environment Division Chief/MFSC	M	BC	29 August 2006
8	GO 8	Planning Chief MFSC*	M	EA	15 April 2006
9	GO 9	Planning Officer/MFSC*	M	BC	10 September 2006
10	GO 10	Director General/DoF*	M	BC	4 June 2006
11	GO 11	Director General/DoF*	M	BC	3 May 2006
12	GO 12	Director General/DoF	M	EA	2 May 2006
13	GO 13	CF Division Chief /DoF*	M	EA	26 October 2006
14	GO 14	Planning Chief/MFSC*	M	ED	6 July 2006
15	GO 15	Forest Secretary/MFSC*	M	BC	21 June 2006
16	GO 45	Planning Division Head/MFSC	M	BC	15 August 2006
17	GO 73	Deputy Forest Secretary/MFSC	M	BC	9 March 2006
18	GO 74	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	2 November 2006
19	GO 75	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	7 November 2006
20	GO 76	Chief Planning Officer/DoF	M	BC	22 November 2006
21	GO 77	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	20 July 2006
22	GO 78	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	10 October 2006
23	GO 97	Deputy Director General/DoF*	M	EA	22 February 2006
24	GO 92	Forest Officer/DoF	M	EA	12 April 2006
25	GO 81	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	11 November 2006
26	GO 82	Forest Officer/DoF	F	BC	3 November 2006
27	GO 83	Forest Officer/DoF	M	EA	24 May 2006
28	GO 84	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	10 October 2006
29	GO 85	Forest Officer/DoF	M	BC	2 May 2006
30	GO 86	Forest Officer/DoF	F	EA	24 February 2006
31	GO 87	Planning Officer/DoF	M	EA	5 July 2006
32	GO 88	Monitoring Officer/DoF*	M	BC	4 May 2006
Non-state actors					
33	CS 16	Chair	M	BC	10 July 2006
34	CS 17	Vice-Chair	F	BC	23 August 2006
35	CS 18	Chair	M	EA	8 November 2006
36	CS 19	Secretary	M	BC	21 August 2006
37	CS 20	Chair	M	BC	27 April 2006
38	CS 21	Staff	M	BC	29 April 2006
39	CS 22	Executive Member	M	BC	28 June 2006
40	CS 23	Staff	M	BC	22 August 2006
41	CS 24	Chair	M	BC	22 February 2006
42	CS 25	Executive Member	M	BC	12 November 2006
43	CS 26	Chair	M	BC	22 June 2006
44	NGO 27	Chair	M	EA	26 June 2006
45	NGO 28	Chair	M	EA	7 November 2006
46	NGO 29	Staff	M	BC	19 November 2006
47	NGO 35	Executive Member	M	BC	10 May 2006
48	NGO 36	Chair	F	BC	21 June 2006
49	NGO 37	Staff	M	BC	8 October 2006
50	NGO 42	Chair	M	BC	17 July 2006
51	NGO 43	Secretary	M	BC	17 July 2006

Politicians					
52	Politician 30	Member of Parliament	M	BC	25 June 2006
53	Politician 31	Forest Minister*	M	BC	2 October 2006
54	Politician 32	Member of Parliament	M	BC	20 June 2006
55	Politician 33	Forest Minister*	M	M	19 October 2006
56	Politician 34	Member of Parliament	M	BC	6 November 2006
57	Politician 95	Member of Parliament	M	BC	6 November 2006
58	Politician 98	Member of Parliament	M	BC	3 October 2006
Donors					
59	Donor 49	Livelihood Advisor	M	EA	29 May 2006
60	Donor 51	Forestry Advisor	F	Expatriate	19 November 2006
61	Donor 52	Programme Officer	M	BC	13 November 2006
62	Donor 54	Programme Officer	F	EA	12 September 2006
63	Donor 67	NRM Advisor*	M	Expatriate	13 November 2006
64	Donor 68	Programme Officer	F	EA	4 July 2006
65	Donor 69	Programme Officer	M	BC	28 November 2006
66	Donor 94	Programme Officer	M	BC	12 April 2006
67	INGO 38	Governance Head	M	BC	15 September 2006
68	INGO 39	Forest Management Coordinator	M	BC	19 September 2006
69	INGO 40	Programme Coordinator	M	BC	5 September 2006
70	Project 41	Social Development Advisor*	M	ED	5 June 2006
71	Project 44	Community Forestry Officer	M	BC	15 June 2006
72	Project 46	Project Advisor	M	Expatriate	11 September 2006
73	Project 47	Programme Coordinator	M	EA	4 May 2006
74	Project 48	Training Officer	M	BC	27 April 2006
75	Project 50	Project Advisor	F	Expatriate	24 August 2006
76	Project 53	Programme Coordinator	M	EA	1 June 2006
77	Project 55	Programme Coordinator	M	EA	10 July 2006
78	Project 56	Community Forestry Technician	M	Dalit	21 May 2006
79	Project 57	Project Coordinator	M	BC	9 November 2006
80	Project 58	Project Advisor	M	Expatriate	12 October 2006
81	Project 59	Enterprise Coordinator	M	BC	30 June 2006
82	Project 60	Team Leader	M	Expatriate	23 May 2006
83	Project 61	Watershed Management Specialist	M	BC	27 February 2006
84	Project 62	Forest Management Specialist	M	BC	7 May 2006
85	Project 63	Project Coordinator*	M	Expatriate	21 March 2006
86	Project 64	Project Advisor	M	Expatriate	31 May 2006
87	Project 65	Regional Coordinator	M	BC	18 April 2006
88	Project 66	Programme Officer	F	BC	14 July 2006
89	Project 70	Assistant Project Manager*	M	BC	15 June 2006
90	Project 71	District Project Coordinator	F	BC	16 March 2006
91	Project 72	Assistant Project Coordinator	M	EA	6 September 2006
92	Project 79	Community Dev. Specialist	M	EA	17 July 2006
93	Project 80	Programme Officer	M	EA	5 June 2006
94	Project 89	Project Consultant	M	BC	12 October 2006
95	Project 90	Forestry Development Officer	M	BC	12 October 2006
96	Project 91	Project Coordinator	M	BC	6 September 2006
97	Project 93	Project Consultant	M	EA	6 November 2006
98	Project 96	Extension and Training Advisor	M	BC	6 March 2006
99	Project 99	Monitoring Coordinator	M	BC	9 May 2006

Notes:

* Retired or former staff when interview was given

GO = Government, CS = Civil society, NGO = Nongovernmental organisation

B/C= Brahmin/Chhetri (high-caste), EA= ethnic advantaged, ED= ethnic disadvantaged, M=Muslim (religious minority)



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Manohara Khadka

Manohara Khadka was born on 26 August 1966 in Deurali VDC in the Gorkha district of West Nepal. In 1985, she started her forestry study at the Institute of Forestry in Nepal. After two years of training, she joined the forest department of Nepal as a forest ranger, engaging local communities in the implementation of plantations and forest conservation in West Nepal. Experience of forestry at the grassroots forestry institution motivated her to continue forestry study. She resigned from her government job to pursue a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in forestry. In 1993, she obtained her BSc in Forestry from the Institute of Forestry with scholarship support from Winrock International Nepal.

This qualification took Manohara to an NGO that implemented rural development programmes including community forestry at the grassroots level. Her position as field staff with responsibility for the facilitation of the community forestry process at the grassroots level provided her with knowledge of community forestry and rural development from a social perspective. With this background, she then worked for a Swiss-funded community forestry project. Her role was to support district forest offices in the implementation of community forestry development programmes. In this position, she gained insights about gender and social inequity issues at the individual and institutional level, about community empowerment and about the interaction of diverse actors in the establishment and institutional development of forest user groups.

These three years of field level knowledge about the social, economic and institutional dynamics of community forestry and rural poverty encouraged Manohara to seek funding for post-graduate study. In 1998, she won a Norwegian fellowship (NORAD) for undertaking an MSc degree in Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Agriculture (MNRSA) at the Agriculture University of Norway. In 2000, she rejoined the Swiss-funded project, this time responsible first for participatory monitoring and action-oriented social research and then for managing the project at the district level. Her position as District Project Coordinator for a remote district of eastern Nepal was a good opportunity to enhance her expertise in institutional governance. Manohara had ambitions to continue her studies, but the political insurgency in the district in which she was working made communication with possible funders difficult. She, therefore, moved to an AusAID-funded forestry project in central Nepal and worked for two years as a Community Development Specialist. In this position, she was involved

in the design and implementation of social strategies in community forestry and watershed management.

In Manohara's extensive work in participatory forestry, she was struck by the relatively small impact that these programmes have had over a period of 40 years on the livelihoods of the socioeconomic disadvantaged groups. This idea motivated her to find the means to continue researching social issues in natural science fields. In 2005, she entered the PhD programme at the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, the Netherlands, assisted by a fellowship from Nuffic. In her doctoral studies, she examined Nepal's forestry sector, with a particular focus on the history and dynamics of the policy process surrounding community forestry. She carried out her fieldwork for thesis in Nepal.

Manohara's research interests include the ethnography of environmental governance, policy, and institutions; knowledge and power relationships in the design and implementation of policy; and forest management and livelihoods of the extreme poor and socially disadvantaged groups in agrarian society. Currently she is a freelancer of natural resource management and development and can be reached at khadkam@hotmail.com and telephone +977-9841-214815 (mobile).

Manohara Khadka was admitted to the PhD programme in the Institute of Social Studies (now the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam) in The Hague in April 2005 on the basis of:

MSc in Management of Natural Resource and Sustainable Agriculture, Agriculture University of Norway, 2000

DECLARATION:

This thesis has not been submitted to any university for a degree or any other award.