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Table of Contents

Editorial Note

This volume -- which is the fourth in the series -- is an endeavor by the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University to continue its tradition to bring out a journal embodying material of theoretical and empirical nature in the fields of social sciences. The present volume especially includes contributions both by the foreign and Nepalese scholars on some of the burning issues of contemporary Nepal.

Although the intention of the editorial board is to bring out regularly a bi-annual journal, this has not, however, been possible for the present for a variety of reasons. So we have to remain satisfied with this annual publication. Even in the case of the present volume, the odds were too heavy. Financial support was not easy to come by. And with great difficulty one could be able to manage the articles which have been included in the volume. These and many other reasons were also responsible for its late publication. Hopefully, we would be able to overcome these difficulties in future.

The editorial board would be glad to receive comments and suggestions from the readers with a view to improving the quality of this journal.

Finally, the editorial board would like to thank all those who have made it possible to bring out this volume. Foremost, we thank the contributors who, despite their heavy schedule, could contribute articles for this volume. We also place on record our great appreciation of those colleagues who have placed at our disposal their valuable time for doing the editing and proof-reading.

December, 1994

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Professor R. R. Regmi
for
Editorial Board.

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ANTHROPOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY[1]

Gerald D. Berreman

INTRODUCTION

I want to thank the members of the Central Department of Sociology/ Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, and the United States Educational Foundation and its Fulbright program for making it possible for me to visit this fine land and people for half a year. I have done research recurrently for over 35 years in India, mainly in the topographically similar, and culturally related Garhwal Himalayas, but this is my first opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in Nepal.

I have been asked to speak as an anthropologist, about the contributions anthropologists might make to development efforts in Nepal. I will do so, but will go beyond development, to refer more broadly to our actual and potential contributions to public policy formation in general (cf. Campbell, Shrestha and Stone, 1979; Messerschmidt, 1992).

In connection with the Himalayan Film Festival held here in February, sponsored by *Himal* magazine, I was quoted in the *Kathmandu Post* of February 27,1994, as having said in an interview:

> "Anthropologists would say most development programmes are harmful. If anthropologists hear of a project, the first thing they would say is 'don't do it'.... You should have people speak for themselves." (Khanal, p. 4; cf. Shah, 1994)

Although that quotation requires considerable contextualization for its import to be fully understood, I did say something very like that and I do believe it. That is, I believe that many or most anthropologists have come to that conclusion, and I also believe the conclusion to be justified by the evidence -- it

3

certainly accords with my own experience (Berreman, 1963a:284-293, 311-335; 1963b; 1977:178-182; 1979a; 1983a; 1989). This is not because development is *necessarily* bad, but because unfortunately, it *usually* is bad. Why? Because development is characteristically planned and implemented by people with money to spend, agendas to carry out, and the authority -- the power -- to do so. The fatal flaw is that they are not the people whom it is intended to "develop," and they often know little about those people, their lives, their needs and their wants.

I will elaborate this point with the thought that anthropologists, as a result of their people-oriented perspective and research, are in a position to make a positive contribution to the situation, if not to remedy it. They are, that is, if they are given the opportunity. What I have to say will apply to a significant extent to sociologists as well, but for simplicity's sake, I will refer explicitly only to anthropologists.

I think it is important to make this last point clear because I am affiliated here with the Central Department of Sociology / Anthropology at Tribhuvan University. In addition, I feel qualified to make that claim because I obtained my Ph.D. in a (then) joint department of anthropology and sociology at Cornell University with sociology as a minor field, and my father was a sociologist, and more importantly in the present context, my wife Keiko Yamanaka is a sociologist! So, I can claim to be sociologically informed, at least by association. I turn now to topic for today.

ANTHROPOLOGY IN NEPAL

A brochure issued in about 1978 by Tribhuvan University's then newly established Department of Sociology / Anthropology (also sometimes called the Department of Anthropology and Sociology), quoted by Bishnu Bhandari in his article on "The Past and Future of Sociology in Nepal," published in 1990 in the Department's *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology* (Bhandari, 1990) had this to say:

"The ultimate purpose [of the department] is to provide students with the theoretical and practical tools that will enable them to assist in the development of the country as planners, administrators, social researchers and teachers". (p.15)

Already, then, the relevance of anthropology to development was made central to the definition of the department.

Bhandari then offered thirteen suggestions as an "Agenda for the Future" of the Department. I will stress four of these here, beginning with his third suggestion:

"3. Define Research Areas to be Covered
-In light of the current situation in Nepal, potential areas [of research] may include poverty, regional inequality, class formation, agrarian class, people's participation, social problems, basic needs, decentralization, women's studies, land tenure systems, population, environment, prescriptive research, the state, etc." (p. 19)

Here again we see a central concern with practical issues, but this time focussing on social and economic issues rather than on "development" as such -- on felt needs of people, rather than (as is most often the case with development programmes) on agendas set from above by government, or from abroad by foreign or international agencies.

Another of Bhandari's agenda items which most interest me today is his ninth:

"9. Shift the Focus of Research from the Descriptive to the Prescriptive
... There is a need for explanation and a shift from asking 'what' and 'how' to 'why' and 'what must be done.' " (p.19)

This is a principled stance that goes beyond seeking simple facts to addressing *issues*.

Yet another agenda item that attracts my attention is Bhandari's tenth:

"10. Strike a Balance between the Quantitative and Qualitative [in research methods].
Qualitative as well as quantitative information are the two sides of complete research work. Research in Nepal tends to be heavily biased in one aspect or another. Studies that over emphasize the quantitative can be interpreted in many different ways and consequently used to justify almost anything. An over emphasis on quality often is not taken seriously. Work should be balanced between the two ...." (pp. 19-20)

Finally, the suggested agenda item that may be at once the most controversial

and the most obviously important is his twelfth:

"12. *Making the Discipline Indigenous*

...... Borrowed modes of theory often adulterate the society and culture and prevent understanding our own society and its problems. Sociology has a national character in other countries, so why not here? [He cites Dor Bahadur Bista here].

There is a need to develop methods and techniques suited to local conditions. To achieve this, teaching and research problems must be reoriented. Nepali examples should be given in the classroom. The medium of instruction should be in Nepali, and [appropriate] educational materials need to be made available." (p.20)

It is in the spirit of this last suggestion, "Making the Discipline Indigenous," that I begin my talk with Bhandari's suggestions. For, as I advocate that development must be an indigenous process from formulation through implementation, I also believe that the definition of the resources that inform that process - - including the academic resources -- must be indigenous. This does not preclude borrowing, for all of culture and knowledge is largely shared, but it *does* mean that such academic borrowing should be indigenously motivated, selected and implemented. That is, it comes from within, according to indigenous definitions of relevance and in response to indigenous circumstances. And, because most societies (including conspicuously Nepal's), are distinctly plural (heterogeneous, with divergent cultures and interests), there must be participation from throughout the society in defining policies and programs -- by all ethnic groups, social classes, castes, genders etc. This, after all, is what democracy is about, to which this nation is now committed.

The well-being of those members of the society who are the most vulnerable, the most poverty-stricken, the most despised, the most remote, the fewest in number is inextricably linked to (and is as important as) that of the most powerful, the most privileged, the most honored and the most plentiful. The fate of the smallest minority is inseparable from that of every other segment of the society. It is absolutely essential that this be recognized and acted upon if this, or any other, nation is to survive in the contemporary world. People who are oppressed or excluded inevitably become angry, resentful people; those who oppress or shun them therefore become vulnerable to their anger and resentment -- increasingly so as technology gives resentful people the means to vent their anger upon their oppressors. That is, the products of oppression are visited upon the oppressors, and as Kardiner and Ovesey concluded nearly fifty years ago in *The Mark of Oppression*, their classic (although in many ways now outdated) study of consequences of the oppression of Blacks in America, "*there is only one way that the products of oppression can be dissolved, and that is to stop the oppression*" (Kardiner and Ovesey, 1951:387). This requires, of course, that the social, economic and political systems which are the bases for oppression must be removed. Thus, social justice is not only a moral imperative, it is a practical imperative as well, for it is in the vital personal interest of every individual and group and of the society as a whole (Berreman, 1980).

'DEVELOPMENT' AS 'PROGRESS': CONCEPT AND PROCESS

With that in mind, I will turn to development as a process: The fascination with development blossomed in the self-described "developed nations" of North America and Europe, following World War II. It was motivated by the desire to rebuild the devastation of war, and to build a world market-place for the victors. The rationale was, of course: "progress," ethnocentrically defined as movement toward a Western (and in most cases capitalist) way of life.

Critics of this view, although out numbered, were significant and vocal. Prominent among them, for example, was Gunder Frank. Basing his analysis largely on his work in Latin America, he maintained that "development" does not improve quality of life, *first*, because it does not respond to the needs of people, and *second*, because it magnifies social inequality -- social and economic disparity -- increasing both poverty and wealth and therefore the gap between them, within and between societies (Frank, 1967; 1969).

Based upon their experience in developing societies and in cross-cultural research, anthropologist have come to include many of the most persistent skeptics and critics of development projects and of the very concept of development. This is because anthropologists tend to study, and therefore to be intimately familiar with, those "targeted" by development schemes -- those who are to *be* developed. That is, they come to know those whose lives and environments are to be managed -- often are to be *exploited* -- for development. To know such people is to understand them and to understand them leads one to empathize with them and their problems.

Not only are development and its goals almost always defined, designed and implemented by outsiders but, as a result, whatever benefits may accrue go to those same outsiders or their allies among elites of the targeted societies. This

is not to say that development is always intentionally exploitative and selfishly motivated, nor that its advocates and practitioners are always thoughtlessly callous. Such plans may actually be believed to be beneficial to the target populations. But because they are not generated from within they are not based on the experience of those to be developed (nor even on significant familiarity with that experience). As a result development schemes most often are not responsive to people's circumstances and needs and therefore have most often proved to be inappropriate at best, counter-productive -- ranging from damaging to devastating -- at worst. For examples, see Bodley, editor, 1988; articles in nearly every issue of the journal *Cultural Survival Quarterly*; and such case studies as those by Gross, 1971, and by R. Franke, 1977. Both of the latter are described in Kottak, 1987a: 340-345; and in 1987b: 492-497, in the context of two excellent chapters relevant here: "Anthropology and economic development" (Kottak, 1987a: 332-355; 1987b:484-507), and "Applied anthropology" (Kottak, 1987a:356-376; 1987b: 508-528).

Why this dismal record on the part of even well-meaning, benevolently motivated development people and agencies? Quite obviously because of the ethnocentric view by planners and policy makers of what constitutes "development," of what constitutes "progress," even of what constitutes a "standard of living."

The standards -- the criteria -- for development are those of Western economics, of Western politics, of Western technology, of Western styles of life. This is generally true whether the planners and policy makers are Western people or not -- for those in positions to become planners and policy makers, regardless of nationality or background, are nearly always those who have been trained according to Western standards, often in Western institutions, and have been assimilated to Western values -- co-opted by what has been termed "academic colonialism" (Saberwal, 1968, cf. Berreman, 1969) or its bureaucratic equivalent. They are, in short, the expatriates, the educated, the affluent, the elite, and in all cases, the Westernized.

Thus, for example, we have the uniquely Western, but almost universally employed concept of the "Gross National Product" (measured by the monetary value of commercial production) as a measure of prosperity, of desirable "development." In fact, we have the broader, but equally ethnocentric concept of "economic growth" as a measure of economic health -- an endless process of striving in an ever-increasing spiral of competitive production and consumption, with a predictable complement of winners and losers (more losers than winners),

as healthy, desirable, even necessary, rather than a concept of a stable economy, fulfilling the needs and wants of the members of a society, as was the case for more than 99 per cent of human existence, and as is the case for most of the people alive in the world today. As *if* ordinary people will benefit from the kinds of circumstances that define a "growing" economy, or a "healthy" gross national product. As *if* anyone but the lucky and ruthless venture capitalists *can* benefit from such circumstances. As *if* profits put in at the top of the economic pyramid will "trickle down" to the wage laborers, to the subsistence farmer, to say nothing of the genuinely poor. In short, *as if* consumption and accumulation were measures of well-being.

One of the most clearly and passionately stated discussions of the implications of these phenomena is to be found in an essay by Ivan Illich, aimed at an American audience but entitled (with intentional irony) as if it were directed to those of developing nations, "Outwitting the 'Developed' Countries" (Illich, 1969). He writes from a position very similar to my own, stating near the end of his essay that:

"There is a normal course for those who make development policies, whether they live in North or South America, in Russia or Israel. It is to define development and to set its goals in ways with which they are familiar, which they are accustomed to use in order to satisfy their own needs, and which permit them to work through the institutions over which they have power or control. This formula has failed, and must fail. There is not enough money in the world for development to succeed along these lines, not even in the combined arms and space budgets of the super-powers" (p. 24).

He begins the essay by describing the self-defeating limitations to the imagination of developers in the context of the "developed" world from which they come:

"So persuasive is the power of the institutions we have created that they shape not only our preferences, but actually our sense of possibilities. We have forgotten how to speak about modern transportation that does not rely on automobiles and airplanes. Our conceptions of modern health care emphasize our ability to prolong the lives of the desperately ill. We have become unable to think of better education except in terms of more complex schools and teachers trained for ever longer periods. Huge institutions producing costly

services dominate the horizons of our inventiveness.

"We have embodied our world view into our institutions and are now their prisoners. Factories, news media, hospitals, governments, and schools produce goods and services packaged to contain our view of the world. We -- the rich -- conceive of progress as the expansion of these establishments. ......

"In less than a hundred years industrial society has molded patent solutions to basic human needs and converted us to the belief that man's needs were shaped by the Creator as demands for the products we have invented" (p. 20).

Further along in his argument he continues:

"[The] concrete consequences of underdevelopment are rampant; but underdevelopment is also a state of mind, and understanding it as a state of mind, or as a form of consciousness, is the critical problem. Underdevelopment as a state of mind occurs when mass needs are converted to the demand for new brands of packaged solutions which are forever beyond the reach of the majority . ... [It is exemplified in] the translation of thirst into the need for a Coke .... [and in] the intense promotion of schooling [which] leads to so close an identification of school attendance and education that in everyday language the two terms are interchangeable. Once the imagination of an entire population has been ... indoctrinated to believe that school has a monopoly on formal education, then the illiterate can be taxed to provide free high school and university education for the children of the rich" (pp. 21-22).

He concludes with his recommendations:

"Defining alternatives to the products and institutions which now pre-empt the field [of 'development'] is difficult, not only because these products and institutions shape our conception of reality itself, but also because the construction of new possibilities requires [an extraordinary] concentration of will and intelligence ... [on what] we have become accustomed over the last century to call research." (p.23)

He hastens to make clear that he is not referring to basic research,

although it has its place and its value, nor is he writing "of the billions of dollars annually spent on applied research [that is] largely spent by existing institutions on the perfection and marketing of their own products" (p. 23). Rather:

"I am calling for research on alternatives to the products which now dominate the market.

"..... This counter-research on fundamental alternatives to prepackaged solutions is the element most critically needed if the poor nations are to have a liveable future. ... [It must be realistic, taking] as one of its assumptions the continued lack of capital in the Third World.

"The difficulties of such research are obvious. The researcher must first of all doubt what is obvious to every eye. Second, he must persuade [or pressure] those who have the power of decision to act against their own short-run interests .... And, finally, he must survive as an individual in a world he is attempting to change fundamentally so that his fellows among the privileged minority see him as a destroyer of the very ground on which all of us stand" (pp. 23-24).

That is the formidable, visionary task to which Illich devoted his life -- a task he considered essential if human kind are to survive with lives worth living. I urge anyone involved in development, interested in or concerned about the process, to read that essay.

Returning to my own remarks, I would say, in sum, that "progress" as it is usually conceived relies upon bigness and complexity of ever increasing proportions; it relies on political centralization, bureaucracy, social hierarchy, specialization of labor combined with heavy reliance on capital intensive, high energy technology; on market economies artificially creating "needs" and the dependency they generate through massive use of advertising (Bodley, 1967: esp. 180-186, 214-217; Bodley, 1990: esp. 94-151; cf. Berreman, 1981a; Berreman, ed., 1981b). It is expressed in rampant technological proliferation and sophistication, in increasingly reckless resource exploitation and foolhardy international adventurism. It has brought about an ever widening gap between the rich and poor nations of the world, and between the rich and poor citizens of virtually every nation in the world including the United States of America. Economists report an increase in the wealth of the most affluent one-third to one-fifth of the populations of most of the world's nations since World War II, and

an increase in the impoverishment of the least affluent one-third to one-fifth of the populations of those nations.

Is it any wonder that some wit in America has asked, "Why is our national product so gross?" and another, "if we're so rich, why aren't we smart?"

To return to South Asia, anthropologist and public health professor John Ratcliffe has argued persuasively to explain why Kerala, the poorest state in India by every "economic indicator," has the highest standard of living in India by every "quality of life indicator:" i.e., infant survival, life expectancy, literacy (especially female literacy), education, low reproductivity (i.e., small family size), nutrition, etc. The reason is primarily that its resources are by far the most equally shared throughout the population when compared to any other Indian state. That is, they have the fewest rich people *and* the fewest poor people; they have the lowest average income, but they have conspicuously the smallest disparity between those who are most and least affluent (Ratcliffe, 1978; cf, Franke and Chasin, c1989; 1992). Put another way, they have the poorest rich people; the richest poor people.

For similar reasons, as is now widely recognized and amply demonstrated by the experience and research of such organizations as Food First, in such publications as their book *Needless Hunger*, there is sufficient food for everyone even in famine-prone Bangladesh. It is the grossly unequal distribution of food (including withholding of food for higher prices and export of food for profit, even in famine years) that is the problem (Hartmann and Boyce, 1982; cf. Hartmann and Boyce, 1983).

In a related finding, anthropologists Laura Nader and Stephen Beckerman have concluded in an article entitled "Energy as it Relates to the Quality and Style of Life," that *there is no relationship* between energy consumption (which is what Gross National Product largely is) and quality of life -- except, of course, for those who sell it (Nader and Beckerman 1978).

ANTHROPOLOGY AS APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCE

The great sociologist C. Wright Mills has said that the role of the social scientist, as of any person of knowledge, is to maintain "an adequate definition of reality." He terms this, "the politics of truth:"

".... The main tenet of [which] is to find out as much of the truth as he can, and to tell it to the right people, at the right time, and in the right way. Or stated negatively; to deny publicly what he knows to be false whenever it appears in the assertions of no matter whom" (Mills, 1955).

He elaborates on this point in *The Sociological Imagination*, noting that:

"In a world of widely communicated nonsense, any statement of fact is of moral and political significance. All social scientists, by the fact of their existence, are involved in the struggle between enlightenment and obscurantism. In a world such as ours, to practice social science is, first of all, to practice the politics of truth" (Mills, 1959: 178).

What Mills had to say in this regard -- and it was a very great deal -- is applicable to all socially responsible social scientists, and in fact to all "knowledge workers," as he sometimes called those who deal in a major way with ideas, be they journalists, philosophers, creative writers, teachers, researchers or others. Therefore in his description, he has included sociologists and anthropologists, by defnition as well as explicitly, as knowledge workers. And surely, the politics of truth is -- or ought to be -- the politics of anthropologists, whatever their orientation or specialization. Here, however, will focus on those who are involved in the application of anthropological knowledge, methods and insights to practical affairs: in short, those who may be termed, "applied anthropologists."

It is from the perspective embodied in Mills' writing that I conceive of "applied anthropology," which I view as my discipline's role in public policy formation. It is specifically with reference to that branch of policy making and implementation called "development," that I am speaking here. In fact, there is now a sub-field of anthropology, in America at least, designated: "Development Anthropology."

My own definition of applied anthropology is that it is the application to practical affairs -- particularly to social change -- of insights derived from the comparative, wholistic, contextual study of human beings. It deals with the systems of meanings through which people understand and organize themselves and their experience in relation to their total environment, human and supernatural as well as physical. In short, it deals with both material conditions and social constructions of reality, and the human consequences of both.

My view of the relationship of anthropology to development, or to any other policy issue, therefore, is to employ what we know or can learn through *ethically*, as well as scientifically, sound research methods, about the beliefs, values, practices, institutions, and any other learned, shared and transmitted characteristics -- i.e. cultural characteristics -- of the members of a social entity, in order to anticipate and respond to social change and its consequences, *in a manner that is in the interests of those people*. The italicized terms in the foregoing sentence are the topic of a recent article, "Ethics versus 'Realism' in Anthropology" (Berreman, 1991).

As I see it there are at least two major kinds of ways in which anthropological knowledge is actually applied. (1) That by those who might be described as "human engineers," among whom I would distinguish two sub-varieties: (a) "practicing anthropologists" and, (b) "public interest anthropologists." (2) That by those who might be described as "academic (or, ivory tower) applied anthropologists" (cf. Berreman, 1991).

I will elaborate briefly on these very casually defined categories:

(1) "Human engineers" -- These anthropologists make themselves available as technical advisers to plan, and facilitate accomplishment of the goals of governments, corporations, political parties, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), or other institutions, groups or persons intent on managing and/ or helping people. In short, they stand ready to help people manage other people in order to get the latter to do what the former want them to do: e.g., to acquiesce in government programs, to buy products, to support policies, candidates, parties or regimes, to become vaccinated, stop smoking, join the army or the Peace Corps, fly United, drink Pepsi Cola, practice safe sex, recycle paper, combat sexism, support human rights, free the Palestine, return lands to Native Americans, etc.

Among human engineers I distinguish two subsets: (a) the first, whom I call "vested interest anthropologists" (although they choose to call themselves "practicing anthropologists"), comprises those who choose to sell their skill and knowledge in the marketplace. (b) The second, "public interest anthropologists," are those who opt to work for public interest groups -- some call themselves "advocacy anthropologists," to emphasize their commitment to working as socially responsible advocates of such groups or causes. I hasten to explain that these obviously value-laden categories and their characterizations, reflect my own biased evaluations and the distinction, while intuitively valid, at best

14

describes "central tendencies," rathr than discrete characteristics. Nevertheless, it is the case that some applied anthropologists practice their profession (often with substantial incomes) as professional consultants, either free-lance or in the employ of profit-making corporations or agencies, while others work for public interest groups or NGOs (often living on a shoestring). It is this contrast that I am making here. Those in the former category predominate among "practicing anthropólogists," (there is a professional organization with this title in the United States, a subsidiary of the Society for Applied Anthropology).

There is as yet no professional organization for public interest or advocacy anthropologists, although there are a number of specific organizations comprising people so motivated: The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) of Copenhagen, Cultural Survival Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts, various regional, national and ethnic "Information Groups," and the late, lamented Anthropology Resource Center of Boston (whose founder and driving force, Shelton Davis, together with his colleague Robert Matthews, coined the term "public interest anthropology" [Davis and Matthews, 1979]), are among those which come to mind as examples.

A few anthropologists have worked in the employ of indigenous or minority peoples, either for particular groups such as an American Indian nation or tribe. By way of examples I will mention two such people whom I happen to have known personally. One, from many years ago, is Hiroto Zakoji, then recently of the University of Oregon, who was employed by the Klamath Indian tribe of Oregon, to help them deal with the problems attending termination of their reservation status. A recent example is Triloki Pandey of the University of California, Santa Cruz, one of the foremost contemporary anthropological authorities on the Zuni of the American southwest, who served for several years recently as a consultant to the Zuni in their land claims case involving the Hopi and the U.S. Government, and whose work was lauded by each of the litigating parties. For further examples see: Robert Paine's edited volume, *Advocacy and Anthropology* (1985), especially Maybury-Lewis's essay therein, "A Special Sort of Pleading: Anthropology at the Service of Ethnic Groups" (1985), and John Bodley's edited volume, *Tribal Peoples and Development Issues*: A *Global Overview* (1988) in which, incidentally, Maybury-Lewis's essay is reprinted.

Some of those who work most directly for emancipation of indigenous and minority ethnic groups have come to refer to their activities as "Liberation Anthropology" -- a felicitous term I first heard from Gerrit Huizer, deriving from the "Liberation Theology" of human rights activist Catholic clergy in Latin

15

America (see: Huizer, 1979). Many of these appear or are cited in the pages of Bodley's volume cited in the preceding paragraph.

(2) "Traditional academic or 'ivory tower' applied anthropologists" -- This second major category within applied anthropology is more frequently encountered in teaching and research than in direct application, hence its description by its detractors, as "ivory tower." It tends to focus on general principles of the application of anthropological insights to human problems, employing specific cases to discover and illustrate these principles. This focus is associated with a strong tendency to do research (in order to discover such principles), and to teach (in order to train others to be able to apply those principles in practice). This kind of applied anthropology, therefore deals more with knowledge than with practice, but not simply knowledge for its own sake. Rather, its advocates would say that it is in the Enlightenment tradition of knowledge pursued and taught for the enhancement of the quality of human life in a very direct and practical way (cf. Berreman, 1968b).

Anthropologists, whether traditional or applied, whether "practicing" or "ivory tower", whether working in the public interest or in the vested interest, all generally believe that their discipline has something unique to offer among the applied social sciences because its distinctive philosophy and methods of research give them an understanding of a people's ways of life -- at once experimential, wholistic and contextual -- that is obtainable in no other way. At their best, anthropologists do their research by putting themselves into the circumstances of the lives of those they seek to understand, through the method of participant-observation-- that is, by sharing with people, in so far as possible, their daily lives for extended periods of time. The understanding comes about through the empathy that results from intensive participation and observation. Thus meaning and its contextual variations are learned to an extent unlikely in any other way short of membership in the group -- and in ways not unlike those ways in which anyone is socialized into an unfamiliar group. In this manner we anthropologists seek to learn the culture in a way not wholly unlike the socialization of an insider. The ultimate accomplishment, it is sometimes said, is not when the researcher no longer makes mistakes, but when the mistakes made are of the sort that people within the society occasionally make. In short, we seek to derive an understanding of the world of the people we study that is consistent with their own understanding -- a definition of reality that is adequate to their experience.

In this way, applied anthropologists hope to be able to provide communication links between people at the grass roots in their daily lives, on the one hand, and on the other hand those -- such as developers and policy makers -- whose decisions and actions are likely to fatefully affect their lives. That is, we seek to apply what we learn to helping enable people in these two interdependent human roles to make significant contact in order that they may have a basis for understanding one another, in the hope that they will be able to reach a creative or at least viable consensus on how they may interact most productively. Without the kind of understanding we seek, without the input we hope to make in policy formation, there is bound to be the kind of frustration, conflict and failure that so often characterizes development efforts worldwide -- efforts which, in fact, have given the very term "development" the kind of negative connotation in most social science quarters that is so vividly exemplified by the writings of Gunder Frank and Ivan Illich, cited above.

In their brilliant book, *Villagers, Forests and Foresters*, comprising a case study of community forestry in Nepal, D.A. Gilmour and R.J. Fisher (1991; See also, Ives and Messerli, 1989)) make the point strongly that conflict between forest administrators and forest users is inimical to resource management; observing that while conflict cannot be altogether avoided, "... a high degree of consensus is probably necessary for effective common property management" (p. 48). The importance of this modest statement cannot be overestimated in its relevance to development, to policy making at any level, any more than it can to forest resource management. Consensus building, like its companion process, compromise, requires mutual respect and understanding, which in turn require common knowledge and shared definitions of the situation at hand. It is to these processes that anthropologists have the most to offer -- I venture to claim in fact that we have something *unique* to offer -- as a result of our intimate, in-depth ethnographic knowledge and understanding. Our understanding attempts to go beyond the goals of a project and the fears or reservations of a user group, to the long range and direct consequences that can be anticipated but are likely to be overlooked or unrecognized by either or both parties to the project. This, too, requires ethnographic understanding. Technical expertise alone is simply not enough and may in fact be deceptive in obscuring the most important issues of all -- the human problems.

I believe that a major reason why Gilmour and Fisher's book comprises such an important contribution -- combining as it does, theory and method with a detailed empirical case study of community forestry in two districts of Nepal -- is that its authors combine Gilmour's bio-technical expertise as forester, and

Fisher's socio-cultural expertise as anthropologist, while the two obviously share experience, knowledge, values and mutual respect, resulting in a crucial consensus of their own.

"SUCCESSFUL" DEVELOPMENT : OBSTACLES AND STRATEGIES

In view of what I have said thus far, where are we in our consideration of development, public policy and anthropology?

Development is by definition a value judgement: an assertion about what is good, desirable, efficient and perhaps inevitable. Its dilemma is that one person's -- or group's -- progress may be another's regress or devastation. One man's gain is likely to be another man's loss, and is even more likely to be another *woman's* loss.

If development is to be in the public interest, it must be accountable to the public. That means the entire public including people of all ethnic groups, castes, classes, genders, occupations, religions, languages, etc. Presumably that is what democracy, to which this nation is now committed, is about. This means it must be planned in consultation with the people who constitute the society, and beyond that, in partnership with them, and even beyond that, in response to them and to their concerns. This is the fundamental dilemma of development, because every complex society is made up not only of diverse groups but of diverse *interest* groups. In South Asia this dilemma takes the especially vivid form of the caste system, analogous to the system of racial discrimination in America.

A caste system is a system of social, economic and political hierarchy made up of groups each with distinct cultures, traditions and histories -- and therefore definable as ethnic groups -- but which differ from other ethnic groupings by being based entirely on birth, i.e., on shared ancestry. As anthropologists put it, caste membership is "birth-ascribed."[2]

Because a caste system comprises a hierarchy of power and privilege -- of vulnerability and deprivation -- as well as of symbolic values, it entails a hierarchy of conflicting interests; what is in the interest of one or some castes is likely to be against the interest of other(s). These are not trivial matters, and often in fact are matters of livelihood, or indeed of life itself. Therefore, any development program is certain to exacerbate intercaste conflicts and to be undermined thereby, for it will be perceived to be beneficial to (and/or controlled or influenced by) one or more castes at the expense of others. Because this is an intrinsic feature of the caste system, and because that system is virtually universal among the dominant sectors of South Asian societies, it constitutes a true and tragic dilemma.

Those involved in development or self-help projects will not improve their chances of success by ignoring this dilemma. The best they can do is to facilitate reasoned discourse among the interest groups -- the castes -- in order to develop an adequate working consensus. This can be attempted through appeals to relevant legal and ideological doctrines which counter competitive, confrontational casteism. Such doctrines can often be found in the religious and ethical traditions of even the most caste-bound or racist of societies and may be invoked even when deeply buried, widely ignored or contradicted. In this way, common values and interests may be discovered which can form the bases for compromise, cooperation, conflict resolution and eventual consensus building -- even mutual empathy -- based on the lowest common denominator of shared interests of the larger community.

Most development projects retreat into supporting caste-specific projects which do not affect members of competing interest groups -- usually supporting projects which benefit the "dominant caste(s)," i.e., those economically, politically and socially most advantaged (Srinivas, 1959; cf. Berreman, 1963a: 205-209). The rationale may be some hazy version of "trickle down economics," or a more pragmatic decision to work with those most able to participate in development and least likely to be challenged by others -- which is a decision to help those who least need it but are most likely to produce "results." These convoluted, devastating, intractable and pervasive consequences of the caste system are, and will long remain, the Achilles heel of concerted, democratic community action in South Asia, for they minimize (if they do not wholly preclude) the possibility of a supportive consensus, and therefore success for such action.

A close second in the list of daunting obstacles to effective development programs -- less daunting, perhaps, in the Himalayas than in the adjacent northern Indian and Nepalese plains and terai -- is gender discrimination. Hierarchy based on gender works quite differently than that based on caste, however, because both genders are represented in every community, every caste, every family with the common socialization and cross-cutting common interests that fact implies. As a result, gender presents different -- and I would venture to say, less ominous -- challenges to development than does caste. I cannot go further into this important issue here, but I have done so elsewhere (Berreman, 1989; 1992).

In any case, development projects routinely fail for want of public support. In addition to failure to achieve consensus (as described above) that failure usually results from the fact that people have not been convinced of the relevance of the projects to their lives and concerns. They more often than not see them simply as instances of familiar and resented bureaucratic intrusions on their autonomy and impositions on their time and energy -- useless at best (as in the case of a program to teach improved farming methods, including the totally inappropriate Japanese method of rice cultivation, to the Garhwali subsistence farmers of the Indian Himalayas among whom I have done research [alluded t in Berreman, 1963a:289; cf. Berreman, 1963b), and devastatingly damaging at worst (as in the case of construction of the huge Tehri Dam in Garhwal, perceived [accurately] by the rural Garhwali people, many of whom it will displace, as destructive, dangerous and useless to them [Tiwari, 1987]).

For any chance of success, people's participation in the development process must be secured at every step of the way: in deciding whether development is needed and wanted, and if so what kind of development it should be, i.e., what needs or wants are to be met; in planning how they shall be met; in implementing the process of meeting them; in assessing the results; in revision of the program in view of assessments of its results, etc. If people withdraw their support of a program so instituted, it need not be summarily dropped, but their support must be won if the project is to be implemented or continued. This cannot be accomplished through bureaucratic bullying, but only through reasoned argument supported by evidence, accompanied by a willingness to listen to learn, to compromise or back down as people's responses dictate. The veto power of the people should be assured and honored. In short, respect for the wisdom and experience of those potentially involved planned change is essential to its success.

Rural people may be unlettered, they may even be uniformed or misinformed on an issue, but they are not ignorant or inexperienced, certainly not with reference to their own environment, livelihood and way of life. They have acquired their knowledge and skills over many generations, and have developed sophisticated methods for managing their environment and social relations (for many examples see Tamang, Gill and Thapa, eds. 1993, and for an excellent brief statement therein on implications for policy making, see Gill's essay therein (Gill, 1993; cf. Chhetri, 1994; Fisher, 1989; Gilmour, 1990). Their knowledge is more grounded, tested and relevant than that of planners, politicians, administrators -- or anthropologists. Like anyone else, they have to be convinced of the value of a project or project in order to support it. In order to be convinced,

they must be taken fully into the confidence of policy makers and implementers and fully into the policy making and implementing process including being given decision-making power. These are requirements unfamiliar and often unpalatable to bureaucrats and experts, but they have to be learned and practiced if planning and development are to be appropriate, accepted and effective.

In addition, those who do the planning, implementing and administering must be held accountable to the "user group" --- that is, to the people whom they serve and who employ them or at least make their employment possible. The "developers" must learn to define themselves as public servants and act accordingly, rather than as authority figures or bureaucratic superiors. Those for whom they plan are not to be seen as target populations but as clients to be served through close and continuous consultation.

As most of us have learned by now, development policy cannot be successfully imposed from above (e.g., from government), nor from outside (e.g., from such funding sources such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), or the big international foundations). The notion that those who pay the piper are entitled to call the tune, is now simply inapplicable, irrelevant and in fact counter-productive to development -- or for *any* issue of public policy. Development funds allocated conditionally are clearly coercive -- they control development, they buy people, their lives and their resources. I believe they should be rejected, from whatever source they may come and however attractive they may be, however benevolently they may seem to be offered. If money is to be given, it should be given freely, with no strings attached, in trust and with confidence that people are best able to define their own needs. This would no doubt seem quizzical and even frightening to donors, but they need not worry; people at the grass roots could hardly do worse than US-AID, the World Bank, and others too numerous and some too sensitive to mention, have done. In fact, the most effective kind of development may be that which does not entail the bestowal of money at all. Those promoting development might best limit themselves to the role of facilitators, advisors available to those who may seek their help, to the extent and for the purposes that they the seekers define. They could help people figure out how to accomplish what they want and need, including how to secure their own financing. It would be worth a try, certainly so if sustainability of development is an issue--as it must always be, because outside funding is uncertain and ephemeral. I have been told of at least one reportedly successful such project, initiated by the United Mission to Nepal in far western Nepal.

But to return to the immediate "realities" of development policy and practice: we needn't hold our collective breaths -- money is unlikely to be offered without strings; projects are unlikely to be widely promoted free of political pressure and without money as an inducement and mechanism for change. We live in a mercantile world in which there truly is no such a thing as a free lunch. Governments want their supporters, foundations want their profits and tax write-offs, missionaries want their converts. Even the apparently benign Peace Corps was founded and sustained explicitly as a weapon against Communism, to be employed in those nations where a threat of Communism was believed to exist -- a threat which, though "real," was deemed weak enough that something as inexpensive as the Peace Corps was thought sufficient to sustain an anti-Communist government, and perhaps to serve as well as a palliative -- and diversion -- for restless American youth and anti-Vietnam war activists (Berreman, 1968a; Windmiller, 1970).

CONCLUSION : THE ROLE AND PROMISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN DEVELOPMENT

I have now come full circle in my discussion: I have claimed that anthropologists have unique opportunities through their training and research experience, to understand peoples, their ways of life, the social and cultural dynamics of their societies, their definitions of their circumstances, and their perceptions of how to improve their lives.

With that understanding and the information which supports it, anthropologists working together with people and their governments, have the potential to be effective social and cultural interpreters or mediators in pursuit of a productive consensus on programs and policies initiated by and genuinely benefitting the people directly affected and their nations at large, and beyond. As such, they should be able to be both practically and morally -- and in any case humanly -- useful as advisor-informants on matters social and cultural by helping to generate adequate definitions of the realities confronting people, to formulate positive responses to those problems, and to anticipate consequences and implications of proposed courses of acton.

That is, anthropologists can be expected to advise, on the basis of sound, empirically and experientially derived knowledge, what the consequences of particular policy decisions are likely to be as they affect particular people in particular circumstances. This, I think, is what is most surely lacking in

development planning and in public policy-making in general, be it in Nepal or the United States or anywhere else.

Too often bureaucrats and planners are entrusted with deciding for people what will be good for them -- often for people a most wholly unknown to those making the decisions. Policies can be effectively formulated only in terms of what people themselves want and need in the context of the total circumstances of their lives. Developers should limit themselves to the role of technical advisers.

As I have argued here, I am convinced that anthropologists -- and here I am thinking primarily of Nepalese anthropologists, of whom a substantial trained and experienced cadre has been developing in recent years -- are in a position to provide the information and understanding which alone can make for appropriate policies and plans for a society as culturally diverse as Nepal -- plans and policies which can work for the benefit of all.

Administrators should grasp the opportunity to make use of this potentially effective, but largely untapped, domestic human resource for bringing into reality the great promise democracy holds for this nation and all of its people. The first steps are up to the anthropologists: to demonstrate to those who govern, to those who provide funds, and to the society at large, the relevance of the resources they command to the problems confronting the people and the nation.

I believe Nepalese anthropologists have already taken the initial steps, exemplified by the work of those I have met and worked with this year. I hope that what I have said here may in its small way, inspire further steps in that direction, and may also alert those in positions of influence and in the general public to recognize, appreciate and respond to those steps by incorporating these people and their skills fully into policy making and implementation of the development process in Nepal.

NOTES:

1. Lecture sponsored by: Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, the Sociological/Anthropological Society of Nepal, and Winrock International. Delivered in abbreviated form at Winrock International, Kathmandu, March 25, 1994.

2. Caste and its consequences have been a major focus of my anthropological

research -- *the* major focus for the first 25 years (1957-1982) of my life as a South Asianist anthropologist. For the benefit of the curious reader, I will list here (and in the "References Cited" section of this paper), some of the results of that research: Berreman, 1960; 1963a; 1963b; 1965; 1966; 1967, 1968c; 1971a; 1971b; 1972a; 1972b; 1973; 1976; 1977; 1979b; 1981b; 1983a; 1983b. For an excellent, brief overview of interpretations of India's caste system, see Kolenda, 1978.

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DEVELOPMENT ISSUES RAISED DURING THE "PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT" OF 1990[1]

Krishna B. Bhattachan

To get more insight into the relation of the "people's movement" to contemporary problems of underdevelopment in Nepal, it will be of great help to look at political pamphlets distributed by political parties and professional groups. In this paper I will show that many development issues were raised in the political pamphlets released by political parties and professional organizations. At the end, I will analyze the two dominant beliefs of the Nepalese public about the current situation of underdevelopment and future prospects of development of the country.

Development Issues Raised in the Political Documents Released by Major Political Parties

Political pamphlets played a very significant role in Nepal under the repressive reign of the autocratic partyless Panchayat regime. Political parties were banned in Nepal by the late King Mahendra in 1960; later by the 1962 Constitution. Political meetings, including mass meetings and street demonstrations against the partyless Panchayat system and the king, were outlawed. In the beginning of the "people's movement" many political leaders and political activists were imprisoned for "public security" reasons. Most of the national and local newspaper and newsmagazine were banned and many editors were imprisoned. All the international newspapers were confiscated at the entry ports. In such adverse circumstances, one effective way to break the barrier against spreading the messages of political parties was the wide circulation of political pamphlets, which are not expensive and easy to distribute. Its effectiveness depends on how the people and public could relate their problems and demands to those mentioned in the pamphlets. If the pamphlets hit the right chord of the people's sentiment, they could help them to engage in public debate about matters of common concern.

Political pamphlets were widely distributed by leading political parties, sometimes jointly and sometimes independently, at various stages of the united "people's movement." Among the parties distributing pamphlets were the Nepali Congress (NC) and the United Left Front (ULF) -- comprised of seven communist parties: Nepal Communist Party (Marxist), NCP (Marxist-Leninist), NCP *(Chautho Mahadhibeshan)*, NCP (Manandhar), NCP (Varma), NCP (Amatya), and *Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party* (NMKP) (the "Nepal Worker and Peasant Party"). The United National People's Movement (UNPM), another coalition front of radical communists, was comprised of five parties and some leftist individuals: NCP *(Masal)*, NCP *(Mashal)*, *Sarvahara Sramik Sangathan* (SSS) (the "Proletarian Labor Organization"), Nepal Marxist-Leninist Party (NMLP), and the Sambhuram Shrestha group. The pamphlets are significant for various reasons: these documents reflect assessments of the current political and economic condition of the country; they contained demands for changing the current situation of underdevelopment of the country; they reflected popular aspirations as perceived by the political parties; and they were one of few available ways for the people to participate in political discussions.

The first political pamphlet was released by seven leftist political parties who joined in the ULF on January 14, 1990 in order to participate in the popular movement against the ruling Panchayat government. Press statements with the same contents were released separately by each of these seven parties of the newly-organized ULF (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990:21-22; *Jhilko* 1990a: 49-51[2]). This document was about their points of agreement, which were minimal, but were the only basis for the newly-formed ULF. It contained three sections: the first consisted of 18 points containing demands regarding social, economic, and political issues; the second totaled eight points about the mechanics of working relationships of the ULF with other popular movement groups, especially the NC. The 18 points included in the first part of this document were later released as the demands of the ULF during the early stage of the movement.

Among the 18 points, some were political demands to end the partyless system and establish a multiparty system; lift the ban on all political parties, as well as independent class and professional organizations; reinstate fundamental human rights; eliminate all *Kala Kanun* (black law);[3] release all political prisoners; stop all political atrocities and arrests made in different parts of the country; renew Nepal-India relations on the basis of Panch Shila;[4] and follow a foreign policy strictly compatible with non-alignment. The main economic demands were strict control over skyrocketing prices; strict action against corruption, commissionocracy, smugglers, and black marketeers; daily availability of consumable commodities in all parts of the country without any discrimination; guaranteed work to everyone; increased wages and fixed minimum wages; the right to organize trade unions, elimination of dual ownership of land; decreased price of fertilizer; improved seed and insecticide; decreased interest rate; guaranteed farm profits; and increased salaries of employees in accordance with price increases, with the maximum increase for the lower-class employees. Finally, the social demands were guaranteed equal opportunity for development to all castes, ethnic and language groups and regions of the country, and affordable education for all people. At this point one may wonder whose wishes do these represent? The simple answer is, everyone's interests. These lists of demands, representing various classes and groups, were incorporated in political pamphlets to gain their sympathy, support, and participation to topple the partyless system. The leaders of the political parties who listed those demands knew that even if they came in power it will be difficult to fulfill them.

In their second political pamphlet, released as an appeal from the ULF, the 18 political, economic, and social demands were put forward after discussing in detail the problems facing the nation. This was basically an assessment of the continuing situation of underdevelopment and a demand for a radical transformation of society and economy through the transformation of the political system. The ULF, in its appeal, asserted that "with the extension of the partyless Panchayat system in Nepal, the country is heading downhill toward massive destruction" (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:23).

The ULF further asserted that the imposition of the partyless system for about three decades had resulted in political, economic, social, and cultural anomie, killing multiparty democracy, depriving fundamental human rights of the people, taking away their right to express their pain through mass meetings and demonstrations, and torturing many activists who denounced the autocratic system (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:23). The ULF, in its appeal, further alleged that the partyless Panchayat system had squeezed the economy by developing an externally dependent economy, fulfilling the interest of rulers and wealthy people, and encouraging corruption, black marketing, smuggling, and commissionocracy. On the other hand, the living standard of the majority of the people had fallen. Peasants, workers, national capitalists, and national businessmen were not able to see economic progress of the country. Communalism[5] is on the rise. In brief, the ULF stated that "the country is in crisis not only in economic and political but all sectors. The increasing national aspiration is for radical change in the country ..... The progress of Nepali society is impossible as long as such a system [Panchayat] exists. Therefore, today's first essential need is the

end of the partyless Panchayat system and the establishment of a democratic multiparty system. This is today's national aspiration too" (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:23).

The punch line of the ULF documents was the strong correlation between two variables: politics and development, with the former being an independent and the latter a dependent variable[6]. The ULF believed that partyless politics leads downhill to underdevelopment; a multiparty politics opens up the gate of development. Partyless politics blocks wider participation of the people in the country's development; party politics increases participation of people across the board.

Similar assessments about the current political economic condition of the country were made by the NC in its historic national convention held in Kathmandu, January 18-20, 1990. The political resolution passed by the NC contained seven points (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:24-25; and *Jhilko* 1990b:52-53). The party resolution stated: "Today our country is being attacked by several problems at once. On the one hand, the country's economic condition is deteriorating every day, and on the other hand, foreign debt is rising." It further stated that Nepal has become the fourth poorest country in the world due to the wrong policies adopted by the Panchayat system. The Panchayat government failed to provide relief to the people from price increases after the trade and transit impasse with India. The country was drowned in the pool of corruption,[7] bribery, commissionocracy, and addiction.[8] The NC asserted that the only reason for such a miserable condition of the country is an undemocratic partyless Panchayat system introduced in 1960. The NC, like their allies the ULF, believed on the strong correlation between an independent variable "politics" and a dependent variable "development." All the wrongdoing during the last three decades was because of partyless politics that prohibited wider participation of the people. The party further believed that the door to development and people's participation would be opened by a multiparty system. The feeling of unity among various groups of people could be possible, the NC believed, only in a democracy, and national unity is a must for coming out of this crisis. The NC appealed for a non-violent "popular movement" to begin February 18, 1990, the official annual "Democracy Day," for the establishment of complete multiparty democracy in the country.

In a joint appeal for a "people's movement" released on February 18, 1990 by the NC and the ULF, after both parties' endorsement of the document on February 9, 1990, they appealed to the people to participate in the movement for the establishment of a multiparty democratic system in the country (cf. FOPHUR 1990:4-5; see also *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:26). Both parties, in their appeal, alleged that the ruling Panchayat government had taken away people's political as well as human rights. They further stated, "The economic condition of the people is dreadful. Prices have skyrocketed. Unemployment has been a problem. The base of this system has been smuggling and corruption. The economic gap between a handful of persons and the rest of the people is growing. Ordinary people are finding it difficult to survive" (cf. FOPHUR 1990:4). Both parties believed, "Nepalese are speaking unanimously for change" and the "truth will prevail. And the truth is the power of the people." Both parties strongly believed that "change is certain."

The central argument of both the ULF and the NC was that change in politics was essential to change in economy and society. When they said that, the NC being a centrist party, and the ULF being dominated by liberal communist parties, they did not mean a "radical change" in the social structure through change in the political system, as suggested by some radical communist alliances, like the UNPM discussed below. Radical change was a stated long term goal of the ULF, but for some time they had accepted a multiparty political system, parliamentary form of government, and constitutional monarchy. Clearly, the position taken by the NC and the ULF was more "pro-reform" than "revolutionary."

The United National People's Movement (UNPM), the second coalition group that participated in the popular movement, also made a similar assessment of the political and economic condition of the country, but, in sharp contrast to the NC and the ULF, took a radical position by denouncing the Western parliamentary form of government which the moderate communist party alliance, the ULF, accepted. In its statement about the policies and programs released on February 12, 1990, the UNPM extended its full support to the movement initiated by the NC and the ULF (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:28-29; and *Jhilko* 1990:53-54).

The UNPM alleged that for the last three decades the ruling Panchayat government had not only taken away people's birthrights, but also "....... failed not only to solve any of the fundamental problems like democracy, nationalism, and people's livelihood, but also failed to make any efforts to solve them." Because of the failure of the Panchayat system, the UNPM noted that now the question confronting the nation was how to solve the fundamental problems of the people, which are nationalism, democracy, and livelihood.

The fundamental problems to be solved by the new system, as identified by the UNPM, were to provide land to the peasants who comprised the majority of the total 18 million people of Nepal, because their problem is the country's fundamental problem and its solution is "land to the tillers"; to liberate women from political, social, and family oppression and exploitation and provide rights and opportunities equal to those of men; to end special rights and privileges for a single language and give equal status to all languages; and to void the unequal treaty made in 1950 with India and establish friendly relations with all countries on the basis of Panch Shila. The UNPM argued that the tasks of the new system would be to create an independent, self-reliant national economy by eliminating imperialist and expansionist control over our national economy; to guarantee people's freedom and rights; and to give supreme priority to the fulfillment of basic needs, including work, food, clothing, shelter, education, and health of workers, peasants, low income employees, students, intellectuals, small businessmen, and several other groups (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:29; and *Jhilko* 1990a:54). The UNPM strongly believed that neither the partyless Panchayat system nor the Western parliamentary form of government as proposed by the NC, also supported by the ULF, could achieve those above mentioned fundamental goals. Therefore, the UNPM asserted that the fundamental problems of the people could be solved only by a "people's democracy" or "New Democracy" (see *Antarastriya Manch* 1990-1991:29).

The punch line of the radical communist group, the UNPM, was similar to that of the NC and the ULF to the extent that partyless politics was the main culprit of Nepal's underdevelopment, but it differed with them substantially by rejecting multiparty politics as its solution and strongly advocating a single party political system ruled by the Nepalese proletariate. Although UNPM differed with the NC and the ULF substantially, they all agreed on the point that "politics," in this case the partyless Panchayat system, was responsible for the crisis in the economy and the growth of internal problems. In other words, all parties believed that "politics" and "development" are closely related; the former precedes the latter. But the UNPM differed with others on the solution to this problem: the UNPM demanded the establishment of "people's democracy" or "New Democracy" and the NC and the ULF accepted a multiparty system with a parliamentary form of government and a constitutional monarchy. Those two different ideas were reflected in the pamphlets released by various professional groups during the progress of the movement.

Development Issues Raised in the Pamphlets Released by Some Professional Groups

Many professional groups, including teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and pilots actively participated in the "people's movement" of 1990. Their active support of the political movement against the partyless Panchayat system helped to take the movement beyond political parties.

During the early phase of the movement when the ruling Panchayat government began a crackdown on the movement leaders and activists, using excessive force and brutality to supress the movement, the professionals, who generally are less active in political life, began to show their concern for the nation's problems and extend support to the pro-democracy movement. Professional associations of doctors and engineers released separate statements strongly demanding that the government stop its brutality against the people and appealing to the people to participate in the movement to overthrow the Panchayat system. In both statements the central issue was the problem of the development of the country.

In its "Appeal to the Government and People of Nepal," issued on February 27, 1990, the Nepal Engineers Association (NEA), Kathmandu, states, "Every conscious Nepalese is now forced to think how various nations, especially those similar to ours in terms of development, have made tremendous progress for the last 31 years, i.e., since 1960." Further, "The entire conscious community knows pretty well that it has been, implicitly or explicitly, a matter of serious concern how the development process in the nation has suffered setbacks from the lack of short- and long-term planning based on national interests, how corruption, rampant in the financial and administrative machinery, has crippled the nation, and how its small technological sector has been abused, e.g., the mushroom growth of fake industries instead of setting up industries for fulfilling the nation's basic needs. The lack of explicit policy and the mismanagement of the development sector have thrust the nation to the second poorest status in the world, in spite of the flow of foreign loans and grant-in-aid" (see FOPHUR 1990:6).

Those impeccable observations and comments by the Nepalese engineers, whose total number is about 2,000, should be well taken. They are one group of professionals who are actively engaged in the material development process, such as building highways and roads, bridges, dams, canals, hydroelectricity plants, tunnels, and buildings. However, the other side of the coin, ironically, is

that they are part of the process of the mismanagement of scarce "development budget," and corruption. But it is precisely because of their two faces, they know better than others about the country's heartbeat of development.

The implication of the NEA Appeal is in conformity with various political parties, i.e., a firm belief that "politics" precedes "development." The NEA's indictment on "politics", particularly the partyless Panchayat, for blocking the process of development through corruption and mismanagement, left the question hanging, how these evils would go away by changing the political system from partyless to a multiparty system?

Similar concerns were shown by the Nepal Medical Association (NMA). In its statement issued on March 1, 1990, NMA begins, "Today, while the rest of the world is progressive at various stages of development, we Nepalese, in a situation to deal with different diseases afflicting our poor countrymen, have been shocked by the cruel government oppression of unarmed citizens who had launched a peaceful movement from the 18th of February 1990. Today, while there is a worldwide movement for change, the Nepalese government has been exposed by its brutal action against the peaceful people not only nationally but internationally as well" (see FOPHUR 1990:7). At the end of the Appeal, the NMA demands the end of government brutality and the search for peaceful political solutions to the current political problems in order to "construct a political environment in which overall development of the nation is possible" (see FOPHUR 1990:8). The NMA, was not as explicit as their fellow association the NEA, in linking the process of development with "politics." But they too saw the possibility of "development" of the country by changing the "political environment," referring to the change from the "partyless" to a "multiparty" politics. Thus the medical professionals' views on development were not different from those of engineers and politicians.

A pamphlet entitled *Sabadhan! Bandukle Muktiko Agraha Mardaina* ("Caution! Guns Cannot Kill the Desire for Liberation"), the *Bahudal Bauddik Mancha* ("Multiparty Intellectual Forum") stated that during the reign of the autocratic Panchayat regime since 1960, "a handful of shrewd people have become richer while poor people became poorer." It further states that "corruption, bribery, smuggling, black-marketing and commissionocracy got encouragement. The nation's coffers are empty. The nation's properties are deposited in foreign banks by the Pancha autocrats. The nation is sinking. People are dying."

Another underground organization, the Nepalese Forum For Democracy

40

(NFD), released a political pamphlet entitled "The Present Condition of Nepal,"[9] in which the king and the palace were blamed for emptying the national coffers. "The unbridled ambition of the king and the queen has repeatedly emptied the state coffers. The sale of the royal palace,[10] the Nagarjun palace, and the Pokhara mansion[11] proved the fact beyond doubt" (NFD 1990:1). Furthermore, "the palace has a monopoly over the main economic resources like the Hotel Soaltee, Yeti Travels, Tea-state (sic), etc. Thousands of hectares of land have been registered in the name of the king and the queen" (NFD 1990:3).

The NFD provides some statistics comparing two rupees (about eight U.S. cents) of daily per capita income of a common man in the hills against 100,000 U.S. dollars of daily travelling allowance abroad for the king. Due to these facts the Forum remarked that "the slogan of the Panchayat, of economic development, is pure hypocrisy because the king and the members of the royal family have never looked upon Nepal as a nation. The nation, they think, is their *Jagir*"[12] (NFD 1990:3). The NFD alleged that "in the name of national development billions of dollars begged from foreign countries have been used for political centralism and at the moment the Nepalese are staggering under the heavy burden of loans of 59 billion rupees (about 50 million U.S. dollars)." This might be the crux of the problem and the real culprit was not so much corruption in general as the exploitation by the royal family. But it is for sure that Nepalese have a strong belief that corruption outweights any other factor.

In the above discussion it is clear that professionals like engineers, medical doctors, and intellectuals agreed with the political parties that "bad politics," i.e., the partyless system was responsible for the underdevelopment of the country; the only possibility left was to change the "partyless politics" into a "multiparty politics." Unlike the political parties, these professional organizations did not specifically suggest or advocate "democratic socialism," or "New Democracy."

Main Issues of Public Debate

From the discussion and analysis so far it is clear that many issues were raised during the movement period. However, there were some issues highlighted more than others. I will discuss and analyze the two central development issues debated extensively during that period. Other issues were overshadowed by these two central development issues: One, "politics" precedes "development", and two, the institution of monarchy as the main obstacle for the country's development.

41

The Issue of "Politics" Preceding "Development"

During the movement period in Nepal, like in many other third world countries, the public strongly believed that "politics" determines the development of a country. The two questions Nepalese asked and answered themselves were: Why is our country poor, underdeveloped? How can we develop our country? Their answer for both was "politics." However, they made a distinction between "destructive politics," like that of the Panchayat, more recently, and of the Ranas before 1950, and "constructive politics," like that of the multiparty system of the West. "Destructive politics" leads the country's economy downhill. Nepalese had a strong feeling that "constructive politics," especially a parliamentary form of government, would not only stop further deterioration, but would be able to boost the economy, rising from its ashes. This was the sentiment of the dominant political parties and the majority of the Nepalese.

There was a minority of radical communists who did not believe any of these arguments. They believed that only "New democracy" under the dictatorship of the proletariate would solve the current problem of underdevelopment of the country. Their main argument was that change of the political system would not be enough to break the current state of underdevelopment of the country. Change from one political system to another, in this case, from the partyless Panchayat system to the multiparty political system, would not change the social structure of society and thus, would not solve the problems facing the people. Instead, they called for the radical transformation in the existing semi-feudal and feudal social structure. They believed that the institution of kingship perpetuates feudalism in the country; therefore, its total elimination is the first step towards such transformation. They further believed that the dominant parties, the NC and the NCP (ML), were helping to maintain the feudal structure in the country. For them, "constructive politics," as suggested by the dominant parties were "destructive," like that of the partyless Panchayat system.

During the movement period, political leaders and the public were so overwhelmed by a "solo mission" of destroying the partyless system that they often preferred to affirm, rather than doubt, their belief that multiparty system is associated with development. Perhaps the "revolutionary mood" of the Nepalese during the movement period was not appropriate for thinking in detail about what they desired.

It appears that the Nepalese were "radical and stone-hard" while dismissing the partyless system and demanding a "miraculous change" in the society and economy, but "soft" in using means to achieve it. The question still lingers: Are both compatible? If we carefully study the history of Nepal, many of the charges made against the partyless Panchayat system, such as corruption, sycophancy, misuse of power and authority, violation of human rights, lack of freedom of expression, palace politics, and poverty existed prior to the system. And these are going to remain in the changed political environment; and are highly likely to remain in the future as well, if some "miracle" does not happen. The public debate was not so much about changing "the rules of the game," as about "changing the face" of the political system.

What I infer from this public debate about the precedence of "politics" over "development" is simply a desperate desire of the Nepalese to get out of the trap of continuing underdevelopment. Freedom of expression and respect for human rights are the beginning of a long journey toward "development." There remain, however, many things to be done beyond that point. A multiparty political system or a parliamentary form of government does not automatically bring "development." If it were that easy then all the third world countries could simply change their political systems and immediately get rid of their underdevelopment, living happily ever after in the "never, never land" of "development". Will this dream come true in Nepal?

Role of the Monarchy:
From Absolute to Constitutional Versus Its Elimination

Another hot topic of public debate during the later period of the movement was the role of the monarchy and its bearing on the development of Nepal. During the 30 years of the partyless Panchayat regime, the king was equated with the Panchayat and vice versa;[13] the Panchayat projected the image of the king as a "benevolent monarch," who was a "development lover." Constitutionally, he was above the law because sovereignty was vested on him; and traditionally, he was the incarnation of the Lord Bishnu, the God of Procreation and Protection. Therefore, comments and criticism against the king and the Panchayat system were taboo. Violators had to pay a heavy price, often of their heads. But, the "people's movement" broke the taboo. The king, queen, and other royal family members came under public scrutiny.

The king and his palace was blamed for many wrongdoings. Many Nepalese believed that the palace had become a center of corruption. In cartoons and posters the king and the queen were ridiculed. In one cartoon, the king's lips were locked by the queen. Similarly, in a poster entitled *"Bahudal Ajako Khancho IIo"*

("Multiparty is today's necessity"), the king was quoted as saying, "The end of partyless is today's necessity. This is the opinion of all the Nepalese. I also think so, but my queen does not accept."[14]

A magazine entitled *Bhandaphor ("Expose")* was published underground by the *Samajik Bastabikata Udghatan Sanstha*[15] (SBUS) in March 1990. It was widely distributed and read by many people. In its editorial, the SBUS stated, "The king and the royal family members are pushing the country into a disaster by engaging in massive exploitation, supression and crimes. But there is no place to speak against their crimes, to write about those realities. Instead, those criminals are praised as the 'leaders of the nation', 'symbols of nationalism', 'centers of national unity', 'carriers of national development', 'people-lovers', and 'democrats' " (SBUS 1990:1). The SBUS (1990:1) further suggested that there are many hidden facts about the crimes committed by royal family members whose exposure will help to "think about whether it is possible or not to reform the miserable condition of people's livelihood, advance of the nation under the autocratic monarchy; if not, then what should be done?" The main implication of this question was that the "absolute monarchy" in the garb of "benevolent dictatorship" was the main culprit for the underdevelopment of the country; therefore, the possibility of development exists only in its elimination.

Ths SBUS (1990:6-9) appealed to the people to identify the root cause of the country's ailment. It believed that the people should get rid of the illusion that "the king is good, a development-lover, but all kinds of wrongdoers are the ministers and government employees." Here it should be noted that the ministers and government employees were also equally responsible for those wrongdoings. All of them were partners, not just the leader and followers. The SBUS (1990:6) pointed out that "the root and the main cause of Nepal's backwardness, poverty, exploitation, oppression, foreigner's brokerage, smuggling, commissionocracy, corruption, and brutality is the king and the monarchy.

The SBUS (1990:11) suggested a very radical solution to solve these chronic problems, "Now everyone should think, if we wants to destroy the partyless autocracy, commissionocracy, smuggling, etc., we should destroy the monarchy. Otherwise there is no sense in opposing commissionocracy and autocracy. In such situation, why should we not dare to destroy the monarchy which has been a communicator, organizer and protector of all this social garbage?"

The punch line of the SBUS was that "politics" and "development" are strongly related, but in the case of Nepal, "politics", particularly "destructive politics" in the form of partyless Panchayat system had been growing under the patronage of the monarchy; therefore, elimination of the institution of the monarchy is crucial to eliminate other chronic problems, including the partyless Panchayat system. The SBUS suggested that the gateway to the country's "development" would be opened up if the institution of the monarchy is destroyed; otherwise, the country's situation of underdevelopment would worsen in the future.

The SBUS provided many facts of wrongdoing by the royal family members, including the king and queen, during the past. Among this information, was the existence of the private property of the pseudonymous "Pamfa Devi", who, the SBUS suspected, was the queen. The SBUS (1990:26) stated, "As known from a palace source, about 350 million U.S. dollars (about 8,000 million Nepalese rupees) is in two bank accounts in Switzerland in the name of Pamfa Devi Thakurani. The same woman has bought 1700 hectares of land on an island in Greece. A huge amount of money has been deposited in British banks. In addition, it has been learned that bank accounts exist in other countries as well. It is being investigated." The SBUS asked, "Who would be that daring woman other than the country's 'only women leader', *'rajmahishi'* ("royal lady"), 'universal mother', 'affectionate', 'people-lover', the Queen Aishwarya." People believed these claims, even if they were not accurate or were rumors, because the common people never benefitted from the huge amount of foreign aid that used to evaporate very soon from the nation's coffers and also because the common people were familiar with the level of corruption in public life. These claims substantiated their prior suspicions.

The extent of public debate on the role of the monarchy in the continuing underdevelopment of Nepal and the people's hope of getting rid of them crossed the Nepalese borders. The significance of this debate could be understood by the importance given by the international media. Some of this information was printed in many Western newspapers. In the *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 2, 1990:z6-3), Dan Spitzer wrote: " ..... King Birendra is one of the richest men in Asia. He owns an island in the Indian Ocean, extensive real estate in Scandinavia, buys gold confiscated from smugglers by his own government for little money, and recently sold much of his extensive royal properties to the government for a goodly sum while nonetheless keeping full use of them."

Similarly, Steve Coll reported in *The Washington Post* (February 25, 1990:A 23): "As the government confronts a growing and sometimes violent democracy movement in this Himalayan kingdom, Nepal's monarchy faces widespread

perception among citizenry that King Birendra and his loyalists are getting richer while the country's peasants stay poor."

In the *News India* (May 25, 1990:22) published from New York, Rajendra Bajpai of Reuters reported that "rumors about the wealth and influence of Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah, dubbed 'Mrs Ten Percent' for her alleged commercial dealings, have grown so intense the royal palace has ben forced publicly to deny them" and "underground publications paint her as a Mrs Ten Percent who collects commissions of major business deals and is the power behind the throne- a sort of Imelda Marcos of Nepal." Bajpai further reported, quoting a Western diplomat, " 'I personally suspect what we hear about the queen is just rumors and slander', he said, 'I am not saying she is a lady sitting at home and knitting socks but I am highly skeptical that she plays the kind of role (attributed to her).' "

Radical communists, arguing from many of the allegations discussed above, demanded the abolition of the institution of the monarchy forever. They argued that this would help to end the feudal system in the country, to transfer sovereignty to the people in the real sense of the term, and to establish a people's republic.

But the demand of the minority radical communists was not accepted by the dominant political parties, especially the NC and the NCP (ML). Both agreed that the role of the king in the politics of Nepal should be limited to ceremonial functions in a constitutional monarchy. Some radical communist leaders suspect that their demands were used by those two dominant parties as bargaining chips to negotiate with the king and terminate the movement.

NOTES

1. This paper is modified version of a section of Chapter-III of my Ph.D. dissertation entitled "Public Debate on Development: Sociological Perspectives on the Public Philosophy of the Development of Nepal" submitted in the Graduate Division of The University of California at Berkeley on April 16, 1993 (Ann Arbor, Michigan : UMI Dissertation Service, Order No. 9407886).

2. Individual pamphlets are hard to find, but these were reprinted in these two Nepalese magazine, which are easily accessible in the libraries. Therefore, I will refer to these magazines, instead of actual pamphlets.

3. The Nepalese, who are opposed to the establishment, call "black laws" to those laws which are against their interests and violate basic human rights. In Nepal, black symbolizes something bad, evil, and sad. The "public security" law was one of these "black laws". This law was misused extensively by the ruling Panchas to imprison opposition political leaders and followers for years and years without any due proces of law through the courts.

4. Panch Shila is the five principles of peace: peaceful coexistence, nonaggression, noninterference in internal affairs of other countries, respect for other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity, and equality.

5. Communalism, *Sampradayik* in Nepali and Hindi, is a widely used term in South Asia to refer to violent religious and racial tension among various groups, such as Hindu-Muslim in India, and Tamil-Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. In Nepal, the racial, religious, and regional tensions between the Hindus and non-Hindus, *Tagadhari* ("twice-born castes") and *Matawali* ("liquor drinking castes"), and *Pahadiya* ("hill people") and *Madhesiya* ("Terai people") are slowly on the rise. Until now, many political leaders have claimed that Nepali society has been characterized by racial/ethnic/communal, religious, and regional harmony. But they forget that such harmony existed because of coercion, constitutional and legal as well as cultural, rather than being natural and spontaneous.

6. Such a correlation was derived politically, not statistically.

7. Perhaps corruption is one of the most talked about things in public by the Nepalese. If we look at the recent history of Nepal, i.e. after the "revolution of 1950", most of the politicians and other public figures have been charged with one or another kind of corruption. It has been a big issue during the past and present elections. Some opine that it is a necessary evil; others say it is an unfailing weapon to ruin somebody's public life; and still others argue it should be stopped at any cost. Whether one likes it or not it is sure corruption will be one of the most debated issues in Nepal in the future.

8. During the Panchayat period some of the most talked about addictions of the Nepalese were related to alcohol, gambling, and drugs.

9. This pamphlet was published in Nepali and English languages. The English version seems to be a summary of the Nepali edition to reach the

international audience. This pamphlet was widely distributed in the towns and villages alike. This document contained factual information as well as rumors. The power of this document lay in the fact that it allowed the common people to engage in public debate scrutinizing the institution of the king, one of the two tabooed fields for such debate; the other being the partyless system itself.

10. King Mahendra had sold the Narayan Hiti royal palace to His Majesty's Government. This palace is in the capital city Kathmandu and the king and other royal family live in this palace.

11. King Birendra sold these two palaces to His Majesty's Government.

12. Prior to 1950, *Jagir* was a form of land tenure system in which the civil servants, military and police personnel get lands instead of monthly salary in lieu of their exceptional loyalty and service to the Rana rulers.

13. Many Nepalese intellectuals wondered why the king had been taking the side of the Panchas and not of the Nepalese during the Panchayat regime. They believed that he is the king of all the Nepalese, not of the Panchas only. They also wondered what the king would do if the Panchayat system was overthrown by the people.

14. See the photograph of this wall poster in Bonk 1990:28.

15. The literal translation is "Social Reality Expose Institution."

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL[1]

Padam Lal Devkota

ABSTRACT

Much has been written on rural problems within Nepal and even more on Nepal's rural poverty. Many research studies have been conducted and recommendations made for improving the quality of life of the rural poor. But the gap between rich and poor is increasing at an even faster rate than the number of Rural Development Projects in the country and research reports in the libraries.

Reviewing the rural development measures undertaken in Nepal, a certain pattern emerges: targets set, strategy worked out, implementation under way, impact studies completed, reports prepared. How much is actually achieved or sustained often remains a secondary consideration.

I first became associated with this project while working in the field in a participatory rural development program in a Nepali Village. I've observed some wonderful things happen during this project, and I've lived through confrontation and frustration. I want to share these experiences with you through this paper.

I've been involved as villagers have become articulate in communicating their planning needs and concerns. I've been excited as I've seen deal with these issues. But I've also shared their dissatisfaction and disappointment as the struggle for development in rural Nepal continues.

I believe development anthropologists have a challenging role to enable the poor and powerless to look at their world differently and to help them develop the capacity for self-help, either individually or collectively, in the long term. This goal can obviously be achieved neither by the national policies of centralized-decentralized development nor by research reports written on rural poverty. What is required is a commitment on the part of development anthropologists to immerse themselves in the quest for the causes of rural poverty. Through the practice of learning by doing a successful process emerges. This process is not in itself a ready-made package for development, prepared without the people's input or the researcher's predictions of problems. The process is the product of the people's own knowledge and action: their effort to look critically at the world in seeking to overcome the present injustice that prevails.

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of my work from June 1988 as Community Facilitator in a rural health development project undertaken in the village of Mehelkuna in the district of Surkhet in the Mid West Region of Nepal. During this time I was employed by the Nepal Health Development Project (HDP), a collaborative project between the University of Calgary and the Institute of Medicine at Tribhuvan University in Nepal. The HDP is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) over a seven year period, 1987-94.

The overall project purpose is:
"To strengthen the capacity of government health institutions and rural communities in Surkhet District to meet health needs through community-based participatory development, management strategies, and the training of generalist physicians."

My role has been to work with groups to develop their capacity to analyze their own priority problems and to identify and access resources to meet health and other needs. I have seen some wonderful things happen since 1988, and I would like to share my experiences with you.

Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries, with a GNP of US$180 (1988). During the period of 1980-88, 55% of its urban and 61% of its rural population were below the level of "absolute poverty." Nine percent of the population of about 20 million is urbanized, with an annual average urban growth rate of 7.2%. The overall population growth is 2.6% per annum, with a fertility rate of 5-8 and a life expectancy of 50 years. The central government expenditure allocation to health is 4% compared to 11% for education. For the years 1985-88 it was estimated that 70% of urban populations had access to safe drinking water, but only 25% of the rural population.

As these statistics show, there's a large discrepancy between standards of living in rural and urban areas of Nepal. This being the case, many have

undertaken research studies and/or written papers making recommendations for improving the quality of life of the rural poor. But the gap between rich and poor is increasing at an even faster rate than the number of Rural Development Projects in the country and research reports in the libraries.

Mehelkuna is an area newly settled during the last 25 years since spraying reduced the area's malaria risk during the mid-60's. People of several ethnic and caste groups moved into Mehelkuna from the surrounding hills and cleared the land. The lack of any effective irrigation means that their yields of rice and winter wheat are declining. Consequently Mehelkuna is only self-sufficient in food for 3-4 months per year. It is thus described as a food deficit area.

DEVELOPMENT ANTHROPOLOGY AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Anthropologists work in an academic environment teaching, studying and completing research projects, or in the field, as applied anthropologists. Development anthropology is another form of applied anthropology.

Participatory Research is the study of effective involvement in the development planning process. By virtue of their long-term commitment and training and skills in participant observation, in in-depth semi-structured interviews, and in successful rapport building, field workers can contribute to community development and participatory research. Many anthropologists now apply anthropological knowledge and methods to elicit practical and effective responses to the realities of community need.

Many international aid programs and large projects hire anthropologists in hopes of promoting community participation within the development process. For with their experience in the culture and society, anthropologists can become development agency "watchdogs," responsible for keeping an eye on development projects. They gain insight into socio-cultural realities and, can identify development issues because they possess skills in presenting data, advice and recommendations to the relevant organizations. Involving anthropologists in development programs indicates not a belief in success but the deeply rooted fear of failure.

The Development of Development Anthropology in Nepal

Historically, anthropology in Nepal has moved from a romantic-orthodox

approach to one with more emphasis on social change and development-oriented teaching and research. The Center for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), a pioneering research institute of sociology and anthropology within the Tribhuvan University, has attracted many competent sociologists and anthropologists. Each year the Center undertakes more and more research work. The previously empty library shelves are now filled with books and reports. Research projects are undertaken on the latest issues and concepts and reseachers busily adapt new themes, ideas, models and methods from books and articles written mostly by Western scholars.

But those suffering from hunger, landlessness and other socio-economic to address the people's basic needs find no comfort in the increasing number of research projects and professional practitioner at CNAS. Their surveys on poverty, self-reliance and income, for instance, ask irrelevant questions about the productivity and income of people who have suffered generations of hunger and poverty. What's more planners lack time to read research findings, professional philosophy, a workable approach or even an intention to be a humanitarian partner in Nepal's emancipation.

Nepal needs well trained applied anthropologists as well as academic anthropologists to reverse this trend. But currently that training is not available.

For instance, TU's Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology opened on the Kirtipur Campus in 1981. While I am in no position to comment on how it functions, I can describe the institution's physical learning environment. More like a cowshed than a classroom, dialogue during the rainy season is almost impossible under the tin roof. Broken chairs lie piled in the corner of a classroom. And the Department Chair's telephone rarely works. There's no budget for repairs. Nor funds are available for conducting independent research. This lack of funding naturally limits the training of both academic and applied anthropologists. A mere 25% of enrolled students attend classes regularly. The remainder show up only to submit internal assessment papers or to fill out registration forms just before the final examination. Senior professors continue to exert their influence and academic biases. There is little evidence or real participation or self-reliance. The salaries and benefits provided by the faculty are so low that teachers spend their time research how to get loans to feed their families.

I believe that the whole academic milieu requires an overhaul. Ironically a lack of bribery and corruption on behalf of education has meant that there's been little investment of national resources in anthropological education in Nepal.

This lack of funding has undermined morale. No one can be a good scholar when there are no incentives to do good work.

Participatory Research in Nepal: Concept and Practice

Although new to Nepal, participatory research has been accepted rapidly and practiced within various rural development projects. It is seen as an important vehicle to gear people's participation through an already structured development program in a fixed socio-policital system. Unfortunately participatory research in Nepal has not been recognized as a means to transform the existing socio-economic reality but has instead been used to maintain the existing development strategy. The major purpose has been to continue fitting people into the existing socio-political machinery, not to facilitate them in transforming it according to their will.

Several grassroots based development projects do exist: the UNICEF/WDS "Production Credit for Rural Women Project" (RIDA 1989:51), the Agriculture Department's "Agriculture Extension Program" (Devkota 1989:10), the Department of Forestry "Community Forestry Development Project" (Griffin 19889:20) and others (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). Unfortunately their programs do not emphasize involving the people in the process, so people do not feel that the projects belong to them. These organizations deliver goods without consulting the beneficiaries.

Many of these programs, because of fear and threat of failure, seek support and acceptance from the rural elites (both the formal and informal leaders). This leads to participatory research's approach, method and techniques being misunderstood and poorly implemented. It also provides more opportunities for the educated and wealthy to manipulate power, resources and the people themselves.

There are good participatory projects in Nepal. The Nepal/Australia Forestry Project, for instance, and the Integrated Development System "Self-Reliant Development Program" (IDS 1989:9) and the ADB/N "Small Farmers Development Program" (ADB 1986:3). These function well because they pay more attention to involving people into the process, into decision-making and planning. Community-based programs actually go into the villages and try to talk with the people about the best strategies for dealing with local issues. Although not based in the community they are in close contact with the people and they have extension workers operating in the villages communicating with the rural poor.

NEPAL'S DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE ON TRAIL

"Dhani lai vikas ayo Garib lai kam ayo." (Development comes for the rich, work comes for the poor)

- A Ramghat Woman.

Nepal has seen a regular increase in new project investment, and in the numbers of administrative staff in development programs and surveys in the countryside. However there has been little improvement in the quality of life, in economic opportunity, or in public consciousness. Although Nepal has tried many development models borrowed from many countries, including both capitalistic and socialistic, our development experience has shown that what works elsewhere does not necessarily work here. One reason is that the flow of foreign aid which started in 1952 and grows every year, does not reach or benefit the grassroots. Rural people still suffer from poverty, hunger and social injustice. As a result many project feasibility studies show that the people have lost their faith in development imposed by the central government.

Subsequently, in 1990 Yadav made an attempt to classify Nepal's Basic Needs, using two broad levels:

1. Physiological: food, clothing, shelter.
2. Essential services: safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and education facilities.

Taking Basic Minimum Needs into account, many sectorial and sub-sectorial programs have been sketched to strengthen both the productive and the social sectors. Designed and then included in district and national level plans and policies they were aimed to enable the poor to purchase essential goods and to obtain other services (World Bank 1988:15). The sectorial programs target food, clothing, housing, education, health, security, employment, distribution and finance for change.

Despite the numerous national and international workshops organized and attended by planners and policy-makers to review, clarify and conceptualize the basic needs concept and context, this development strategy has also failed. For once again the development benefit has not gone to the poor but to the educated alliance of professionals, middle and upper-classes who live in the over populated urban areas.

Nepal requested that the bulk of foreign aid be provided to support and implement Nepal's BMN program. Since then many surveys have been conducted and reports have been written. The result of this work, however, was rendered useless by the Basic Need Task-force formed in the country.

What is more rural people know only the slogan of the BMN program. How "to lead a life with human dignity by Asian standards," by the year 2000 was never clearly explained, much less effectively implemented. People perceive the BMN as a dream, gone on waking. Although the program was promoted throughout Nepal, villagers have seen nothing happen. Consequently they are today so antagonistic towards the Basic Need Program that one hesitates to introduce the subject. When someone accidently does, people laugh and speak of *"adhar"* and *"bhut"* (literally, "base" and "ghost"): the "base" has gone and only the "ghost" remains.

In Nepal many terms describe planning: Planning for People, Planning to People, Planning with People, Planning by People. But the performance of the plans shows that there has never been a commitment to people-based planning. People-based planning encourages people to be upstanding and self-reliant through their own initiative and aspirations. It helps people to look critically at their total environment and to acquire the skills needed to unite, organize and plan improvements in the quality of their lives through their own local popular organizations.

The rural poor need a place where they can present their ideas and interests, and be heard. Those projects that operate in Nepal outside the political system function well. Examples are: the Nepal/Australia Forestry Project, the Small Farmers Development Project, and the Dhading Development Project. These receive direct input from the community in both their development and implementation.

Often as planners we interact with the structure, with the framework rather than with the beneficiaries. We consider how many people should be belonged on a project, and what class of officer they should be. we become lost in the organization, rather than in interaction with the people. When the management structure operates at central, regional and district levels, but not at the place level, how can you interact with the people ?

Sometimes the planning is so poor that even the most needed thing in a particular region, such as drinking water, is not provided. Politicians may not

consider it a priority. One top planner has said: "There is no planning in Nepal at all" (Shrestha 1989). Whatever exists on paper is but a "guessing game".

This guessing game exists because planning in Nepal has always been imposed from above and hidden in the files of planners and bureaucrats rather than in the minds and hearts of the people. I believe that development planning cannot be imposed from the top down. *"Source-force"* works against it. This refers to the network of relationships between the lower and upper middle-classes, or between ethnic groups, or castes. While self-interest groups place their own people into positions of power development planning cannot function equitably. The Nepali value system, for instance, affects the accessibility to power by supporting the caste hierarchy. *Chakari* relationship built on the philosophy of "I will wait to see the person in power", and *'afno-manche'* closed power networks all work against the rural villager, who has no such influence.

People's participation has been recognized as a principal development *mantra* for rural development but paternalism has dominated popular wishes. Foreign agencies give money and power to people within the existing infrastructure, and they make themselves more influential, more powerful as they determine where the money should be spent. The end result has been that people's participation has almost lost its meaning while all the power remains at the central level (Uphoff 1978:71).

The evidence shows that every "revolutionary step' was systematically ignored as development programs were imposed from the center. Thus, success can hardly be claimed on any front. What is needed to change the whole system is a process based on the critical discovery of the people's own praxis and quest to transform.

DEVELOPMENT AT THE GRASSROOTS : LOOKING FROM BELOW

"Everybody in the town here says, the Bahudal (multi-party) has come to the country. But I do not know when it will come to our remote villages."
- A villager from the remote district of Jumla in Birendranagar bazaar.

Development is a sensitive issue in Nepal. It is the easiest to obtain when perceived narrowly, as the delivery of resources or commodities from the center to the periphery. If the system wants to give development to a certain area, it provides services with no thought of process or channel. If the system does not

want to deliver however, people do not receive. Nor do they ask for development for they do not know how.

Inevitably in most cases people do not know what kind of project will be imposed on them. What is certain is that lacking prior discussion regarding need, priority and implementation policy, they will not receive quite what they expected or requested. For this reason social planning has not meaning for rural people. They are not involved and accountability is far away. If they were involved, if they understood the development process, and had input, they could communicate their development needs and concerns through the proper channels. Then the issues would change.

But for now no means exists for public debate on how, where, why and who should benefit from development aid. Rather, the typical process revolves around the central political structure which operates from center to region to district but not to the place actual level. That system becomes stronger and the powerful become more powerful.

For example many villagers only learn of a project when a development agency employee makes his first visit to the site. For instance a survey team may come to ask the formal leaders about possible sources of drinking water. The leaders offer many extension and technical workers, accommodation in their homes and then direct them according to their wishes.

Bearing this in mind, I was assigned to work at the place level. My role has been to involve the poor in debate about their own development, and to help them learn skills necessary for discussion for change and development. When the people are capable of analyzing their own situation, and participating in development debate, they can express their own ideas and organize themselves to ask for development.

The rural community experience and perception of "development" is largely limited to projects coming from above, from the district and central levels. Subsequently those projects that have been completed at the grassroots are frequently perceived to belong to others rather than to themselves (Devkota 1988:8). This is understandable when outsiders not villagers make money or find employment from these schemes. And organizations away from the place level not only plan but manage, and monitor the projects, usually without consulting the people.

The following illustrates how the development system operates at the micro level. For ten years Mehelkuna villagers sought funding to construct an irrigation system. They went through all the required processes and correct bureaucratic channels, but never received the necessary money. This was not because the scheme was unnecessary, but due to a weak village leadership that was unable to challenge the system's decisions.

Elsewhere in Surkhet, in the village of Gutu, the people misdirected a survey team for a drinking water project because the local people did not want the source chosen by the District Office to be used for drinking water. They had used this source for irrigation for many years and feared their farming practices would be threatened where it to be used for drinking water.

In nearby Ramghat villagers had been requesting an irrigation canal but they received instead a small drinking water project. They did not refuse, feeling lucky to get anything at all after waiting for so long. If they had said no, they would have received nothing.

These experiences reflect how development in rural Nepal often occurs through chance and uncertainty.

"People wait for good things to come, but nothing comes here except the worst."

- An anti-panchayat school teacher.

The Decentralization Committee, established as early as 1964, has objectives that villagers and their leaders still do not clearly understand. The principles and policies of decentralization look impressive on paper but have not been passed on to villagers in practice. Local development in the name of "self-help" and people's participation has received lip-service only. As one village leader, discussing HMG's decentralization policy, stated: "We don't know anything, we only know the words 'you dig' and 'drink water' " (Devkota 1988:19).

An old man in Mehelkuna who became sufficiently aware and confident to speak at one of the community meetings commented:

"You see, development is more or less like a tree, but we only see the top of our development tree without a trunk. I wonder how the top could survive without a strong trunk."

This wise gentleman's metaphor exposes his understanding of the rootless decentralization and decision-making at the top, as compared with the real need to strengthen development at the grassroots, at the village level.

A Tharu woman also became quite articulate after a few months of participatory leadership training. She gained an understanding of the planning process and asked meaningful questions, such as when she grumbled before the video camera:

"Development never comes, so we can't bring it. I do not understand why the many people of our village can't bring development."

This woman was not referring to the delivery of development per se, but was directing her comment to the strength of her fellow community members - literally empowerment.

Nepal's development has operated in a "trickle-down" process from centre to region to place levels, rather than being firmly grounded in popular action and reflection. As a result the people, like the state, see development as synonymous with road construction and the digging of irrigation ditches, all supported by foreign aid projects. Development has become merely a commodity delivered from superiors to inferiors for there is no structure for development to be planned at the grassroots level. Since the people have no experience of grassroots planning, they have no understanding of how to start the process. There are no local initiatives and no people's involvement in the development process.

Instead they ask for what they may receive. In the Surkhet District nearly 75% of the village assemblies have asked to be included in the K-BIRD project, requesting this kind of community oriented project. K-BIRD is the largest Canadian-funded Integrated Rural Development Project for mid-western Nepal, especially responsible for strengthening the existing development infrastructure.

According to Bhave the required influence and power can only be developed by involving people in participatory training where they acquire the critical skills and education necessary to deal with changing experiences, either individually or collectively (Bhave 1986:23). A local people's organization could at least work to alter the system responsible for injustice, inequality, ignorance and lethargy. They not "it," would be accountable.

GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY : A DEVELOPMENT TOKEN

In reality, the concept of people's participation has been restricted to the voluntary labour contribution (APROSC 1986:62). The government philosophy is to "mobilize" people, as if the people are another development commodity. "Mobilization" is misunderstood as being participation. I believe that we do not need to mobilize people. We need to involve them. Villagers are typically treated as development mules to dig the roads, carry the pipes and the cement. If they become participants, they not only dig roads, lay cement etc. but they play a continuous role in the process of planning development for their village.

The history of Nepal's development planning has moved from District Plan, local development program, IRDP and other multi-sectorial programs, but the pace of implementation, especially at the grassroots level, has not improved significantly. Past experience reveals that many sectorial programs remain quite unsatisfactory. Pradhan's review of rural development programs shows that they all suffer in implementation (1985:42). I submit that many of the problems that occur in planning, in structure and in implementation arise because the people have no understanding of how the system works.

The so-called "social planning process" detailed in government documents under the previous panchayat system makes no sense when implemented. On behalf of the whole village, the community leaders, sitting in the local tea shop, seek the assistance of a school teacher to draft a village planning document in the prescribed official format and language. The teacher is brought in only because he can read and write. He has no basic skills in place planning. The village messenger then collects the villagers' thumb prints and submits them to the village assembly. With no discussion or debate, the document is approved and submitted to the district planning unit for further action. In most cases, the same process is re-entered every year as non of the projects the village has requested in the past five years have yet appeared (Devkota, 1989). For usually not even the leaders have training in how the place development process operates. The people are patient however, and will try and try again.

Once the document reaches the district planning unit, it must compete against the other villagers' requests. The leaders and others with more access to central power, personal relations, political accessibility, source-force or exposure to the functioning of the system (i.e. knowledge of the structure and function of the politico-development system) remain the most successful in accessing the development resources.

The 1990 movement for the restoration of democracy has certainly increased popular expectations for social, economic, political and administrative reforms. It is the right time to establish new administrative machinery for development to meet people's basic needs and aspirations for an improved political system. Efforts at such change should be guided if possible by peaceful means in a democratic environment.

The Government has misunderstood mobilization for participation. Mobilization means bringing villagers to work on projects. Participation starts much earlier. Villagers help plan projects and have a voice in determining which projects are undertaken.

The current structure of development planning mirrors the political infrastructure within Nepal. I believe that the present machinery needs to be reviewed the replaced with a system Nepal. I believe that the present machinery needs to be reviewed and replaced with a system that operates not only at the center, region and district levels but at the place assembly level also.

Outreach Services

"A signboard alone help people. The extension workers must have a sense of dedication, a service moti ve and honesty."
- A wise old man of Kunathari village.

Theoretically Nepal follows a concept of integrated service between the center and the rural communities. Development expanded rural services in one of the key goals of Nepal's rural development planning. Attempts are being made to put the concept into practice by establishing Rural Service Centers in each *Ilaka* of the district, under district level development offices and organizations. But the concept of integrated service neither integrates services at the grassroots level nor affects the district, regional and national level target setting and planning processes. The reason is that this strategy suffers from ineffective coordination, management and implementation (Acharya 1986:90).

There is a serious problem of coordination at the district level among various line agencies and among the local development organizations. They have no direct link between their departments at district or regional or central levels. Their managements operate in differing structures and in differing styles, so inevitably their development implementation varies as well. Even the physical location of the Rural Service Centers reflects the problem of providing an integrated service. Location is more often settled as a matter of political dispute than because of its equal accessibility to its beneficiaries.

Nor are most extension programs operated by service centers (or other extension programs) community-based (Devkota 1988). The Government imposes services and programs on the beneficiaries to meet its ready-made package of set targets. For instance, too often the district center totally changes programs and targets set by the village extension worker. Thus local needs are ignored in favour of so-called national priorities.

Self-reliance is a major development objective with implementing agencies, such as the SFDP, WDS, IDS and DDP/GTZ have tried to develop through poverty group ranking strategies. Significant results have not, however, been achieved. Placing "mediators," "brokers," and "matchmakers" as liaison between the village and district agencies is a good idea, but in reality these have only increased local expectations and dependency. The "middlemen" keep busy meeting set targets to produce tangible results rather than undertaking social mobilization for empowering the powerless.

In my opinion, the people will never be empowered to improve their critical awareness of development, nor their level of confidence and self-reliance by this kind of dependency approach. Instead this sort of malpractice creates local dependence on outsiders. Most poverty group ranking programs lack a strong base. This leads to local misunderstanding of their purposes.

The process is not only inefficient but often corrupt. One example is that the user groups formed in the name of so-called "people's organization" are listed in reports and graphs enabling planners and administrators to show donors that development has happened, if not in the village, at least on paper. This enables dishonest technocrats and bureaucrats to continue their suppression of the people.

In addition, the meaning of "community participation" and "self-help" have been explained narrowly so that the people will provide the projects with free labor. The local power elites utilize this misunderstanding for their own interests, increasing their wealth by mobilizing voluntary labor. After long involvement in the dialogue process at place level, villagers identified the following causes they considered responsible for the failure of earlier types of community extension services:

1. Most of the extension programs are directed by the individual interest of some influential persons rather than by the interests of the community as a whole.
2. The programs are imposed on the people from above without prior consultation or discussions.
3. Communication between the extension workers and the villagers about the extension service is lacking.
4. Individual effort to overcome problems is emphasized more than organized group effort.
5. Too many political factions exist for small scale community development to occur.
6. The local leaders push their own interests rather than listening to the people.
7. The extension workers feel superior to the people and hesitate to sit with, listen to and learn from them.
8. Inappropriate procedures, not including consultation with the community, are followed in the selection of village level mobilizers, workers and volunteers.

Outreach Services and Rural Service Centers are intended to help integrate village communities with the center. But the function of all the extension services is geared to target bounded action. These targets are established outside the community, and so make a dynamic partnership between the people and the extension service impossible.

Further a lack of links between departments and between organizations means that coordination is very difficult. For instance, the rural service centers at the place level have a veterinary office, an agricultural service station etc, but no formal communication network between them.

The end result is that an individual household's utilization of services still depends on its relationship to various physical, economic, social and political factors (Blaikie et al. 1979:80). The Basic Needs Approach has not benefited the poor (Blaikie 1979:81) nor succeeded in transforming the society and the economy from below.

The Development Phantom : People are Still Waiting

"We need vikas (evolution/development). People coming from mathi (district level/central level) should give us vikas..... Anything that comes from mathi is vikas."

- A village woman.

In my father's time villagers used to gather together to discuss social problems and to resolve them. They might decide to dig a road or repair a water well, or build a temple. The place level functioned socially and culturally. Now that development aid agencies exist, the people no longer bother trying to solve their own issues. Instead they say: "The government will help," or "the foreigners will come".

The problem is that development never comes, or at least not in the form that is needed. Instead of power being viewed as both source and product of the broad development process (Korten 1986:1), it has been confined to certain hands within Nepal's development structure. The cultural empowerment process based on the understanding of mutuality has been lost and replaced by the self-centered self-interest. Social cohesion has been disrupted in the name of development and institutionalization. Stratification and economic disparities have become widespread. For the people have lost their concern for their community, for the welfare of others. They think only of themselves, of their employment, of their families and friends.

Subsequently through the actions of local power brokers and moneylenders, popular strength declines. For these groups control the development machinery and organization. People must depend on their leaders for their development. The elites are the source of information and decision making, and in many cases are seen as community change agents.

These formal leaders and local elites provide their knowledge about development, not to transform the "on-hand" social, economic and political structure, but to continue it in order to obtain more power from both the people and the state. In most cases their description of development does not reflect the popular aspirations but is based instead on maintaining their own power and the status quo. The state lacks the will to change this situation to liberate the masses.

The local power structure is not easily understood or analysed. It has both direct and indirect relations with district and center. Local power is affected and determined by district power, and this in turn by center power. Even after the restoration of democracy, the Palace remains the source of ultimate power in Nepal. The power structure is determined by many factors, such as interpersonal relationships, family affiliation and accessibility to the power base following ethnic and regional groupings. The village elites remain the key people in the flow of information to the top, in the maintenance of local security, in politics and in influence-peddling. In the actual exercise of national-local policy and development, the communication flow remains top-down.

THE BLUEPRINT OF DEVELOPMENT : WHEN TO END?

"Sarkar ko kam kahile jala gham."
"(Government work is waiting for the sun to set)."
— A Nepali proverb

Korten defines the blueprint of development as the series of steps involved in careful pre-planning before the development program is undertaken (Korten 1980:177). My concept of blueprint development is less broad and is based on the villagers' micro level experience when dealing with local and district level officials. The concept of "blueprint development" as used here is equally concerned with the contents of the policy papers, even if un-implemented, and with their effects on the recipients.

In many government offices throughout Nepal, officials treat the citizenry as inferior beings. Underprivileged and simple village people are overawed in the presence of government officials and try to use the Palace language (even thought it is unfamiliar) to impress them, in hopes of expediting their requests. Villagers must wait for several days to obtain one signature, and are often verbally abused by the officials. Many steps must be completed at the government offices and some allocate special days to particular work. Villagers may be unaware of this, and must therefore wait in the local bazaar where food and accommodation are expensive. The process of buying and selling land for example, takes at least 3 to 4 days and people have to return frequently to the same desk.

Village education is not compatible with the administrative process. Consequently professional writers *(lekhandas)* are always available around the court and district land revenue offices, often in greater numbers than their clients. The blueprint approach blocks the human sense of respect as the individual must manipulate the system rather than finding it a self-regulating administrative structure.

What is more, cases filed against socioeconomic injustice and deprivation lie lost in office drawers unless one can provide bribes or evidence of accessibility to the *source-force* (Weiner 1989: 669).

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, local people have not perceived development as their right to demand local and state power. They receive it as a gift from development teachers.

These and many other factors indicate that in Nepal development is processed, practiced, measured and even purchased, by paper. It is centered neither around people's basic needs nor around a broad national interest. It has been taken up as a slogan and a kind of propaganda by middle class bureaucrats to consolidate their own power and to gather more material wealth in the name of so-called "people-oriented development".

When top level officials visit the countryside to assess development progress, they are lost among these same rural elites. And the files of applications of the poor continue to proceed through these village leaders. This is not because people want to maintain the status quo with these leaders, but because this is the only way they can get a piece of the blueprint that carries demands to provide cement, pipe or other small scale village level projects.

Thus, unless the local power structure changes, rural development will remain meaningless. Such change could effect the country's entire governing system (Pandey 1989: 3).

Many other examples exist as well, compelling the conclusion that when put into this feudo-bureaucratic framework, even the most successful programs have failed to win over the people (Devkota 1985: 117).

I submit that the present power structure must be overturned in order for the grassroots to achieve self-reliance and sustainable development. This can be done by introducing the participatory process in rural development ventures. Such a process will empower the people. It will enable them to develop the confidence to take responsibility, ownership and control of development resources from the hands of government machinery into the hands of their own needs-based organizations.

The illusions developed by the power elites to hide development realities have compelled people to wait for development from above. This process will continue unless the poor and powerless can understand and analyse why and how they are forced to accept such an unjust reality.

I believe that the development anthropologist's role should be the study of powerless people's concerns, i.e. how to facilitate their liberation from poverty, repression and hunger by organizing them through their own popular

groups. It seems to me that anthropologists often devote their intellectual energy to investigating problems but rarely take interest in solving them. We should be aligning anthropological research with a more pragmatic approach, using participatory methods to develop and strengthen community-based programs which are created by and reflected through the people. For then the people themselves step in to create development theory and gain control of the total development process.

This kind of approach in which the people themselves analyze their life experiences is "dialogue in development" and requires great patience on the anthropologist's part. He must listen and learn from the people, must share their experiences and work with them. In this way the people become able to relate to prevailed groups, and to create or adapt their organizations to alter the total system responsible for the existing ignorance, poverty, exploitation, social injustice and repression.

Development planing cannot be imposed. It is like trying to spoon feed a baby. A mother treis to give the baby more because she feels the baby needs something nutritious, but the baby is not interested, and spits it out. You cannot tell the rural poor "this is good for you, you must take it." It does not work.

FOOTNOTE

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DEFORESTATION AND RURAL SOCIETY IN THE NEPALESE TERAI

Rishikeshab Raj Regmi

Nepal lies between India in the south and China in the north. It is a land-locked country in the Himalayan region with a surface area of 147,181 square kilometres and with a heterogeneous population of more than 18 millions. The mountain region ranges from 5,000 to 8,000 metres in altitude, constitutes about one-third of the national territory: the hill region (1000 - to 5000 metres in altitude) containing most of the grazing land, the forest for about 45% and the rest is the fertile tropical plain area. About two-thirds of the population live in the hill and mountaineous areas which contain, only about 30% of the country's available land resources. As a result, the population pressure on the available land resource of these areas is intense and the problems of deforestation and soil erosion have a negative effect on development efforts in these areas.

The principal natural resources are the land, forest and water. Some mineral resources (e.g. lead, zinc, phospates and limestones) are known to exist but are not yet being exploited commercially. The water resource potential is very high both for irrigation and for power generation. Agriculture including animal husbandary dominates the economic activities. Industry is still in an infant stage. It is Government's policy to raise the quality of education. In the health and nutrition sector the conditions are not satisfactory. Infant mortality is very high. For centuries, Nepal was, until 1950, isolated from the rest of the world. Now we have a democratic government with a constitutional monarchy. It is hoped that the country will move ahead with new policies and programmes. In the past the green forests were considered to be the wealth of Nepal. Dwindling of such forest resources due to a number of interdependent factors like "nature and the people". Human intervention in the form of pressure on the forest resources has cleared away a massive area of forests in Nepal. This has also had a negative impact on the environment. The most observable current environmental issues and problems are deforestation, soil erosion, landslides, uncertain rainfall and the pressure of the growing population. These issues have not only created

an ecological imbalance but also have given economic hardship to the people of Nepal in general. In 1964, forests covered 45% of the total land area in Nepal, whereas in 1979 only 29% remained. It is estimated by now that forest resources by 1990s had slowed down to 25% despite the afforestation programmes carried out by the Government and various non-governmental agencies.

A current rates and causes of declining forest reserves in Nepal differ according to ecological regions: the Hills and the Terai. In the hills, collection of fuel wood and fodder, lopping and grazing, slash and burn cultivation for farm land and timber are generally considered to be the major traditional factors responsible to damage the forest. Nepal's per capita annual energy consumption -- 11 kilograms of coal equivalent -- is among the world's lowest. About 93% of all energy is consumed for cooking, heating and lighting, and of the total energy consumed for domestic use, over 92% is fuel wood. In urban areas, people are switching over to kerosine, electricity and LP gas but these options are possible for only a small fraction of the population. In rural areas, alternative sources of energy are scarcely feasible. Fuelwood substitutes for rural villages, which constitute most of Nepal's population, is becoming impossible. Crop production, livestock raising and forest form the cornerstone of nutrient inputs for crop land in Nepalese hill farming systems, originate largely from animal manure and leaf materials. Demand for fodder is probably the greatest pressure on forests. Almost every household in rural areas keeps domestic animals. The supply of forest fodder and grass to feed the livestock over the years is declining, with the result that there has been severe pressure on the remaining forests and grazing areas, leading gradually to further degradation. The supply of timber from the governmental fuelwood corporation enterprise is erratic and unreliable, and this has encouraged the private sector and individuals to engage in illicit felling of trees. The pace of deforestation has further been increased in recent years by the development activities of the Government related to road consruction, irrigation, dam building and proliferation of administration centres. In general, little amount of the timber obtained through forest clearance goes to actual developmental works, most goes for other commercial purposes. In addition to these pressures, the impact of tourism, establishment of national parks and the nature of government policies are also resulting in the rapid commercialization of timber and firewood. Deforestation in the Terai has been caused mainly by the clearing of forest land for agricultural purposes. Forest use in the Terai for agriculture was associated with the concentration of large agricultural land in the hands of a few individuals under various systems of land tenure. The state also seeks revenues from such land. *Birta* (state landlordism) and *raiker* (land granted

to individuals as a favour for a specific job) were two major land tenure systems employed before 1957. Whatever the legal status of the forest, the state exercised little control over forest use during this period. The Government encouraged individuals (*birta* holders and *zamindars*) to convert forest land to agriculture field as a means of extending state control over territory and increasing net revenue through land taxes.

A total of 103,968 hactres of forest was cleared under the resettlement programme from 1950 to 1986. During this same period migration from the hills to the Terai was mainly for economic reasons. Together with the several resettlement policies of the government until early 1980, the pull factors (such as the eradication of malaria in the Terai, easy access by road connections, and possibilities of employment, encouraged huge numbers of rural mountain and hill people to migrate into the Terai plain. The influx into the Terai was a result of both the government's resettlement's programmes and illegal encroachment. The construction of the East-West highway and its corridors joining the north to south belts has further given impetus to migrants to enter the Terai plains. Due to migration, land fragmentation has resulted from migration leading to shortage of agricultural area, which in turn has created insufficient food production and indebtedness, and has damaged environmental conditions and the economic situation of farm families.

In Nepal inheritance of land property passes through the male line. The existing social system of equal inheritance of land amongst all sons has created fragmentation and increased sub-division of household plots to the extent that land sizes are progressively decreased and become insuffficient to provide subsistence. Because of their meagre amount of the land and small margin of economic safety, many households become extremely vulnerable to indebtedness. In many cases even an illness of a family member may throw the whole household off balance. Similarly, the increasing pressure on cultivated land due to rapid spread of cultivation can lead to a situation whereby land prices escalate. Furthermore, demographic pressure has reduced availability of land to rent and has also reinforced higher rents for land. The reason for high demand for land ownership amongst the landless population is that it allows that population not only to grow staple crops for subsistence but also provides them much needed security by enabling them to own the plots upon which they build their houses. For these reasons, migrants having no shelter and land began clearing forest wherever possible.

Government forestry policies are also directly responsible for the

degradation of forest. The nationalization of forests in 1957 has led not only to further tree clearing but also to the rapid disintegration of forest and local resource management practices. Attempts put forward since 1970 have also failed to solicit the desired level of co-operation. In the government's established national wildlife parks and reserves, little attention has been given to the forest needs of local people. As a result, people living in areas around the reserves are often forced to over-exploit a reduced area of forest. This process of forest degradation has contributed greatly to total socio-economic costs for various ethnic groups.

Deforestation and its effects on environment and socio-economic processes are the basic interacting elements causing harm to rural societies in Nepal. They have caused varying degrees of loss and a variety of changes which have resulted in the present socio-economic and environmental situation. Their direct effects relevent to socio-economic processes are on crop production/yield, fuelwood, fodder, timber and allied forest products and income and employment. Overall yields of almost all crops have declined in the hills for the last twenty five years caused mainly by declining soil fertility due to washing away of valuable plant nutrients and scouring of top soils. There has been the shortage of fuelwood both in the hills and Terai. Poor families are badly affected due to shortage and high price for fuelwood. Landless women and children dependent direclty on income from the forests through the collection of fruits, roots and tubers, processing of cane in the hills and the selling of wood in the Terai have vanished over the years. Furthermore, employment opportunities for landless women and children in processing of forest products have been gradually diminishing. Environmentally, the most serious impact resulting from forest degradation is the loss of cultivable soil - the most obvious cause being soil erosion. Much natural erosion occurs in Nepal because of heavy monsoons and steep terrain. Top soils, heavy mud and stones are washed away every year. It is reported that the annual top soil loss from Nepal is about 200 million cubic metres which is at the rate of 4.5% per square kilometre per day. Further, a typical hill watershed contributes a total sediment of 21 tons/ha/year which equals between one and two mm. of soil cover per hectare per year. Debris transported by rivers from the hills and mountains is deposited downstream, changing the course of rivers and inundating fertile Terai flat land.

Mechanism and Process of Deforestation

The physiographic structure of the Terai is that it extends from east to west along the southern part of the country, adjoining some parts of the north

Indian border with an elevation ranging from 60 to 300 metres above sea level. This belt forms a low flat land comprising about 23% of country's total land area (14 million hectares). It is characterised by its low lying and almost flat nature and fertile soil formed by the extension of Indo-Gangetic plains. It possesses a sub-tropical climate which favours cultivation of food grains. It produces abut 54% of the country's total food grains and almost of all of its cash crops including sub-tropical fruits. It sustains some 44% of the country's population (APROSC, 1986). The Terai forests are dominated by hard woods (primarily Shorea robusta) and were estimated in 1986 to have covered 0.45 million hectares (MPFS, 1988).

Land Tenure System

Land tenure institutions are among the most obvious manifestation of the power relationships that directly affect rural people in Nepal. Such power relationships are inherent clearly in Nepalese social system. In primary agrarian societies, they crystalize the relations among the individual, social groups and classes in their access to land labour and hence to wealth, opportunities and power (Barraclough and Ghimire, 1990). In Nepal, various types of land tenure systems notably the *Raiker*, *Birta*, *Jagir*, *Guthi* and *Kipat*, have historically influenced the relationships between various ethnic groups. *Raiker* is a state landlordism in which the state retains full rights of its use and alienation. After the unification of Nepal (1768-69), the monarchy started granting large area of *Raiker* cultivated and cultivable lands. The land grants were made to the members of the royal family and nobility, civil and military officials, priests and other selected groups of the society. Its purpose was to enrich the members of the ruling classes and to assure them of the support of vested interest with a view to preserve their authority. It became a legitimate and effective tool for the exploitation of the common people, enhancing the social and economic disparities. Lands assigned as their emoluments for their services and loyalties took the form of *Jagir* land tenure. The beneficiaries of both *Birta* and *Jagir* land grants were entitled to collect revenue from all sources and dispense justice. Land grants made for the maintenance of and charitable institutions as temples and monasteries were then known as *Guthi, Kipat* was another form of land practised among Rais and Limbus who inhabit in the eastern part of Nepal. *Birta* holders had also set up their forest offices in their respective forest. Birta system has a great influence on deforestation process in Terai. The emergence of Rana autocratic regime in 1846 heralded a new era in the history of *Birta* system in Nepal. When Junga Bahadur Rana, the first Rana primeminister, came to power by massacring all his opponent and rival nobilities in 1846, he and his successors adopted a policy of enriching the members of Rana nobility through liberal *Birta* grants. Most members of the families of Ranas were granted Birta in Terai because of the existence of plethora of fertile land and forest resources. The Rana family autocracy lasted for 104 years, till 1950 in Nepal and plunder all the economic resources including forests. The beneficiaries of these *Birta* land grants had an opportunity of maximizing profits through the collection of revenues either from the cultivated land or from forest products. Collection of revenues from the cultivated land/settlements was possible only through reclamation of forest land. The *birta* holders had appointed *Jamindars* (non official local tax collection functionary) and *Subba* (local tax collector) for land reclamation, establishment of new settlements and exploitation of forest products. With a few exception, hill people hesitated to go to Terai for new settlements due to fear of endemic malarial diseases. Therefore generally the people inhabiting in the hills and Terai were given the title of *Jamindar, Chowdhary* and *Subbas*. They started clearing the forests for new settlements. Such settlements would call *Mouja. Moujas* were under the jursdiction of a Jamindar and Subbas. These *Jamindars* and *Subbas* used to visit the *birta* during december to february when there was less chance of being caught by malarial disease. During their absence, their duties were performed by their *Karindars*, the assistants. In addition to the land reclamation and revenue collection *Jamindars* and *Subbas* were also authorised by the *Birta* holders to discharge the legal, judicial and administrative functions within their *Moujas. Birta* holders had also set up forest offices in their respective forested land area to maximize profits from timber extraction and their export to India. The expansion of rail-way lines to north India played a contributory roles in the deforestation process by facilitating timber export to India during British colonial period. This process of timber export to India by the *birta* holders continued until 1969, when it was formally abolished.

Migration and Land Settlement

Migration in Nepal is not a new phenomenon. During Rana regime (1846-1951), the hill people used to migrate to India and Burma in search of livelihood. The Rana rulers made several efforts for land settlement in the Terai but failed to motivate the hill people due to the wide spread fear of malaria. Then the rulers encouraged, even Indian settlers while Nepalese migrants migrated for land and livelihood to India, Sikkim, Bhutan and Burma. But migration from the hills to Terai was never adopted as a survival strategy by the hill people despite the high population pressure on limited cultivated land in the region. But now the population of Terai has been increasing faster than of hill and mountain over the years. It is evident that the Terai accounted for only 35% of total population in

1952/54, has increased to 44% in 1981. The corresponding figures for the mountain and the hill declined from 65% in 1952/54 to 56% in 1981. The population of Terai increased by an average annual rate of growth of 2.9% from 1952/54 to 1981. The corresponding increase of the Terai population is attributable, interalis, to exodus of people from the hill to the Terai, after malaria was eradicated in mid 1950's with the joint collaborative efforts of HMG, USAID and WHO. After the eradication of malaria, the Terai once known as "Death valley" transformed into a principal settlement area for the hill migrants.

In general, the major push factors of migration from hills to Terai are: population pressure, insufficient land holding, dfficiency of food productions, indebtedness, deteriorating environmental conditions, natural calamities, lack of employment opportunities etc. Analogously malaria eradication, availability of land, greater availability of food, better health, education and transportation facilities, better agricultural wages are the major pull factors of hill to Terai migration.

Political Liberalisation

It is very essential to consider the political context of deforestation in Nepal Terai. After the *coup d'tat* of 1960, with the introduction of *Panchayat* system, much of the opposition to the king were from Terai where the majority of the population was of Indian origin and was influenced by Indian political culture (i.e. the multi-party system and direct franchise). In order to achieve the political integration of Terai people into the monarchy led *Panchayat* system, the migration of hill people (who were believed to have more loyal to the monarchy and the *Panchayat* system) into the Terai was seen to be very crucial. For this purpose, even the Nepalese of hill origin settled abroad were encouraged to return Nepal and given land to settle in Terai. There were also fear that the leaders and workers of then banned Nepali Congress exiled in India might organize opposition party across the border, which they infact did in 1962, but failed to succeed. In this context, generating support for the *Panchayat* system in the Terai was of great importance and urgency. Consequently, such political considerations affected the land resettlement policies. In 1970 seven ex-service men colonies were developed in the districts of Jhapa, Sunsari, Rupandehi and Banke in the Terai area with about 7,000 ex-service men's families settling there (Elder et al. 1976). Similarly various political and non-political groups were also able to acquire land through the personal decrees of the king. The king granted land to those who were serving inside the royal palace and to other political and local leaders who were loyal to him and the *Panchayat* system. The loyalty and the support of the military high officials and the political leaders and workers were important for creating a stable political environment. In many ways, such land grants were not much different from the earlier *birta* and *jagir* grants. Thus, these people who were considered the key to the political system by the king, were able to acquire property rights over uncultivated forest or waste land at no cost to them. All this led to the acceleration of deforestation process in Terai (Uprety, 1981). The opportunistic exploitation of timber and forest enchroachment was further intensified in the Terai after the introduction of multy-party system in May 1990. Multy-party system in Nepal was introduced by over throwing the thirty years old dictatorial partyless *Panchayat* system by people's movement and the interim government was entrusted with two major responsibilities: framing of a democratic constitution and holding of general election. Availing of this transitional phase of politics the forest encroachment was so intensified that the enterim government was compelled to constitute a Forest Protection Task Force. On the other hand the regressive elements who exploited the forest resources of the country for 30 years under the *Panchayat* system were actively involved in deforestation by creating an artificial problems of *sukumbasis* (squatters) in the Terai. The landless people also endeavoured to have access to a patch of land through forest clearance during this transitional phase. The deforestation by the *Sukumbasi* was accelerated in an organised way. The former *panchas* had created an organisation named "Sukumbasi Service Association" and its function was to distributeplots of lands to the landless. Thus, through this association a kind of parallel government was created to accelerate the deforestation furthermore. Later the forest protection task force visited such areas and with the joint efforts of the task force, administration and the local political groups, the so called *sukumbasis* were persuaded to go back to their respective places. Before the general election that was held on May 12,1991 political parties also could not antagoniz these encroachers in the forest, keeping in view of the election. The professional timber smugglers with the help of the political supporters had also then increased the timber exports in the various districts during this political transition.

Public Policies and Development Programs

In Nepal, as in many other developing third world countries, deforestation is always linked with the process of development. The process of development has immensly contributed to accelerate the rate of deforestation. In the construction of east-west highway, hundreds of hectres of forests area had been cleared along the road side and huge extraction of timber were made for use of construction of

bridges, culverts, heating charcoal for pitching etc. And also the people were encouraged to settle in a group particularly in the road side and construct shanti towns for business and had started occupying land by clearing the remaining forest area. Community managed as well as Government managed irrigation projects have also contributed in the distruction of forests. Each year, canals are repaired and labourers pick up the forest products with undue purposes. Several thousands of tree saplings are cut for the use of dam building and canal construction.

The Problem of Open Border

To a larger extent, open border of Nepal's frontiers in the south with India is also responsible for forest destruction. People fell trees in the forest for timber extractin and export to India by ox-pull carts particularly during the night. Such timber theft is usually done in an organized way by the landlords and influential people. Timber in India is more expensive than Nepal so the smugglers are motivated to export timber to India for higher prices despite legal ban. In frontier areas curruption has become an established feature. What the smugglers need to do is that they are required to pay illegal remuneration to forest people and in the custom offices. Indian traders are always ready to buy the valuable Nepalese timber at the Nepal India border. However, at present the illegal practice of exporting to India, in terms of quantity, has declined due mainly to the decline of forest area over the decades.

Livelihood System

The basis for living of the entire households of rural people of Nepal are the natural resources and their products. Most of the family has a small house (generally small shanty shelter), small parcel of land and a couple of livestocks. Food grains vegetables and fruits are grown in their small parcel of land. Livestocks are used as a means for agriculture and ploughing. Their sale provides them for purchasing of salts, oil and clothing apperels. Timber for construction of houses and livestock shade, fuelwood for cooking, fodder for livestock, leaf litter for manure are taken from near by forests by these households. And the wild fruits, roots and tubers also are taken from the forest which are very near to their households. In general, the majority of people have this standard and this is the reality of their economic situation.

Even during last several decades when population problem was not serious, the balance between demand and supply of natural resources was maintained. Forest was abundant in ratio in comparison to population density and their demand. Since ancestors, man-forest relationship was simple and was easy to survive but now the situation is different, demand has exceeded supply.

Social Consequences of Deforestation

Environmental degradation associated with deforestation often has affected delicately maintained production and subsistence system within the Terai rural areas in Nepal. Forest depletion has led to massive soil erosion in the Terai where foot of soil has been considered as precious and is required to produce basic necessities of life such as food. Landslides and floods are very common in the mountains and the hills due to the loss of ground holding trees. Soil erosion and landslides in the hills have been the contributory factors to decrease productivity due to deposition of eroded soil, widening of the river and the stream beds in Terai, there by causing high inundation, destroying human lives, settlements, crops, livestock and other property during every monsoon.

Deforestation process has generated fuel wood, fodder and timber scarcity. The fuelwood and fodder scarcity has negatively affected the delicately maintained subsistence system of the farmers. Fuelwood is the dominant source of energy in Nepal as it meets 87% of the energy requirement and this particularly so in the absence of other alternative fuels. Not long ago fuelwood collection, in the Terai, was not a difficult task in view of time for collection and nearness to forest. Wood was abundantly available in the near by forest of the human settlements because of the low density of population and the regular regeneration of the forest biomass. Merely one hour was sufficient to collect one bundle of fuelwood. But now it takes hours to collect the same quantity of fuelwood. Fuelwood prices have gone up in the urban centres because the poor professional fuelwood sellers have to use more labour and time in the collection of fuelwood owing to the gradual disappearance of the forest resources. As the forest depletes, these poor people also have to lose their means to have their living expences through fuelwood sale. Deforestation has also resulted in the fodder scarcity. The relationship between the forest and the arable land has now been irrevocably disturbed. Land requires a net transfer of fertility from the forest by transport of leaves and grass either to the field directly or more usually as fodder to stall fed animals, when it is distributed as farmyard manure to the fields. If this transfer does not occur in sufficient quantity to maintain nutrient levels and structure in the soil, a decline in fertility occurs (Blaike et al., 1980). Now fodder collection has become a very time consuming job. And most grazing lands have disappeared.

Therefore the fodder scarcity has resulted to the decline of livestock population and consequent decline in the income of farm families from the livestock products. Decline in livestock also means the decline in manure production needed to fertilize the field, which results in the decline of agricultural productivity. Consequently, the poorer peasants have become the victims of the vicious cycle generated by the deforestation process. Women are the principal fuelwood and fodder collectors in Nepal. Therefore, they are the most adversely affected population by the process of deforestation. With an accelerated process of deforestation, there has been the added pressure on women in collecting fuelwood and fodder and fetching water. They, in turn have become progressively over loaded and undernourished. This affects eventually to their next generation of children, because they begin life with more and more deficient in essential nutrients, thus worsening the situation further. Since the women have to spend most of their time in collecting firewood and fodder, fetching water and discharging other household affairs, the elder siblings of poor households have to take care of the younger siblings in the absence of their mothers and, are deprived of their education.

Similarly, there has been a growing scarcity of timber predominantly needed for construction purposes. Because of timber shortage in the Terai richer people have now started constructing concrete brick houses instead of constructing wooden houses which used to be built some twenty five years before. At times valuable such as sal tree (shorea robusta) was abundantly available. On other side, the poor landless people have started constructing small shanty houses/huts using soft bushes. Again, these small shanty houses are particularly unhygienic for the women who have to spend their time in their unventilated small kitchen. Poorer and landless communities are not in a position to buy good timber for building new houses. Because of the deforestation process, there has been the soaring price of timber in the urban centres. The slash-and-burn cultivation practices generally undertaken by many poor people of the indigenous communities are on the process of its disapperance owing to the reduction of the forest area. Similarly, the hunting-gathering economy of the people living on frontier lands is also going to be vanished. Forests playing significant role to the poor rural farm families in nutrient supply in areas of food scarcity and in periods of food shortages have very low potentialities of obtaining these products. Poor people collecting or gathering fruits, nuts, roots and shoots to supplement their diet have gradually been cut down. Similarly the hunting of wild animals for meat consumption particularly of forest dwelling communities has already been diminished. Likewise, women's supplementary cash income through the sale of various forest products (e.g. fruits, yam, honey, etc.) has also drastically declined. Poorer peasants of different ethnic groups are increasingly finding difficulties to extract wood for making of various farm implements needed for their agricultural activities. Thus, the livelihood systems of the poor people belonging to various socio-economic strata have been severely affected by the deforestation process. Nontheless, some social groups at the same time, have also benefitted more from deforestation at the expense of others. Urban population are getting steady and cheap food supplies grown in the heavily deforested areas of the Terai. The landed households and merchants are able to buy land in urban centres from deforested areas and from there they flourished through their business. On the other hand, the ethnic communities (e.g. Tharus, Dhimals, Rajbansis, etc.) of Terai further marginalized through the process of dispossession of their traditionally held forested land by higher and dominant castes people who migrated to Terai after malaria was supressed. More importantly, *Birta* holders and *jagirdars* of the pre-1959 and the key supporters of the *Panchayat* system and senior palace officials and military personnel, belonging mostly to higher castes took the maximum benefit from the large scale deforestation in the Terai. By and large, the honest and the poor population of Terai has become the victims of the deforestation and development process which affected them negatively in their livelihood system. Forestry supports agriculture and livestock, husbandry making important contributions to the farming economis. The Terai farming system is comprised of a complex arrangement of soils, water, crops, livestocks, forest and other resources within an environmental setting. The agricultural families, then manages in accordance with its preferences, capabilities and available technology. The farmers are engaged in production of crops, livestocks and non-agricultural commodities such as handicrafts and other income generating activities of the farm to supplement their income. But, as a whole, the process of deforestation has inversibly affected the subsistence agrarian economy of the different social groups living in the hills and Terai regions of Nepal.

Deforestation has also equally affected on the traditional livelihood system of some of the disadvantaged groups of the society (e.g., Kamis, the blacksmiths). Their traditional livelihood system is completely based on forest. In caste stratified society of Hindus, all agricultural implements such as plough share, sickle, *khukuri* (a traditional Nepali knife) etc, were used to be made by these blacksmiths. All agricultural households, irrespective of their ethnicity, require these implements for agricultural economics. The *kamis* in the process of preparing these agricultural implements, have established an *aran* (an

indigenously designed furnace operated by hands to blow wind for burning fire to heat the iron) which requires tremendeous quantity of charcoal, known as *gol* in the common parlance. Thus, operation of an *aran* is not possible without charcoal. Consequently their traditional liveliliood system is affected. The farmers of different ethnic groups are greatly affected because *kamis* are no longer be able to prepare as well as repair their agricultural implements.

Social Response to Deforestation

Due to the severe consequences of deforestation in various ecological zones and its impact on livelihood of the people there also has been growing awareness among the individuals, communities and the state. Endeavours towards the preservation of forests have been made in varying ways. Social structures of individual households, communities and in a whole state is apprehended to have changed through the development of options to cope with depleting forest resources.

Individual Response

Due to adverse effects of deforestation, various social coping mechanisms are developed at the household level just to maintain the subsistence level. Rural energy problems created due to fuelwood shortage have been solved through switching over to other substitution of fuels. As wood has become scarce, women no longer have been able to select the size and types of fuelwood they prefer. Consequently roots and shrubs previously left in the fields are cut from degraded forest. Fresh branches are also cut from healthy trees. Many indigenous communities have started burning dung-cakes due to fuelwood shortage as substitute.

One way of coping mechanism of the farmers, in the Terai, has been the reduction of the quantity of fuelwood used for cooking, heating and lighting. They have started uncooked *"kudo"* (a kind of gruel prepared by mixing salt, husks, etc. in the water) to feed the livestocks. Decline of fuelwood availability has also led farmers to burn agricultural residues such as maize stalks and paddy straws in the Terai.

Some middle class and rich farmers have resorted to planting trees in their own waste land or unproductive land to meet the fuelwood and fodder requirements of the households. The blacksmiths to some extent have also started planting sal trees in their waste land with the hope that they will be able to continue their *aran*

In urban and towns people have resorted to using kerosine and electricity for cooking purposes. Trees are planted now, even as the cash crop in many parts of Terai. The landless poor families living close to the urban areas have started to work for agricultural wages or other wage labour besides, selling the fuelwood. Some rich farmers have installed *gobar* gas plants in response to fuelwood shortage. The timber has become a scarce commodity so people have started to buy ready made wooden houses. The farmers are using corrugated zinc as roffing material due mainly to the shortage of thatching materials previously available in the forests. Poor people use small straws and branches for thatching purposes. In the Terai people have also devised other social responses to fodder shortage. Farmers have started feeding inferior fodders to their livestocks. They have reduced the number of lifestock and are practising stall-fed. They have started raising poultry and pigs to cope with their problem of fodder scarcity. To provide nutritional value to rural poor, traditional contribution of roots and tubers in the private land has further been increased (e.g. yam, sweet potato, taro) etc. As result of deteriorating economic condition due to agravated forest ecosystem and other natural calamities, many landless poor men seasonally or permanently migrate to the cities, development projects sites, within Nepal and to Indian cities in search of assured income and to sustain their livelihood. As poor males migrate to imporve the deteriorating household economic condition, females become the *defacto* heads of the households. They discharge the household duties and manage the family farms with the help of the younger children, thus, depriving the younger children from schooling. Children are compelled to look after the younger, when their mothers are away from house to collect fuelwood and fodder. What their response to this situation is to be away from education. Communal responses to ever growing deforestation is hard to find in Terai, The awareness among different social groups is creating response in protecting and planting new trees in their respective places. Community plantations has been another endeavour of the village people so as to conserve natural water resources and to generate ground grasses around the river, streams, catchment areas and in previously left pasture land. Always community participate for the common purpose.

Government Response

In order to prevent the destruction of forests, the government nationalised forests along with private forests in 1957. Until the late 1970s the government hoped that placing forests under the control of the Forest Department would ensure proper use. It provided negative effect to the people and indigenous forest management system. People, as a result, started deforesting the forest

84

85

unprecedently. Very lately, the government realised the possibilities of forest protection through the local people by entrusting responsibilities to them for their active participation. It was in 1978 that philosophy of community forestry came into existence through the process of legislation. Two major forest categories developed under the policy of community forestry were: (1) *Panchayat* (village level political and administrative uni, (2) *Panchayat* protected forests. The village level community used to receive three fourths of forest product income (Wallace 1987). Government also made a provision to lease forests under private ownership. The leases were allowed to afforest and manage the degraded land, there by enjoyed the advantages from it. *Panchayat* system no longer exists and the community participation had not been so fruitfull. In April 1990, the thirty years old dictorial *Panchayat* system was overthrown by the people's movement and the democratically elected the then government considered the forest destruction and encroachment illegal and took strict action. The government has set the policy of legally confiscating the excess land and has also confirmed that such land will be distributed to *Sukumbasi* (squatters). Also with the help of foreign aided projects, the government, for the last decade has taken steps towards the dissemination of improved stoves with the objective of minimizing the traditonal fuelwood consumption pattern. This dissemination of improved stoves has been a governmental response to deforestation. During the last few years, the government has encouraged farmer for installation of bio-gas plant, provided loan through agricultural bank with interest. But only very few farmers, who are rich, have benefitted. It is not possible for the poor farmers to afford the money as it is very costly.

With the consideration of country's physiographic structures and availability of abundant water resources and their feasibilities, government is trying to develop several small-scale hydro electricity projects in the different rural villages of Nepal. But due to the lack of technology, man power, and capital, this initiation has not so far been faster. The government has not been able to fulfill the demands for the majority of the Terai rural people. The supply of kerosine as fuel in the urban areas by importing from the foreign countries is also an alternative response from the government to deforestation.

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THE CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF UNTOUCHABLES IN NEPAL

Thomas Cox

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Caste System and Untouchability in Nepal

According to one definition castes - as they are found in the Hindu caste systems of Nepal and India - are "ranked endogamous divisions of society in which membership is permanent and hereditary" (Berreman 1972:198). However, it is important to realize that there are significant differences between the classical Hindu caste system, as defined in certain ancient texts such as the Manusmriti, and Nepal's caste system.

In the classical Hindu caste system, there are four varnas, or categories, including Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. In the Nepali caste system, however, there are only three categories; *Tagadhari* (twice-born), *Matwali* (liquor drinking) and *Pani Na Chalne* (untouchables). The *Tagadharis* include Nepal's highest castes; Brahman, Thakuri and Chhetri. The mid-ranking *Matwali* include most of Nepal's Tibeto-Burman and Indo-European tribal groups. The *Pani Na Chalne* are untouchable caste groups who are associated with specific traditional occupations. (In this regard it is important to note that *Tagadharis* and *Matwalis* are not compelled by caste considerations to take up any one specific occupation. They may enter any one of a variety of professions - except [in many cases] those that are traditionally associated with untouchables).

Tagadhari, Matwali and *Pani Na Chalne* Nepalis are all ranked along an axiom of purity and pollution (see Sharma 1977 and Bista 1991 for a comprehensive discussion of the Nepali caste system). *Tagadhari* caste Nepalis are (traditionally) considered to be the most pure while *Pani Na Chalne* caste Nepalis are considered (under certain circumstances) to be ritually polluting (or

jutho as pollution is known in Nepali). According to the rules of orthodox Nepali Hinduism Brahmans, Chhetris and Thakuris cannot accept cooked rice or water from an untouchable - or even allow them into their homes without being ritually polluted. (Some very orthodox high caste Nepalis even consider any kind of physical contact with an untouchable to be polluting. And if polluted by this kind of contact they purify themselves with water.

The Nepali caste system as described above, was codified in the National Legal Code (*Muluki Ain*) of 1853 by Nepal's Rana rulers. The *Muluki Ain* went into effect in 1854 and lasted until 1951, when the Ranas were overthrown (see Sharma 1977 and Bista 1991 for a good historical description of the *Muluki Ain*).

The *Muluki Ain* discriminated among Nepalis on the basis of caste. For example, Brahmans, as the highest ranking caste, were exempt from certain taxes and compulsory labor (for government projects) that were required from members of other castes (see Caplan 1970). Punishment for some crimes also varied depending on what caste the culprit belonged to. Brahmans, for example, were exempt from capital punishment, while members of other castes were not (Sharma 1977:285). But for some other offenses the punishment for Brahmans (and other *Tagadhari* Nepalis) was actually more severe than for members of lower castes. For example, high caste Nepalis who accepted cooked rice from untouchables were punished more severely than *Matwalis* who were guilty of the same violation (Sharma 1977:286). And while Brahmans were not subject to capital punishment they could be stripped of their high caste status and brought down to the rank of untouchable for certain offenses - including incest, murder, rape, marrying an untouchable or accepting water from them (Sharma 1977:285).

The constitution of 1963 abolished the *Muluki Ain* and, further, outlawed all discrimination on the basis of caste. And yet there is still a caste system in Nepal. The strength of the system varies, to a certain degree, from one part of the country to another. And there is considerable variation in the extent to which individual Nepalis follow caste-based principles. But the fact remains that untouchables in Nepal continue to be discriminated against in a variety of ways, and that this is one major reason why their socioeconomic status (relative to that of other castes) remains poor.

Many development policy makers in Nepal have become concerned about the problems faced by untouchables. In an effort to better understand these problems some officials have implemented studies on the socioeconomic situation of untouchables in Nepal. Much of the data in this paper comes from

two such studies. In one, completed in January of 1994, Save the Children USA (an international NGO), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development, surveyed 751 untouchables in 5 different districts, one in each development region in Nepal. In another much more limited study, in 1992, Save the Children conducted a socioeconomic survey of 30 untouchable households, again, in 5 districts representing all of Nepal's development regions (see Cox 1992 and Sharma 1994).[1]

2. Organization of the Article

This article begins with a description of the different untouchable castes found in Nepal. This is followed by an analysis of the discrimination faced by untouchables. The third section discusses economic conditions and educational achievement in Nepal's untouchable communities. The fourth section gives recommendations for raising the socioeconomic status of untouchables in Nepal. The final section is a conclusion which goes over major points made in the article.

II. UNTOUCHABLE CASTES IN NEPAL

Untouchable castes in Nepal can be divided into three different categories; (1) Those living primarily in the terai (the southern plains of Nepal). These include Dum, Teli, Musuhar, Dusadh and Sundi (among others). (2) Castes that are predominantly found in the middle hills. These include (among others) Kami, Damai and Sarki (who have higher respective populations than any other untouchable caste groups in Nepal). (3) Newar untouchable castes (the Newar are an ethnic group - who speak a Tibeto-Burman language - indigenous to the Kathmandu valley. They have a complex, highly stratified society that includes both Buddhists and Hindus). These include Kasai, Pode, Chyame and Kusle (see also Sharma 1994 for a description of these castes).

What follows is a description of the untouchable castes discussed in this article and surveyed in the two studies conducted by Save the Children.

- **Badi:** Until the 1960's most Badi worked (primarily) as traveling entertainers, dancing and singing at festivals, weddings and parties. Over the last 30 years, however, prostitution has become the primary occupation for Badi women, while Badi men usually fish and make drums. Badi are found in the Banke, Bardiya, Kailali, Dang-Deukhuri, Rukum, Rolpa, Dailekh and Doti districts of far west Nepal. With a total population of

about 7000 they are one of the smaller untouchable castes in Nepal (see Cox 1993).

- **Damai:** Damai are found all over Nepal. Their traditional occupation is tailoring, although some Damai also work as entertainers, playing musical instruments (such as the drum and flute) and dancing and singing at weddings and festivals.

- **Dum:** Dum are migrants from India who live, primarily, in urban areas of the terai working, for the most part, as sweepers.

- **Gaine:** Gaine live all over Nepal. Their traditional occupation is entertainment and, more specifically, playing an instrument known as the Saringe and singing. Some Gaine also fish and make Saringes and sell them to tourists.

- **Hudke:** Hudke originally lived in the Jumla area of far west Nepal. But 25 years ago they migrated to Surkhet, where they live (as squatters) on government land and work as laborers and entertainers (see Sharma 1994).

- **Kami:** Kami are found all over Nepal. Their traditional occupation is metal working. Kami living in villages usually make and repair agricultural implements, pots and pans, chains, locks and other hardware. Kami who live in bazaar areas often make and sell jewelry.

- **Kasai:** Kasai are a Newar caste who live in most of Nepal's major bazaar towns. Their primary occupation is selling meat. Most Kasai manage their own butcher shops.

- **Kusle:** Kusle are a Newar caste who live, mainly, in large bazaar towns. Their traditional occupation is cleaning temples and putting on musical performances (usually inside the temple).

- **Musuhar:** Musuhar originally came from India and are found, primarily, in the Jhapa district of southeastern Nepal. Their traditional occupation is brick making and other kinds of labor associated with construction. Some Musuahar speak Maithali as their native language and do not even know Nepali.

- **Pode:** Pode are a Newar caste who live in urban areas throughout

Nepal and make their living, primarily, as sweepers.

Sarki: Sarki have a large population that is spread all over Nepal. Their traditional occupation is shoe-making.

III. DISCRIMINATION

In the 1993 Save the Children study 84% of the total 751 untouchable respondents reported that they had been subjected to caste-based discrimination.[2] The kinds of discrimination reported included; (1) Not being allowed to take drinking water from taps used by members of higher castes. (2) Not being allowed inside hotels, restaurants, shops or high caste Nepalis' homes. (Another common complaint was being forced to wash glasses or plates after eating in a restaurant). (3) Not being allowed inside temples. (4) Not being allowed to sit or eat with high caste people at social events (these include school functions, wedding feasts, etc.)[3] (5) Being denied jobs - especially higher-level managerial positions - even when they are qualified for them.

It is important to realize that the nature and degree of caste-based discrimination varies considerably from one part of Nepal to another.[4] Caste-based discrimination appears to be far more prevalent in far western Nepal than in other parts of the country. In the 1993 Save the Children study, for example, 69% of untouchable respondents in Jhapa, and 71% in the south-central district of Chitwan, reported discrimination by high-caste Nepalis, whereas in the far western districts of Kailali and Surkhet the figures were 90% and 94% respectively.[5] The reason for this discrepancy is that:

"The isolation of far west Nepal has, to a significant extent, preserved Hindu orthodoxy in all its manifestations - including caste-based discrimination. In central and eastern Nepal, however, traditional Hindu norms have changed, due to an influx (facilitated by communication and transportation links) of new ideas and institutions" (Cox 1992:6).

Caste-based discrimination in the far western district of Doti appears to be particularly severe. High caste people there not only purify themselves with water each and every time they are touched by an untouchable, but also sprinkle water on themselves after returning home from trips to a crowded bazaar, out of concern that they might have been touched by an untouchable without being aware of it. In Doti all untouchables are: (1) Strictly forbidden to take water from taps used by members of higher castes and; (2) Always required to wash their own dishes and glasses after eating in a restaurant (Sharma 1994:62).

94

In Jhapa, by contrast, very few high caste Nepalis will purify themselves with water after being touched by an untouchable. And only 15% of untouchables surveyed in Jhapa (in the 1993 Save the Children study) reported instances of not being allowed to take water from taps used by high caste people. In addition less than 5% of surveyed Jhapa untouchables reported that they had been required to wash their own glasses or dishes after eating in a restaurant (Sharma 1994:62).

Ongoing discrimination adversely affects untouchables in many different ways. For example, in some communities high caste Nepalis monopolize the best (i.e. cleanest and most reliable) sources of drinking water, leaving untouchables with unclean water that threatens their health. For example, in a village north of Pokhara high caste and *Matwali* Nepalis refused to let untouchables take water from local community taps. As a result many untouchable families were forced to drink the dirtier water that ran through the rice paddies. One consequence of this was that untouchables in this village had a much higher rate of gastrointestinal disease than members of higher castes (Macfarlane 1981:85).

In Doti untouchable students (in all primary and secondary schools) are not allowed to touch the drinking water pitcher that is kept in the classroom. As a result thirsty untouchable students often have to go outside the school in search of water. In one such instance an untouchable boy studying in Dipayal was forced to go to the Seti River, and while trying to get a drink fell into the raging torrent and drowned (Sharma 1994:80-81).

Refusing untouchables entry into Hindu temples is one of the most common forms of caste-based discrimination in Nepal. Indeed, 54% of the untouchables surveyed in the (1993) Save the Children study reported that they were not allowed to enter local Hindu temples. Many untouchables find this kind of discrimination to be particularly outrageous, as they feel, like most Nepalis, that religious practice is a fundamental human need, and, further, that since they are also devout practicing Hindus, that access to Hindu temples is their basic right. Despite this kind of discrimination however, the majority of untouchables in Nepal continue to follow Hinduism.[6] Ninety-seven percent of the untouchables in the (1993) Save the Children study said they were Hindu. The remaining three percent were Christian or Buddhist (Sharma 1994:16).[7]

An unwillingness to give higher, professional level positions to untouchables, even when they are qualified for them, is another common manifestation of caste-based discrimination in Nepal.[8] And even if untouchables are given professional positions they are sometimes still persecuted or even

95

dismissed for no reason. What follows are case studies of these kinds of discrimination.

A Sarki man received his intermediate degree and shortly thereafter was hired as a teacher at a government primary school in Kaski district. From the beginning he was maliciously teased by the students and ostracized by other high caste teachers and members of the local community. These people eventually convinced members of the Kaski District Education Administration to fire the Sarki teacher and replace him with a high caste Nepali. After his dismissal the Sarki man enrolled in Prithivi Narayan Campus' B.A. program. But after his bitter experience as a teacher he is not confident that another degree will enable him to find a job (Sharma 1994:30).

An untouchable man in Doti, with all the formal credentials needed to qualify for a teacher's position, approached a visiting minister to ask for help in obtaining just such a post. The Minister dismissed the request saying. "I cannot help you in this matter because high caste people would never accept an untouchable as a teacher" (Sharma 1994:32).

An untouchable man in Kailali was hired as a high school teacher in Kailali district. After assuming his position he noticed that high and low caste students were forced to sit separately during school lunches. Determined to stop this discrimination he encouraged all the students in his class to sit and eat together. The school's Brahman headmaster found out about this and had the teacher transferred to another school (even though independent school inspectors had determined that the teacher's performance was satisfactory) (Sharma 1994:32).

There have also been instances where untouchable businessmen have been discriminated against, in ways that threatened their livelihood. In one such case, high caste employees at a milk collection center in Syanja refused to buy milk being supplied by untouchables, remarking that it "stank like a blacksmith". Local untouchable residents protested against this action, pointing out that the constitution of Nepal forbids caste-based discrimination. Local high caste residents, in collaboration with milk collection center officials, responded by moving the milk collection center to a local temple that untouchables were not allowed to enter. Soon after a meeting was held in an attempt to resolve the dispute. But this meeting ended in a bitter argument in which nothing was resolved. As of December, 1993 both sides remained completely polarized. Local high caste officials still refused to buy milk from untouchables, and the untouchables responded by initiating legal proceedings against them (Sharma 1994:77)

96

In another similar case the Brahman Chairman of a milk production center in Jayanagar stopped buying milk from a local Kami man, just because he was an untouchable. The Kami reported the case to the Depressed Caste Emancipation Society. The society then organized a meeting in an attempt to resolve the dispute. During this meeting local untouchable residents, with the support of the Chief District Officer, told the Chairman to resume buying milk from the Kami dairy farmer, or face a lawsuit. The Chairman apologized for what he had done and promised to start buying the Kami's milk again (Sharma 1994:76).

1.   Untouchables' Responses to Discrimination

In their 1993 study, Save the Children researchers asked all surveyed untouchables how they had responded to discrimination. Only fourteen percent of those surveyed had ever responded with protests. Fifty-six percent of surveyed untouchables had remained silent in the face of discrimination, even though they believed it was unjust. Another twenty-nine percent of respondents had accepted discrimination, saying it was their inescapable, god-determined fate (Sharma 1994:63).

Many untouchables are pessimistic about their chances of receiving social justice by protesting against caste-based discrimination. They assume that Nepali legal officials - most of whom are Brahmans, Chhetris or Thakuris (or high caste Newars) - will almost always side with high caste Nepalis in any dispute involving untouchables.

The Save the Children researchers found 31 instances in which untouchables filed lawsuits in response to alleged caste-based discrimination. In only seven of these cases did the judge rule in favor of the untouchable (Sharma 1994:68).

Without knowing the details of these cases it is difficult to say with certainty whether the low success rate of these lawsuits is a result of high caste bias or not. Nonetheless, when discrimination suits (apparently) have such a low success rate it is understandable that many untouchables are hesitant to file them at all (especially when one also considers the time, effort and expense involved in taking such legal action).

A low level of awareness about the rights that are due to them under Nepali law is another reason why so many untouchables do not protest against

97

caste-based discrimination. Indeed, in the 1993 Save the Children study only 9% of untouchable respondents knew that caste-based discrimination was outlawed in Nepal (Sharma 1994:67).

Untouchables also have a very low rate of involvement in NGOs, political groups or other organizations that could (potentially) assist them in combating caste-based discrimination. In the 1993 Save the Children study only 6% of untouchable respondents were actively involved in any NGO(s), and only 4% were active in a political organization or party (Sharma 1994:65-66).

Fatalistic, accepting attitudes towards caste-based discrimination appear to be most prevalent among untouchables in remote parts of west Nepal where the caste system is still very strong. In Doti, for example, the majority of untouchables accept the caste system, accept the theory that people should be ranked along an axiom of purity and pollution, and that certain occupations should only be performed by members of particular castes. Indeed, in describing themselves and why they accept their place in the caste system, Doti untouchables often state a Nepali proverb; "you can't make a cow out of an ass" (Sharma 1994:63).[9] Many Badi in the districts of Banke, Dang-Deukhuri and Kailali have a similar attitude (Cox 1993:11).

IV. THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF UNTOUCHABLES IN NEPAL

1. Educational Status

Before 1951, there were not many schools in Nepal. And in the schools that were established untouchables were usually not allowed to enroll and, thus, generally received little or no education (Sharma 1994:30). Because of this lack of education, and ongoing discrimination, untouchables were, generally, unable to compete for professional positions (i.e. government posts or jobs in medicine, law, teaching, accounting, etc.). As a result most untouchables ended up working in their traditional caste-based occupations and/or as menial laborers.

The 1963 constitution guaranteed all untouchables access to education in government primary and secondary schools (and colleges as well). But most untouchables have still been unable to afford an adequate education for their children. Sometimes parents have been unable to pay school fees, or buy books and/or stationary. On other occasions parents have been able to afford initial school-related expenses, only to have their children be forced to drop out in a few years and work to support their aging parents and/or younger siblings (and themselves).

Fourteen percent of the untouchables surveyed in Save the Children's 1993 study had a primary school education. This is not far below the national average of 16% (for all castes). And 8.3% of surveyed untouchables had a secondary school education. This is also not far below the national average of 8.8%. But at higher educational levels the gap between untouchables and other castes widens considerably. Only 0.8% of untouchable respondents had passed the SLC (taken after 10th class). This is significantly below the national average of 1.98%. At the college level the gap widens even further. Only 0.3% of surveyed untouchables had studied up to the Intermediate level, whereas the national average is 0.9%. And only two untouchable respondents (both men), a mere 0.04% of the whole sample, had studied up to the B.A. level, far below the national average of 0.64% (see Sharma 1994: 19 and the Central Bureau of Statistics Records).[10]

2. Economic Status

Even when untouchables receive a college degree they often still have a difficult time finding a professional position. Many high caste Nepalis (as was previously discussed) are reluctant to hire untouchables.

Untouchables' efforts to find jobs are also often hampered by their lack of kinship or social connections with high caste people in positions of authority. In Nepal people in high positions often arrange jobs for their relatives and/or friends (*afnu manchhe* as they are known in Nepali). The importance of these *afnu manchhe* connections give high caste Nepali job seekers a big advantage over untouchables. This is because there are far more high caste Nepalis than untouchables in high positions. This means that high caste Nepalis usually have far more connections to draw upon in their search for work than untouchables do (see Bista 1991 for an excellent analysis of the importance of *afnu manchhe* connections in Nepal). In many cases untouchables who have a college degree are unable to find a professional position and, thus, end up working in their traditional caste occupation.

In the 1993 Save the Children study ninety-seven percent of untouchable respondents reported that they were working in their traditional caste occupation and/or as menial laborers (some of these respondents also worked their own land

as subsistence farmers). Only 3% had professional positions in the government or private industry (Sharma 1994:49).

The majority of Save the Children's untouchable respondents also had a low average annual income. The highest proportion, 41%, averaged less than 10,000 rupees in annual income. Thirty-seven percent averaged between 10,000 and 20,000 rupees, and twenty-two percent had an average annual income of more than 20,000 rupees (Sharma 1994:50).

Fifty-seven percent of untouchable respondents reported that their income was not enough to meet basic subsistence needs (Sharma 1994:50).[11] As a result of such deficits 60% of surveyed untouchables had to borrow money to pay for food, clothing and/or medical expenses (Sharma 1994: 51).

In conclusion it may be said that most Nepali untouchables are caught in a vicious economic cycle. They are unable to receive an education that would qualify them for a well-paying professional position. This means that most of them end up working in their traditional caste occupation and/or as unskilled laborers, usually for a limited income. Consequently, they are unable to give their own children an adequate education and the whole cycle repeats itself.[12]

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems faced by untouchables in Nepal have, until recently, been (generally) neglected by the Nepali government and development agencies (both domestic and international). Addressing these problems is imperative, not only to raise the socioeconomic status of Nepali untouchables, but also to facilitate a more general development process that would benefit all Nepalis. Caste-based discrimination, poverty and low levels of educational achievement prevent most untouchables from realizing their professional potential. If more untouchables could realize this potential it would, in the long run, benefit other Nepalis as well.

Take the example of Dr. Ambedkar. Ambedkar, an untouchable, overcame discrimination and other obstacles to become one of India's greatest leaders. Indeed, he drafted India's constitution, an achievement that benefited all Indians regardless of caste. Ambedkar then went on to lead untouchables in a movement against caste-based discrimination. Throughout this movement Ambedkar emphasized peaceful, rational, politically sophisticated action as a solution to untouchables' problems. In the hands of a lesser man the movement could have degenerated into violence and chaos that would have intensified untouchables' problems instead of alleviating them.

One can only hope that ongoing and future development efforts in Nepal will facilitate the rise of many Ambedkars, who will work for the good of all Nepalis. What follows are some recommendations to improve the socioeconomic situation of untouchables in Nepal.

1. Educational Support

Needy untouchable students, who are both motivated and academically qualified, should be targeted for scholarships at the primary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate levels. These scholarship programs should be implemented by government and private (domestic and/or international) agencies, in collaboration with local-level NGOs. The government, and/or any involved agencies, could provide financial backing and technical support, while the NGOs could be active locally, selecting scholarship recipients, monitoring their progress, arranging tutorial help and providing general moral support and assistance in resolving any school-related problems.

One such program is already running successfully. The Nepal Scholarship Endowment Program (NESP), which began in January of 1992, has been implemented by the Nepal National Social Welfare Association (a Nepali NGO that is working to improve the quality of life for untouchables in 65 districts of Nepal) in collaboration with Save the Children USA and with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development. The NESP has given scholarships to over 300 untouchable (and tribal) high school students in 16 districts. But this one program is not nearly enough for all the needy untouchable students in Nepal. The government and concerned development agencies must take the initiative to start similar programs.[13]

2. Institution Building

Nepalis should be encouraged to establish organizations that protect untouchables' rights, and work to improve the overall quality of their life. These organizations could implement the scholarship programs proposed above. Other potential programs could focus on health education, legal education, family planning and income generating activities.

Ideally, these programs, to the fullest extent possible, should be run by

locally based untouchables, as they are the ones who know the most about local conditions and have the closest ties with target community members. In the process of running these programs local untouchables would also be able to develop their managerial and leadership skills.[14]

3. Legal Aid

The Nepali government should establish a commission to investigate the nature and extent of caste-based discrimination in Nepal. On the basis of this commission's findings the government should adopt new policies that effectively address the problem. In addition, the government, and other concerned agencies, should establish community education programs that inform untouchables of their rights under Nepali law, and action they can take in response to discrimination.

4. Consciousness Raising

All Nepali students, in both primary and secondary schools, should be given talks and readings that address the problem of caste-based discrimination. Students should be taught: (1) Why the cultural-ideological basis of caste-based discrimination is false; (2) About different kinds of caste-based discrimination and how they adversely affect Nepalis; (3) About existing laws against discrimination and; (4) The role that they can play in breaking down caste-based discriminatory attitudes.

5. Income Generation

Through the Nepali government and/or private (domestic and international) agencies, programs should be implemented to raise the income of untouchables involved in traditional caste occupations. These programs could include training to improve untouchables' technical and business management (including accounting, market surveying and preparation of business plans and bank loan applications) skills. In addition, untouchables should be encouraged to form themselves into cooperative savings groups to finance their individual income generating activities. Some bank officials should also be recruited (by concerned NGOs or other organizations) to educate untouchables about the kinds of loans that are available to start up businesses, and how they can be obtained.

VI. SUMMARY

This article has argued that there is still caste-based discrimination in Nepal, and that this is a major reason for Nepali untouables' current poor socioeconomic status. The article began with a short history of Nepal's caste system. This was followed by a description of the different untouchable castes found in Nepal. The next section focused on different kinds of caste-based discrimination in Nepal. This was followed by an analysis of the economic and educational status of untouchables in Nepal. In this section I concluded that a lack of education (reinforced by discrimination) limits untouchables' economic options, making them dependent on their traditional caste occupations and unskilled labor. This economic dependence has, in turn, impoverished many untouchables to the point that they cannot adequately educate their children. Thus, many untouchables remain trapped in a cycle where poverty and lack of education reinforce each other. The final section gave recommendations for raising Nepali untouchables' socioeconomic status. These included implementing educational support, institution building, legal aid and income generating programs in untouchable communities (as well as raising awareness - among Nepali students from all different castes - about the problem of caste-based discrimination).

FOOTNOTES

1. Gopal Sunar (Save the Children's Scholarship Program Manager) and I conducted the limited 1992 study. In the more comprehensive 1993 study I served as an advisor. I helped plan the study and accompanied the team (of 13 researchers) to Kaski District where we spent eight days conducting interviews. It was during this period that we collected data on the Kumal (see footnote number eleven), economic status of the Kasai (see footnote number ten) and Hinduism (see footnote number six). Kagendra Sharma was Project Coordinator. He supervised research activities in all five target districts and wrote the final report.

2. In the 1992 study 62% (eighteen out of thirty) of all surveyed untouchables said they had been discriminated against by high caste Nepalis. All nine (100%) untouchables surveyed in the far western districts of Kailali and Bardiya reported discrimination whereas only nine out of eighteen (50%) untouchables surveyed in central and eastern Nepal reported the same problem.

3. Orthodox Hindu caste values forbid Brahmans, Chhetris and Thakuris to marry untouchables. Nonetheless, such marriages sometimes do occur. In one case that I know of a Brahman woman married (against her parents' wishes) an untouchable Damai man. The woman was subsequently disowned by her parents and brothers. Her brothers were reported to have said, "If we accepted this marriage we would have to touch our head to the feet of our brother-in-law whenever he came into our house. How can we touch our head to the feet of an untouchable." (According to Nepali custom men are supposed to touch their head to the feet of brother-in-laws when they come to visit).

I also know a Chhetri man who is happily married to a Badi woman. He met this woman and married her after his mother and father died, so parental opposition was not a problem. Indeed, the man admitted that if his parents had been alive he probably never would have married a Badi (Cox 1993: 4).

4. The extent to which untouchables are discriminated against is often dependent, to a degree, on their personal qualities and achievements. For example, I know 3 Badi girls who have not been discriminated against by high caste Nepalis (this stands in sharp contrast to most other Badi girls who are subject to various forms of discrimination, including severe harassment by some high caste Nepalis). These three girls are excellent students and are considered (by both other Badi and high caste Nepalis) to be very personable and attractive. These girls' personal qualities and academic success have given them a certain status that has defused potential caste-based discrimination (see Cox 1993: 14).

I also know several wealthy, successful untouchable businessmen who have, generally, not been subjected to caste-based discrimination (whereas the poorer, professionally undistinguished untouchables living around them have). Again, wealth and professional success give these untouchables a certain status that, to an extent, shields them from caste-based discrimination.

5. Untouchables also often discriminate against each other on the basis of caste. For example, Hofer (1976: 354) reports that Kamis (in a village west of Kathmandu) do not let Damais into their homes or accept water (or cooked rice) from them.

6. Hinduism in Nepal is a syncretic religion which often differs significantly from one village to the next. Different communities select some traditions from orthodox Hinduism, but reject others, worship certain local deities that are not found elsewhere, and often follow certain Animist traditions as well (Cox 1993: 10). And many Nepalis are keenly aware that their local version of Hinduism differs from the more mainstream (or "great tradition") Hinduism that is found in major religious centers of India. Indeed, when I asked untouchables north of Pokhara what religion they followed many of them replied "Nepali *Dharma*" (Nepali Religion) to express the fact that their syncretic Hinduism differs significantly from Hindu traditions in India.

7. In the 1950's India's great untouchable leader, Dr. Ambedkar, led thousands of untouchables in a mass conversion to Buddhism, to protest against orthodox Hinduism and the caste-based discrimination that often goes with it.

8. Caste-based discriminatory principles often have an adverse impact on Brahmans, Chhetris and Thakuris, as well as untouchables. For example, I know a Chhetri man in Pokhara who wanted to open up a *khukuri* (a knife with a long curved blade) factory, but felt that he could not (even though he was convinced that the enterprise would be profitable). *Khukuris* in Nepal are traditionally made by Kamis. The Chhetri man was worried that he would lose status by taking up an occupation traditionally associated with untouchables.

9. In Nepal's Hindu society cows are sacred, the epitome of ritual purity, whereas asses (i.e. donkeys) are thought to be more *jutho* (ritually polluting). Thus, when fatalistic Doti untouchables say, "You cannot make a cow out of an ass," that can be translated as, "You cannot make a ritually pure being out of one who is polluted."

10. One reason why so few untouchables go to college or graduate schools is that they lack role models. They usually do not know of any untouchables who received an undergraduate or graduate degree and then went on to establish themselves as a professional in medicine, law, business or any other field. As a result untouchable students often assume that untouchables in general have no chance of becoming professionals. If there were more successful untouchable professionals in Nepal they could constitute valuable role models who could motivate untouchable students by showing them

that untouchables can be just as academically and professionally successful as high caste Nepalis.

11. Current market forces have made some untouchables' traditional occupation less lucrative than before, and others more so. The Sarkis, for example, have seen the market for their hand-made shoes go down in recent years due to stiff competition from cheaper, factory-made foreign imports. The Kasai, on the other hand, have benefited greatly from a recent expansion in the market for meat. Rising incomes among the urban middle class have enabled many Nepalis to purchase more meat than before. And religious prohibitions (which applied primarily to Brahmans and Chhetris) against eating meat have been relaxed, further facilitating an expansion in the market for poultry, mutton and pork.

12. Because uneducated untouchables generally have very limited economic options they become vulnerable to exploitation and shifting market forces. This vulnerability was very apparent in the squatters' settlement of Azurtebat (near Guleria in the terai zone of Bardiya district) which I visited in July of 1992. Thirty-seven out of the forty families in Azurtebat were Kami or Damai. And none of them had more than a fifth class education. These untouchable families had come to Azurtebat from different villages in the hills. Some had come after losing their land (usually because they sold it to pay off a debt). Others were unable to make a living from their traditional occupation. Two families had worked as tenant farmers, but were not given their rightful share of grain by the landlord and, thus, had to leave. All of these families had come to the terai in search of land, and eventually hoped to make a living as farmers. If the untouchable squatters of Azurtebat had received more education, they probably would have had more economic options, and not been forced into such as desperate situation.

In August of 1993 Save the Children researchers and I interviewed twenty-four Kumals (a tribal group whose traditional occupation is making pottery) in the village of Argau (which lies just east of Pokhara). While the Kumal are not untouchables I am including their case study here, as it constitutes a particularly instructive example of how whole communities with limited income generating options can become impoverished by certain economic (or, in this case, environmental) forces. Almost all of the Kumal families in Argau previously made their living as potters. They made ceramic ware in their own homes and sold it in Pokhara. And most of them had a fair to good income. But as nearby forests were being rapidly

cut down it became increasingly difficult for Argau Kumal to obtain the firewood necessary to fire their pots. Finally, firewood became so scarce that by 10 years ago almost all Argau Kumal had given up pottery-making. Many of them were subsequently forced to work as low-paid unskilled laborers. Some others have not been able to find any work at all (and the vast majority of these Kumal did not have the education necessary to get better jobs). Many Kumal families have been forced to sell their valuable agricultural land to pay off debts and/or meet basic subsistence needs.

13. I am against any policy that would require employers, in either government or private offices, to give some jobs to untouchables. There are three major problems with this kind of policy: (1) The reserved jobs usually go to rich, well-connected untouchables who would have found employment anyway; (2) Untouchables might think they don't have to work hard to build up their professional credentials since employers will be forced to hire them no matter what. (It is better to create educational opportunities that will allow untouchables to successfully compete for jobs on the open market); (3) This policy could intensify high caste resentment against untouchables.

14. There are many intelligent, well-educated untouchables in Nepal who have leadership potential, who could really help other untouchables if they wanted. But in many cases highly educated, well-off untouchable Nepalis distance themselves from other untouchables, and, in many cases end up having a closer relationship with high caste people. I even know one wealthy untouchable man with a master's degree, and a high managerial position, who gave his children a new last name - a Chhetri name - in a deliberate attempt to shed their untouchable status. The fact of the matter is that even though highly educated, wealthy untouchables may not be persecuted - to the same degree as those who are poor and uneducated - they are still, to an extent, stigmatized, and think they would create new social and professional opportunities for themselves (and their families) by associating more with high caste Nepalis and less with untouchables.

Another reason why wealthy, well-educated untouchables often do not become leaders is that they tend to be relatively comfortable, usually experience a minimum of caste-based discrimination, and, thus, are never radicalized to the point that they want to dedicate their lives to the fight against caste-based discrimination.

All over the world the greatest, most committed minority leaders are those

who initially suffered as a result of racism, and then dedicated the remainder of their lives to the struggle against it. Indeed, it is no accident that the greatest African-American leaders - and I am referring here to Malcom X and Martin Luther King - rose to prominence before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. These men grew up in an age when African-Americans had to face racism daily, and had no burgeoning, comfortable, professionally successful black middle class to take refuge in. Malcom X and Martin Luther King chose to fight that which they could not escape. Similary, Dr. Ambedkar was radicalized by discriminatory acts before he became a leader of India's untouchables. And in Nepal as well, a very successful young Tharu leader, Dilli Bahadur Chaudhary, was initially radicalized by the theft of his family's land (by a high caste landlord), before leading a grass-roots movement - with over 75,000 members - to liberate other oppressed Tharu (such as bonded laborers).

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GROUP PROCESS FOR PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN RURAL NEPAL : REFLECTIONS FROM A MICRO LEVEL STUDY[1]

Youba Raj Luintel

INTRODUCTION

Small human groups[2] are considered as the strategic mediums of people's participation. They are the prime collective forums in local affairs. Their role in mobilizing the common people through some kinds of membership and adherence has been vital. Groups have been a perennial feature of human society. We have social traditions which indicate that people have always been engaged in some specific works collectively through some kinds of group, be it family, clan or so on. The problem is how to organize the rural people in modern secular groups, and how to activate them in the process of self-help development. It is beleived that common people, if organized into groups, can tackle with the various power groups of the society. They can confront with the forces exploiting them. Organized people participate more actively and effectively than the dispersed ones.

The primary objective of the paper is to explore the viability of group process for people's participation in rural development efforts in Nepal. An attempt has been made to examine the performance of small farmer groups (SFGs) under the support of Small Farmer Development Programme (SFDP) in Chhatre-Deurali Village Development Committee, the coverage area of SFDP's sub-project office (SPO) under study. The area is situated in Lamidada ridge to Mahesh Khola basin of the eastern parts of Dhading District.

For the purpose of the present study some of the key variables such as size, intimacy, interaction, homogeneity, leadership and group spirit are selected in order to assess the group process. The state of participation has been examined through four broad phases, in which participation of the people themselves is considered essential. These phases are decision-making, implementation, benefit-sharing, and evaluation.

Seventy respondents were selected on the basis of *purposive* sampling. The *key* and *peripheral* respondents were identified during the field study. Primary data was collected through interview, observation, and consultations with the local authorities. Area survey, pre-household survey and progress reports of SFDP were the sources of secondary information. Besides, a survey of various small groups, existing in the area, including the SFGs was carried out.

The Brahmin/Chhetri including the Sanyasi (52.7 per cent) and the Tamang (38.5 per cent) are the two predominant ethno-linguistic groups of Chhatre-Deurali (Project Survey of Chhatre-Deurali SPO, 1984). Agriculture has been the main occupation of the people. Agriculture, as an occupation, is not so unesteemed now-a-days in Chhatre-Deurali since vegetable farming is gradually becoming quite profitable. If we go through the general economic conditions of the people, small farmers[3] dominate the scene. The project survey indicates that of the total 1,118 households, there are 921 (82.5 per cent) households of the small farmers (Project Survey of Chhatre-Deurali SPO, 1984).

RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN NEPAL

History of Nepal is largely a history of upheaval and uprising for power. After the political unification (1769-1816), attention of the nation was concentrated on maintaining law and order, political stability and territorial integrity. During the century-long Rana regime (1846-1950), ruling elites and their coteries were engaged only in vested interests of their own. It was only after the political change of 1950 that the concept of 'welfare nation state' emerged. Therefore, the need of 'development' is a recent realization in Nepal.

With the imposition of *Panchayat* system (1960), development strategy also changed. Subsequently, Tribhuvan Village Development Model (TVDM) introduced in 1952 was replaced by the *Panchayat* Development Model (PDM). Various other development programmes, coached with different priorities, followed it. Examples are Remote Area Development Programmes (RADPs), the Cooperative *(Sajha/Sahakari)* Movement, Integrated Rural Development Programmes (IRDPs), etc. (for a detail information on various rural development programmes in Nepal, see Adhikari : 1982; Pradhan : 1985). Though most of the

110

Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology, Volume 4 (1994)

111

development programmes are forwarded on trial basis, it is important to note that 'rural development' has been the core of development strategy in Nepal.

Seven periodic plans have already been accomplished during the period of four decades of planned development. A substantial portion of internal resource is mobilized, a huge sum of foreign dollar (grants and loans) is poured, and various NGOs and INGOs are engaged in the process of rural development. The outcome, however, has not been so satisfactory (Ministry of Finance:1990).

It has been realized that one of the main constraints of rural development efforts in Nepal is the lack of people's participation. From the very beginning of rural development efforts, i.e. from TVDM, upto the IRDPs, people's participation has been a serious challenge (APROSC:1986). Taking this into consideration, a different kind of programme called Small Farmer Development Programme has been introduced since 1975 in a series of development experiments (for the concept of SFDP in general and SFDPs in Nepal in particular, see ADB/N:1986; APROSC:1985; IFAD:1980).

THE CONCEPT OF GROUP PROCESS

People's participation, a systematic concept of mobilizing the human resource, seems to have been connected with the group process because the scheme of activating the process of self-help development is possible only at the mass level (see Heck:1979; Oakley and Marsden:1987; Uphoff and Cohen:1978; Yadav:1980 for the concept of people's participation. Also see Lohani:1978; Sharma:1978; Uphoff:1978 for the state of people's participation in Nepal).

In this perspective, SFDP seems to be a significant medium of acquiring people's participation for rural development in Nepal. SFDP has adopted group process. It includes only the most vulnerable section of society- the small farmers, who have absolute majority in the total population. Besides, the programme is being reported as one of the most successful development programmes (ADB/N : 1986) and, it is a strategy for rural development that combines both the concepts of small group and people's participation for the first time in Nepal.

The conceptual scheme of SFDP is to identify the target group -the small farmers- from among the rural masses, and organize them into small functional groups so that their collectivity could enable them to participate in development process, the process which has been beyond their control and comprehension so far.

On behalf of SFDP, at least theoretically, priority is given to form small (not more than 25 members) homogeneous (in terms of socio-economic characteristics) and harmonious groups. All inputs and services required by the small farmers are provided on group liability, without any collateral. Small farmer groups (SFGs), thus formed, are supposed to be able to identify, plan, implement and evaluate their needs, programmes and benefits. Provisions of group meeting, group saving, training, and assistance in community works are the other formal arrangements of SFDP.

Hence, SFDP has been trying to acquire people's participation through group process. Group process has become the pivotal feature of SFDP, and thus, that of the current development strategy in Nepal.

SMALL GROUP PHENOMENON

Small groups are a recent origin in Chhatre-Deurali VDC. Until a decade ago, there were very few conscious collective forums. Neither the Brahmin, Chhetri, Sanyasi (Indo-Aryans) nor the Tamang (Tibeto-Burmese) had any socio-religious forum to bind and protect them and their cultures, as it can be found, for example, in the practice of *Sangha* among the *Theravada* Buddhists, the practice of *Communitas* among the Christians and that of *Ulema* among the Muslims.

In Chhetre-Deurali, as in other parts of the country, all the processes of production and consumption are confined to family level. Family is such a distinct institution that it is difficult to have any other joint units in inter-family level. However, it is poverty and common hardships of the majority of the villagers that it helps them feel 'consciousness of kind' and be a category. In this context, it is the economic aspect of rural life which makes the group process feasible.

Now-a-days, there are a variety of small groups in Chhatre-Deurali. Upto 990, 76 different small groups were identified in the area. Of them, SFGs were the most prominent in terms of coverage and performance. 68 SFGs were already formed at the time. Other small groups include two Society Welfare Associations (one in Ramche and another in Mahanta Gaon), two Dairy Promotion committees (one in Mahesh Khola and another in Dumre Chour), Vegetable Marketing Committee (VDC wide), Paropakar Welfare Fund (Siran Chour, locally called the Hita Kosh), Religious Choir (Maidan), and Deurali Youth Club (Dumre Chour) (field study,1990).

Chhatre-Deurali SPO has been in operation since 1984 . There are 5,364 small farmers residing in Chhatre-Deurali VDC (Project Survey of Chhatre-Deurali SPO,1984). Among them, only 545 (10.16 per cent) small farmers are organized in SFGs. Out of 68 SFGs, 8 groups are formed purely by the local females. They are often called women's saving groups (WSGs).

Of the total beneficiaries, 349 (64.1 per cent) small farmers are from the Brahmin/Chhetri category. The second large beneficiaries (32.3 per cent) are from the Tamang ethnic group. Farmers from the occupational castes have negligible (3.6 per cent) inclusion (field study,1990).

In respect to their performance on loan repayment, group meeting, group saving, etc. the SPO reports only 16 SFGs as 'progressive'. Almost half (30) SFGs are 'moderate', while 22 SFGs are likely to be 'defunct'4 (Chhatre-Deurali SPO, 1990). During the field study, it was found that most of the so-called 'defunct' SFGs were the older ones, larger in size, and organized by 'Dhakal Sir,' the first group organizer (GO) of Chhatre-Deurali SPO.

In brief, Chhatre-Deurali has three kinds of small group. First, there are some groups established and sustained by the local themselves. Examples are the Religious Choir, Deurali Youth Club, and the Paropakar Welfare Fund. Secondly, there are other groups inspired by some external agencies and sustained by the local villagers. Vegetable Marketing Committee, Dairy Promotion Committee fall under this category. Thirdly, most of the groups are both inspired and sustained by some external agencies. Examples are Society Welfare Associations supported by OXFAM and SFGs supported by Agriculture Development Bank (ADB/N). Small groups from the third category are relatively more functional and progressive, for the time being, because they obtain technical and economic supports regularly from their respective centres. Their sustainability is, however, obscure since there are no symptoms of any diminution in their external dependency.

SFGS AND THE QUESTION OF PARTICIPATION

The field observation reveals that the groups which are formed by the GO, in a hurry to show some progress, are almost defunct or doing very little. Rather those formed by the farmer themselves are more active and functional. In the majority of cases, large groups are not only socio-economically heterogeneous and spatially scattered, but also unmanageable and, thus prone to failure. Small-

sized groups, having 6 members in average, have shown fine performance in general.

There are 6 SFGs (group Nos.[5] 1, 3, 8, 12, 30 and 34) whose progress has been hampered by the leadership crisis. However, there are other 6 SFGs (group Nos. 6, 11, 18, 25, 59 and 62) whose success is generally attributed to their leaders. Female leadership is an important aspect of Chhatre-Deurali SPO. The group leaders of 8 female SFGs gave an impression that they have comparatively a good family background, at least, in terms of family economy. They were relatively less mobile outside the village and were successful housewives. Male leaders, on the contrary, were more mobile, outspoken, and dominent in most of the cases. Males were literate previously whereas females were just about to be so through the literacy programme of SFDP. They had proved themselves as a receptive and conducive section of the population.

In Chhatre-Deurali SPO, except for 22 SFGs, others have more or less regular group savings. There are some groups, especially the female ones- such as group Nos. 24, 36, 40, 47 and 61- which did not have taken any loan, but were regular in their savings.

The SFDP has so far provided 12 different types of training. All total 284 small farmers have been trained. Among them, 3 groups (group Nos. 6, 11 and 62) have their leaders frequently trained in a variety of sectors, no matter how useful it was. There are many other SFGs (group Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 13, 39 and so on) whose members had never got any opportunity to take part in any training programme (Chhatre-Deurali SPO,1990).

The SFDP manual describes that there are two types of evaluation procedure: self and participatory evaluations. Self-evaluation is done at the SPO level bi-annually. Participatory evaluation is done at the zonal level annually, in which ADB/N and line agencies' officials equally take part (ADB/N:1977). Chhatre-Deurali SPO, however, has never done any such self-evaluation. Only 3 group leaders have taken part in participatory evaluations.

Hence, in terms of participation, the SFGs are enough deficient. SFDP seems to be grossly unable to create a healthy environment for farmers' participation. Either the representatives (the group leaders) or the SPO staffs have decisive and imposing role in the phases of participation. Though the meetings are held, most of the decisions, however, do occur in ordinary day-to-day life. *Shramadan* (labour contribution) is popularly equated to people's participation. *Shramadan* is easily provided, but the process of control remains

not in the hands of these contributors but in the hands of some of the local elites.

It seems that SFGs are merely the channels of SFDP loan but not the forums of mobilizing the masses. A considerable number of members from various SFGs are almost passive now because SFDP has virtually stopped to provide them additional loans.

RELUCTANCE OF THE SMALL FARMERS

A substantial number of small farmers are yet outside the circle of Chhatre-Deurali SPO. It can be justified from the fact that only 10.16 per cent of potential beneficiary small farmers are organized so far. There are 53 households of the occupational castes, almost all of which are small farmers. However, there is not a single SFG organized only by such low caste people. None of the low caste small farmer is included in any SFG that has predominantly the Tamang memberships. A negligible number (18) of low caste small farmers are rather included in the SFGs that have the Brahmin/Chhetri majority.[6]

High level officials of SFDP complain that lack of initiative, lack of leadership capabilities, and that of risk-bearing capacities are some of the reasons behind the dispersed and passive state of the majority of small farmers. This blame rather seems a mere apology for not being able to tackle the problem. These officials have never bothered themselves to help enhance the initiative, leadership and risk-bearing capacities of such poorest of the poors.

The landless farmers who are not in any SFG have various grievances. First, it is frequently complained that small farmers who hold some land always refuse to include landless small farmers in the group. The land-owning small farmers use to suspect on the landless small farmers since the later does not have any collatral. It might cause trouble for them at the times of repayment. Secondly, most of the landless small farmers come from occupational castes, thus, the caste factor has been a barrier to their interaction. Similarly, almost all such landless people, with whom the researcher could approach, complained that not a single official from the SPO had ever come to them. The officials, on behalf of the SPO, want to maintain that SFGs are formed by the famer themselves and not by the SPO.

The potential beneficiary small farmers are keen in observing the performance of the SFGs that are already formed. Since more than half SFGs are either passive or unsuccessful, they do not dare to form new groups. Thus, the demonstration effect has been negative in its consequence.

One of the main causes of such reluctancy of majority of the small farmers is the lack of proper motivation by the well-paid Youth/Female Activists or the GO himself on behalf of the SPO. The bureaucratic approach of SFDP seems to be a hurdle since the SPO has not been able to explain itself within the majority of the potential beneficiaries. SFDP has shown symptoms of elite bias within the small farmers. The concept of people's participation itself, which the SFDP has followed, does not seem compatible with the local conditions of socio-cultural system. The people had been working on the basis of decisions either made by their own families, kinsmen or neighbours. Benefit-sharing had been mutual and evaluation informal. The process of participation enforced by SFDP, viz., decision-making, implementation, benefit-sharing and evaluation, seems to them rather artificial, formal and more statistical. The small farmers are even not aware on what to do with such 'step-by-step procedure'. Ultimately, SFDP seems to have been suffered from malaise to be a catalyst in improving the fate of local small farmers.

APPROACHING THE TARGET GROUP

Empirical observations reveal that small farmers either residing in the unaccessible area or from downtrodden sections (e.g. untouchable castes, women, landless, etc.) of the population have got little or no inspiration and/or opportunity to receive the services and facilities of SFDP. They are not even aware about SFDP objectives. There are, for example, only 7 Tamang women, 7 landless farmers and 18 lower caste people (Chhatre-Deurali SPO,1990) fortunate to have the opportunity to stay in SFGs, regardless of how much are they benefitted.

Though all the beneficiaries of SFDP are supposed to be the small farmers, there is, however, a vast disparity of economic transactions amongst the registered small farmers. A handful of small farmers have occupied a considerable portion of loan, training opportunity and such other facilities.

Upto the last of 1990, there were 56 SFGs which had already taken loan once or more. In total, a sum of NC 1,938,000/- was allocated for 362 small farmers, 17 of whose transactions had blocked some 148 small farmers (Chhatre-Deurali SPO,1990).

It seems that SFDP has been cycling around a particular section of the small farmers, officially called the 'progressive' ones, who are able to absorb most of the SFDP services. The only little remaining percolates down to the

subordinate small farmers. There is, for example, one group leader (of group No. 27) whose other 5 adult members of the family are all engaged in 5 different groups, taking advantages from all possible points. Field data clearly reveal that SFDP has been 'successful' to serve mainly the richer stratum of the small farmers. SFDP has never bothered itself to the needs, difficulties and hardships of the poorest small farmers.

The target group of SFDP, the small farmers, is clearly a distinct category of society. But SFDP seems partly successful to approach them. The 'target group approach' sounds nice to hear. SFDP has, however, never been alert on-the-spot to follow the strategic core of the concept. SFDP seems to be lounging after having identified 'the clients'. In Chhatre-Deurali, 89.84 per cent of the potential beneficiaries are not yet involved in the SFGs circle (Chhatre-Deurali SPO,1990).

SELF-RELIANCE OF SPO

SFDP has adopted a new strategy in the case of Dhading District to develop secondary organizations at inter-group level, called *antar samuha*. Its main objective is to experiment whether the various SPOs could be made self-reliant on the already built-up structure.[7]

About this new strategy, I had requested my respondents to preview whether their SPO in general and the SFGs in particular would be self-reliant before or after the withdrawl of SFDP supports. Of the 70, fifty respondents replied it as 'quite unlikely and very difficult,' 14 respondents answered it as 'challengeful but not impossible,' and 6 respondents were confused. Most of the optimist respondents were either the group leaders or better benefitted ones. General respondents were suspicious over the confident of others and afraid of the possible monopoly of their leaders.

One of the important findings of the present study is that SFDP has not been able to stimulate group spirit, collectivity and we-feeling among the small farmers, as it was envisaged in the planning phase. Their collective group identity and group interests are not yet projected. Group-level planning and implementation are not occuring in their pure sense. Structured group meetings are mere formal gatherings. Group saving practice is quite irregular. The process of evaluation does not exist at all. There is a problem of communication gap within a group and between the groups. In brief, dependency of small farmers on SFDP has not decreased. Not a single SFG has been graduated;[8] neither is there

any SFG independent in course of seven years of operation of the SPO in question.

CONCLUSIONS

Traditional groupings such as kinship, clan, lineage, etc. are the family-based institutions. Family is the ultimate unit of collective behaviour, however, handicapped by its inherent deficiency for inter-family collectivity. Nevertheless poverty is the cause that compels the rural people to be united and work in groups beyond the family level. Secular groups which complement and cut across the traditional institutions, however maintaining the indigeneous system of participation, seem essential to mobilize the rural people at the mass level.

SFDP has not been much successful to go deeper into the society and grasp the target populace adequately. Instead of being a catalyst agency, SFDP has become merely a loan-granting office. People in question are forming more groups only because in other way loan is not provided. The claim of SFDP that it has not followed the 'trickle down approach' of development is not completely true. It seems partly successful in forming groups, but it has shown many symptoms of malaise in mobilizing them in proper direction.

Despite these many shortcomings of SFDP, there are some positive symptoms, too. The findings of the present study reveal that small groups are the potential viable mediums of mobilizing the masses. The ever challenging component of self-help development, i.e. the lack of people's participation, could be achieved through the group process provided that it is inspired inductively and systematically. Small, compact, homogeneous and self-formed groups are more dynamic, cohesive and durable.

For Chhatre-Deurali, the innovative beginnings of some locally organized programmes and seemingly participatory trends are the results of collective behaviour of the local farmers through the group process. What has been obtained from group efforts in a relatively short span of time, not more than one decade, was not gained by strong individual efforts during the century-long history of the settlement. At least, the farmers have become optimist and interactive due to the presence of SFDP. The phenomenon, in general, indicates towards a hope that if approached in a proper manner, there is a lot of potential for people's participation through the group process in the rural development of Nepal.

FOOTNOTES

1. The material of this paper is based on the field studies carried out in March 1989 and Nov. 1990. The initial field work was accomplished with some other colleagues to present a report on rural communication to Human Resource Development and Research Centre (HRDRC). Necessary data was collected in the later field visits in course of preparing an MA dissertation (Luintel:1990).

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2. Small group is a unit of at least two or more individuals upto the maximum number, who can interact and communicate with one another. In this paper, terms like small human group, social group, small functional group, etc., are used interchangeably. For details on the concept of small group, see Esman and Uphoff : 1988; Hare : 1955; Larry et al. : 1983 and Mills : 1988.

3. We have not yet defined the small farmers. Central Bureau of Statistics has categorised them as those having less than one hactare of land (CBS : 1987). SFDP defines them as the farmers whose annual income does not exceed Rs. 950/- per head (ADB/N : 1986). For the present study, SFDP-definition has been followed which is inclusive to farm labourers, share-croppers, tenants and the owners of some cultivable land.

4. SFDP has not specified any indicators to evaluate the performance of various SFGs. Terms like 'progressive', 'moderate' and 'defunct', therefore, connot only the relative state of group dynamism in general.

5. Group numbers are assigned serially on the basis of group formation and/ or registration under SFDP.

6. It does not mean necessarily that the Tamangs are less likely to accept low caste small farmers in their groups. The settlement pattern of Chhatre-Deurali might have caused this. Households of the low caste people are mostly within the Brahmin/Chhetri settlements where as such intermix with the Tamang is rare. The Tamang settlements are ethnically concentrated, if not quite separate.

7. Meanwhile, the management of this SPO, among others, has been transferred to Small Farmers' Cooperative of Chhatre-Deurali from June 15, 1994 onwards. Henceforth, the administrative and financial supports on behalf of SFDP are withdrawn so as to make the farmers themselves capable of handling such group processes for self-help development. The small farmers have been now instructed to contact either ADB/N or other banking agencies in case of further loan needs. This decision has been inplemented on the technical recommendation of Dhading Development Project (DDP), a GTZ - financed Integrated Rural Development (IRD) project. DDP is now evaluating the outcome of this 'experiment.'

8. Graduation, a term frequently used by SFDP officials, means a mark of success. Progressive SFGs are supposed to be able to take care of themselves, thus no longer needy of ADB/N supports. SFDP scrutinizes time by time whether some groups have reached the level.

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SHERPA BUDDHISTS ON A REGIONAL PILGRIMAGE : THE CASE OF MARATIKA CAVE AT HALASE[1]

Eberhard Berg

I. The Subject of this Paper

Nowadays it seems to be a well established fact within the scientific community that Buddhist - as well as Hindu - pilgrimages may be studied as an ancient socioreligious institution sustaining a system of interrelated holy centers. In the case of Buddhism this system helps to bind together diverse peoples of South and Central Asia. According to the results of the last decade of empirical research as well as in theoretical discourse, pilgrimages, represent a distinct kind of ritual performance with a broad range of corresponding processes of social interaction.

Halase in Eastern Nepal is a popular pilgrimage quest for Hindus and Buddhist alike. It is characterized by an almost complete lack of institutionalized formal religious structures. That specific condition endows this sacred center with its very distinctiveness. Apart from these circumstances it is worth mentioning that still today there seems to be very little known concerning Halase and the diverse pilgrimages connected with this holy locale.[2]

In this paper I am not trying to find a means of generalizing on the almost worldwide phenomenon of pilgrimage by investigating a specific case. Rather, I am exploring the various aspects of a specific case of pilgrimage in order to illuminate its particularity: the Sherpa pilgrimage to Halase on occasion of *'losar'*, the Tibetan New Year Festival.

Thus this paper is an examination of the diverse ways Sherpa Buddhist pilgrims united within one single religious tradition approach and 'appropriate' a holy place which they share not only with each other but also with diverse groupings of Hindu devotees. Accordingly, it aims at exploring various aspects

124

of the Sherpa Buddhist pilgrimage to Halase, focussing primarily on two questions: (a) the forms of social interaction emerging between groups of Sherpa pilgrims as well as between Sherpa and other pilgrims, and (b) the various ritual performances which characterize the whole process of the Sherpa pilgrimage to Maratika cave.

Mention must be made of the fact that this holy place is situated beyond the confines of Solukhumbu, their familiar territory, thus necessitating a cross-regional pilgrimage.

II. Sherpas and Tibetan Buddhism

The Sherpas are an ethnically Tibetan group in northeast Nepal, the majority of whom live at high altitudes in the valleys of Solukhumbu region. They trace their origin to a group of clans who had moved from Kham in northeastern Tibet due to conflicts with Mongolian invaders. This movement came to a halt when the Sherpas settled in Khumbu, Pharak, and Solu in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries.[3]

The distinctiveness of Sherpas in relation to other ethnic groups of Tibetan stock is well established.[4] Culturally, however, the Sherpas are Tibetan. Their way of life is in most respects Tibetan; they speak a Tibetan dialect; and as adherents to the unreformed Nyingmapa order their whole lives are deeply embedded in Tibetan Buddhism. Sherpa pilgrimage can only be understood in the context of the Buddhist textual tradition and the Nyingmapa in particular.[5] This implies that existing knowledge as to how to encounter the gods and goddesses associated with a holy center and what to expect from a pilgrimage to this site, which kind of rituals to be performed in a distinct sequence and which prayers to be recited there is, at least basically, guided by specific texts. The ordinary laypeople whom I was mainly travelling together with revealed a varying degree of 'previous' knwoledge about Halase and the mythology connected with this place of pilgrimage; in other words they were informed somehow, either by conversation with those who had been there before or by own experience and/or by the books themselves usually mediated by a *lama* or a monk.

III. Why the Buddhist Sherpas Use to Go on Pilgrimage

'To gain' or 'to accumulate merit' was the usual answer to all my questions relating to the central problem of what makes the Sherpa individual decide upon

125

going on a pilgrimage.[6] This seems to be the key metaphor not only in Sherpa Buddhist society which morally guides the individual's acting.[7] Thus without a clear idea of this concept of 'merit' which among the Sherpas - as well as among other Buddhist peoples - also represents the crucial motivation for going on pilgrimage an adequate understanding of this particular form of socioreligious process cannot be reached.

The acquisition of 'merit' (Sherpa *'sonam'*, meaning 'good *karma'*) at an individual level is a constant theme of Sherpa life, as it is with Tibetans and also with Theravada Buddhists in Burma and Thailand. According to Buddhist tradition the accumulation of 'merit' through performing good actions such as financial donations to monasteries and *lamas*, becoming a monk, giving food to *lamas* and monks and avoiding bad actions is the primary religious duty specified for the laypeople. The building up of merit is thought to counteract the efffects of sinful deeds committed and to ensure a happier rebirth.[8] According to my informations the practice of certain religious activities among the Sherpas like going on pilgrimage aim at both accumulating merit for the future life as well as gaining benefits in this world; in other words it comprises inner-worldly motives and those transcending the constraints of this world.

Lamas, monks, and nuns as well as laypeople can acquire merit by prayers, by recitation of scriptures, by putting up prayer flags, by moving the prayer wheels, by offering butter lamps and burning incense before the temple images, by prostrations, by making repeated circumambulations of religious buildings and by many other ritual performances. Laypeople can also accumulate merit by giving alms to the poor. Highly valued are such acts as building bridges and rest-houses, mediating as peace-maker. Even more respected ways of gaining merit consist in giving gifts to *lamas*, monks, and nuns. It is particularly meritorious, however, to give donations for the support of a monastery and for the construction or repair of religious buildings such as temples, shrines, *'mani-*walls' and 'chorten' (Sherpa *'stupa'*; circular edifices containing religious relics).

All those acts are regarded as meritorious because of their benefit to the community as a whole. One of the foremost important modes to gain merit in Sherpa society, however, consists in going on a pilgrimage. But even this way of gaining merit individually produces some sort of 'benefit' to the whole of the local community.

As will be shown, however, the act of going on a pilgrimage does not represent a wholly religious affair. To the Buddhist motif of accumulating merit

clearly add more inner-worldly ones easily summarized as the wish for health, wealth, and progeny. Yet there is also a wholly different aspect involved lending its distinct flavour to the individual's pilgrimage experience. During the pilgrimage process there is much to be seen on the way, many people to be met, and there are many teastalls by the road offering also *rakshi* and *'chang'*. And on the margin of the holy center there is usually a *bazaar* with a range of goods, however limited, coming from as far as India and/or Tibet. And there can be found numerous teastalls, representing an important 'profane' social arena in close association with the realm of sacred space. At those teastalls many of the pilgrims present, especially the younger people, like to spend the whole night drinking, singing, and dancing. Thus, in most cases pilgrimage seems to constitute a particular space of time which usually is experienced by the laypilgrim both as 'holy day' and as 'holiday'. Accordingly, the motif of the average Sherpa for going on a pilgrimage usually is of dual character though when being questioned the answer usually omits the fascination of this very this social aspect of the pilgrimage process.

IV. The Setting of the Holy Place of Halase

Halase is a holy place in Eastern Nepal visited by Hindu and Buddhist devotees alike. This important place of pilgrimage is situated in Khotang District in the hills south-east of Okhaldhunga at about one long day's walking distance. Not unimportantly its exact location is just alongside the main trade-route connecting Katari Bazaar in the south with Bhojpur via Diktel village.

It is the dramatic natural setting - a hill covered with trees consisting of two uninterrelated limestone caves - which gives this pilgrimage locale its very distinctive character. There is only one formal (Hindu) shrine but no statues within a setting of wonderous and enigmatic natural formations lending themselves to impose arious meanings on them.

The bulk of the numerous Hindu pilgrims visiting Halase is made up of caste-groups such as Brahmin and Chhetri as well as ethnic hills-people such as Rai, Lumbu, and Magar. According to my informations this place of pilgrimage is visited four times a year by Hindus (at *Bala Chaturdasi*, at *Ram Navami*, at *Tij* and at *Sivaratri*[9] - which I witnessed twice on March 2nd 1992 and on February 19th, 1993. And it is interesting that Halase is regarded by the Hindu villagers of the area (predominantly Rai, others are Brahmin and Chhetri) as their most popular site of pilgrimage to be visited on occasion of the big *jatras*.[10] As to Hindu pilgrims the catchment area of Halase seems to consist of a wide area

including the foothills as well as the lowlands of the Terai.

The same place is the holy center of a pilgrimage by Tibetans as well as by Tamang and Sherpa Buddhists from Solukhumbu who use to gather there once a year - usually in February - on the occasion of *Losar*, the Tibetan as well as the Sherpa New Year. The Tibetan population of the Dingri area just north of Khumbu and Sagarmatha traditionally have had close economic ties with Solukhumbu, Kathmandu Valley, and the southern lowlands. Apart from regular trading ventures the population of Dingri and the Sherpas of Solukhumbu used to share particular pilgrimages like that to Halase in the south or north to Tsibri in the Dingri region.[11]

On the margin of this sacred space there is located a *bazaar* of regional importance being held not only on occasion of a pilgrimage but also weekly on every monday. Apart from food and drinks such as tea and locally brewed alcohol - but neither imported beer nor 'coke' and the like - this market offers a variety of goods especially from the Terai and northern India to pilgrims and to the local population. Due to these various aspects, the pilgrimages to Halase four times a year give this holy place a distinct and very complex social organization.

It must be mentioned in this context, however, that, unlike those holy sites in remote areas connected with mountain peaks and glacier lakes regarded as the seat as well as the physical representation of the regional protective deities, Halase is not difficult to reach. For Hindus coming from the Terai and the whole southeastern part of Nepal and for Buddhist pilgrims from Solukhumbu the travel to this holy place involves a journey on foot of between four and eight days to reach there and return home. Khumbu Sherpas on pilgrimage to Maratika cave usually follow the axis of the Dudh Kosi valley remaining on its east side for most of the journey. Solu Sherpas and Tibetans from the Chalsa refugee settlement, on the other hand, reach this sacred locale via Okhaldhunga.

Still today there seems to be known only very little concerning Halase and the different pilgrimages connected with this pilgrimage center. As the pilgrimage to Halase as well as the holy place itself have until now been almost completely ignored by scientific researches, there exist only few written comments.[12]

V. Mythic Origins of Maratika Cave at Halase

Apart from the mythical stories connected with a holy place and its origin an important feature of a sacred center usually is represented by its specific geological nature. Of central importance here is a specific combination of the geological characteristics of an enormous stalactite cave and selected mythologemes which are interpreted by the informed pilgrim according to the - oral and written - traditions legitimating, encouraging, necessitating the socio-religious practice of a pilgrimage.

According to the differing religious traditions concerning the holy center of Halase Hindus and Buddhists hold true different versions considering the mythological origin of the holy place in question. In each religious system this pilgrimage site is associated with a specific mainfestation of the divine. Those enigmatic and wonderous geological creations to be found in Halase are regarded in mythology as manifestations of gods and - in the case of Buddhists - of goddesses having spent some of their time there for meditation in retreat.

For Hindus Halese is an important place of pilgrimage because of the famous shrine of Mahadev[13] which is situated at the bottom of the cave. Mahadev is said to have manifested himself here in the form of a natural *'linga'* being nowadays enshrined. It must be mentioned that in the spatial contest of the sacred cave this shrine represents the only man-made religious structure.

Among Buddhists the sacred center of Halase is known as Maratika cave. Most of the Buddhist pilgrims questioned concerning the mythic origin of this sacred locale refer to Maratika cave as the site where the famous tantric sage Guru Padmasambhava once had stayed at for retreat before making his way up to Tibet[14] in his pursuit to introduce Buddhism there. Its distinct sacredness, however, is due to the following legend which seems to transcend the knowledge of the average laypeople. Buddhist tradition holds true that Guru Padmasambhava and Mandarava,[15] the Indian princess from Mandi and one of his main consorts, had practiced and mastered the long life practice called *'cedrub gondus'* ('the union of primordial essence') together at this unique cave site.[16] Thus, this holy site is important to the adherents of Nyingmapa Buddhists in that it is illustrative of a crucial part in the life of Guru Padmasambhava and his famous consort Mandarava. The aura of holiness which emanated from the legendary presence of the mythical culture hero and this dakini and the specific practices performed there has been transmuted into a spatial sacredness anchored in this place and sanctified by their presence.

Those deities are to be revered according to a specific time-schedule by presenting offerings, prayers, performing *poojas,* and - in the case of the Buddhist pilgrims - by circumambulating this holy inner center as well as the whole hill.

By journeying to this powerful sacred center, by offering gifts to these deities, and by performing certain ritual practices there pilgrims obtain the realization of their very individual goal.

What can they expect from going on pilgrimage to Maratika cave? According to the texts it seems to guarantee fairly much to the devote pilgrim. Alexander MacDonald (p.9) cites a guide-book copied, translated and presented by Barbara Aziz specifying the particular merit to be gained at halase. There she writes: "As soon as one visits this sacred place Ha-la-shes, one is assured of not being reborn in one of the bad realms. As soon as one hears (of its virtues), one is purified from the five sinful acts and pollutions." - Apart from this it should be kept in mind that the framework of the investigation presented here focussing upon Sherpa Buddhist ritual practices during a specific pilgrimage has to deal with the fact that the 'setting' of Halase as a holy place of pilgrimage comprises two - Buddhist and Hindu - realities.

VI. Sherpa Pilgrims on the Road to Maratika Cave

The majority of the Sherpas on pilgrimage to Halase I encountered were travelling in fairly large groupings. In most cases witnessed, these groupings consisted of both sexes and members of the three generations. They comprised between eight and twentyone people. Usually the pilgrims of one grouping were only bound together by a shared purpose but also by affinal relations and by the same locality. Sometimes a group of pilgrims included also an individual's personal friend. Sherpas starting out as singles very often join a group in the course of their peregrination. Another striking aspect was that very often these groupings were lacking Sherpamen of the middle generation. Usually those Sherpa men of middle age were hindered from taking part in this social event due to their diverse obligations in the trekking business.

Occasionally a group of Sherpa pilgrims was accompanied by a monk and/or a nun who were also relatives. Without any doubt their presence in the group provided some spiritual touch. But in no case I witnessed any kind of spiritual leadership of a Sherpa pilgrimage grouping.

Sometimes sick people travel amidst their relatives to a holy place hoping for being cured by this venture. This seems to represent another albeit only occasional feature of a pilgrimage. For example, on my first journey to Halase on occasion of 'losar' 1992, I met a big group of sixteen people from Goli in Solu. One of the male members was a very old man who due to some sickness had to make the two and a half days' travel to Maratika cave on horseback. His nicely decorated horse had to be led all the way by one of the his male relatives. Without any doubt travelling in this area under these circumstance must be a very uncomfortable task.

If they can manage, Sherpa pilgrims to Halase spend a night at a relative's house. But due to the fact that one has to spend at least two nights outside Solukhumbu before reaching the pilgrim's goal most of the groups encountered on the road stayed out over night. They preferred sites suitable to the needs of being on the road where they could camp, cook their own food carried all the way, and stay for themselves without disturbances arising from 'outside'. It seemed to be a remarkable feature of all Sherpa pilgrimage groupings I encountered in this context that they were very well organized for those purposes. Thus deliberately avoiding the overly spending of money Sherpa pilgrimage to Maratika cave does not seem to necessitate any considerable financial resources nor does it involve any minutious preparations beforehand of any sort. The specific way of their acting as pilgrims on the road, however, resulted also in a social effect of another sort: communication with people of diverse origin other than Sherpa met on their way to the holy center like porters, traders, local villagers etc. seemed to be restricted to a striking minimum. Apart from teastalls there did not appear much realm for social interaction with other people on the way, and even these short moments of trying to relate to others seemed to be dictated predominantly by necessity. By contrast, intra-group communication seemed to be all the more lively. It was generally characterized by a continuous flux of merry talking among the diverse sub-groupings usually emerging on the road either by conscious acting or just accidentally.

The track from Solukhumbu to Halase neither provides a great mental nor a great physical challenge to Sherpa pilgrims. Neither are there dangerous gorges and difficult high passes nor are there any religious buildings like temples or monasteries to be visited by the road. Coming from Solu there is only one pass of about 2,800 m height to be traversed. To mountain people whose life-style since several centuries has been well-adapted to high altitude areas this small pass does not pose any serious problem. Apart from these circumstances the fair weather around 'losar' makes the pilgrimage to Halase an enjoyable journey.

The only situation where for a short period a serious individual 'crisis' became manifest arose while crossing the Dudh Kosi by a small canoe. This shaky means of transportation across unknown waters and tricky currents could only take up to six people including luggage at the time. While waiting for one's

own term to come and watching their fellow pilgrims handling this seemingly unknown and dangerous crossing by boat the usual way of laughing and merry talking became tinged with a slight nervous overtone. For the duration of this undertaking especially old people both men and women used to pray continuously and to snap drops of water with their ring-finger over the head as if they were trying to appease the unknown powers of this river. This seemed to represent an encounter characterized by an obvious breakdown of the routine guiding the individual's acting in everyday-life.

Yet the crossing of the Dudh Kosi by means of a small shaky canoe represents the only obstacle on the way to Halase which to overcome Sherpas traditionally do not seem to be accustomed to. And aprt from this the movement of the Sherpa pilgrims across the landscape to Halase does not seem to evolve within a symbolically charged realm. By comparison with, for example, the pilgrimages within the Dolpo area, as reported by Corneille Jest,[17] the movement of the Sherpa pilgrim groupings encountered on the way from Solu to Halase does not seem to be strongly ritualized.

VII. Approaching the Holy Site

The way to Halase I was travelling together with a Sherpa pilgrimage grouping from Ringmo in Solu. Their group consisted of seven women, four of whom of old age, three of them young, two of which married including a small kid each and four men, three old and one only young man married with one of the young women.

The hills around Halase are steep. This notwithstanding the terrain does not pose any serious problems to people who are accustomed to travel extensively on foot. However, the sight of the impoverished red and ochre soil and, due to its barrenness, the poor vegetation of the whole region was striking not only to me.

The final approach to the sacred center of Halase is signalled to the pilgrim by a hill densely covered by trees. Already at some distance the gazing eye recognizes that this hill is one of the very few forested hills in the whole region. This landmark is the more obvious as many of the trees covering the hill-top are decorated by countless coloured prayer-flags heralding Maratika cave to pilgrims as well as to travellers already from afar.

The holy center is represented by this hill consisting of two uninterrelated

132

caves. The one cave of about 120 m. length situated at the bottom of the hill does not seem to be of much importance neither to Buddhists nor to the Hindus present. Only at three minor sites in the dark few burning candles, butter lamps, and incense testified that *poojas* must be held here. I personally witnesssed mostly visitors curiously discovering the site like visitors of a museum do. Before entering this cave one has to blow into a small hole in the rock on the left side which results in a deep sound resembling, for example, that of a conch-shell used in Buddhist gompa rituals. At its end there is a platform which looking upwards gives way to the sight of the blue sky through an enormous hole in the 'ceiling' of this cave. One its one side there are a few *'om mani padme hum'* including a stupa engraved in the rock.

From the bottom of the hill the pilgrim proceeds by way of a circumambulation of the holy center spirally upwards to its very top decorated by many coloured Buddhist prayer flags.

On this hill-top there is a small gompa. According to various information gathered at the locality[18] this gompa is only about 13 years old (and its construction had seemingly caused strong conflicts within the - Hindu - village community leading even to an attempt to demolish it). Nowadays the *lama* is the owner of the whole hill. He has prohibited hunting and the cutting of trees on this terrain. Currently he intends among other projects to build a new and bigger gompa including a pilgrim's guesthouse with the financial support both of widely respected high Tibetan *lamas* and of Westerners. Thus the recent Buddhist activities at Halase initiated by Tshopel Lama provide an illuminating example of the significant processes of Buddhist revitalization to be witnessed currently not only within the realm of Nepal but also in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, and in some Western countries.

We arrived at this hill-top shortly before sun-set on the night before *Shivaratri*. Orientation at the place was not difficult even to those who had arrived for the first time. A steady flow of several hundreds of Hindu devotees back and forth through the gate right next to the gompa strung with bronze bells clearly indicated the pilgrims' goal albeit hitherto still being invisible.

A personal impression may suffice to convey an idea of the specific atmosphere reigning down there among the (Hindu-) pilgrims gathered in combination with the impressive size of Maratika cave. After ringing the numerous bells we passed through this gate. At the threshold the constant sound of these bells met with thick clouds of incense in combination with a loud mix

133

of human voices and of the high-pitched screaming of thousands of bats coming up in waves from a dark pit.

From here one has to proceed on fairly newly built greyish steps made of cement on the way down, the goal being still invisible (formerly these steps were black stone steps carved into the hillside, some experienced pilgrims told me). Continuing the downward climb it becomes increasingly dark. This creates the impression of descending into a well but the goal remains still out of sight. All of a sudden, as if by shere magic, one is able to realize that one has reached something like a platform which constitutes the floor of an enormous cave. In size this cave equals a huge hall or auditorium.

As mentioned before I visited this site on the night of *Shivaratri* in the company of the group of Sherpa pilgrims from Ringmo. Some hundreds of festively dressed Hindu pilgrims had assembled there for the night in order to be in closest contact with the venerated deity. Obviously several groups had come to Halase in the company of their own *'pujari'*. The bottom of the cave was completely packed by the numerous and diverse groupings chanting hymns, reciting prayers, burning incense, etc. There was hardly any room to move, but nevertheless there was a constant coming and going of happily smiling and talking pilgrims. Many candles and fires were burning the flames of which were throwing flickering Bahun-Chhetris, Limbus and Rais take part in this pilgrimage. But in this situation the observing eye just being overwhelmed by the sight of an immense mass of gaily interacting - within their group, at least - and very nicely dressed pilgrims was not capable of making out the many differences (ethnic, linguistic, gender and age) which set them apart from each other in normal everyday life.

It took us quite a while to make our way as curious visitors down to the bottom of the cave. But due to the mass congregation of Hindu pilgrims in closest proximity of the venerated deity we finally had to return up again. - This and the following two nights we slept in the courtyard of the house of a widely respected old Brahmin widow in the vicinity of Maratika cave. Other places where Sherpa pilgrims use to spend the night during their stay at Halase are in or around the gompa or on a small strip of terraced field on the other side of the *bazaar* on the bottom of the hill which was used as camping ground.

On the morning of the following day all the Hindu pilgrims who had gathered at the bottom of this cave for that one night had left the holy site. Apart from several big heaps of garbage already piled up there were no remnants

reminding of the huge gathering of Hindu pilgrims in the night before. Now it was time for those Buddhist pilgrims already present to discover the interior of the holy cave. This was usually done not individually but in those social groupings the various participants had formed when leaving for a pilgrimage. In all cases recorded those social groupings consisted of parts of an extended family and/or of individuals belonging to the same locality.

Those diverse social groupings kept on dropping in to Halase in the course of the following two days. The number of participants over the days of festival was in constant flux. This phenomenon seems to be a central feature of pilgrimage events making any 'exact' counting of those pilgrims present at one specific site or of all the pilgrims during a specific pilgrimage a difficult if not an impossible task. Some participants had several days to spend there, whereas others only came for the length of one or two nights before returning home again. Their main aim was to visit the holy site and to spend some time there for religious purposes. To this of course, add some seemingly quite profane purposes like enjoying the various mundane offers in the local *bazaar* run during times of pilgrimage.

Excessive drinking of *rakshi* and *chang* by men and women alike often inviting Sherpas from other groupings was a common theme. Old people especially, both women and men appeared to be tough, happy, and controlled drinkers. Usually they stuck to *chang* which traditionally is regarded as drink only being consumed in the context of religious festivities. Not infrequently one could encounter an aged person who probably had got importance for a while being led by a young kid to the next place of importance for the grouping he or she belonged to.

Apart from circumambulating the whole mountain, the interior of Maratika cave seems to be of special interest to the Sherpa pilgrims observed on the spot. It is 'discovered' on one of the days before *'losar'* in order to perform *poojas,* to recite sacred formulas, and to direct prayers individually to the deities connected with the holy locale. Through the sacred realm the pilgrims move accoding to an itinerary arranged to reflect upon the power of Buddhism and the venerated deities, the surmount obstacles, and to test and to prove he strength of their faith.

Down there it is black and damp and it takes a while until in this dimly lit place the eye is able to provide usual visual orientation. The intense smell of waves of incense and the squeaking sounds of thousands of bats high above underneath the impressive 'ceiling' of this site add more specific flavor to the important gathering.

In this context orientation in the process of personal discovery is extremely difficult. On the one hand one rarely gets a clear overview over the whole structure of the holy cave because of its various specific geological formations - if one tries to take photos one object usually hides many others. On the other hand while discovering this only dimly lit site there are so many instances to distract the gaze of the observing eye. As everything was new to the whole group of Sherpas I was travelling with - but not to me - I observed that everyone for a short but interesting moment seemed to encounter the same difficulties in exploring this wholly unknown terrain. Finding ourselves finally down there in our group of pilgrimage among several other sherpa groups everyone of us seemed to sense just a very short moment of insecurity as to what to do now, where to start the inner circumambulation, in which sequential order the various important places are to be visited etc. - This individually felt disorientation occured for a short time until the eye got adapted to the dim light. It seems to be noteworthy in that it represents an essential feature of what in the realm of current theoretical discourse drawing considerably on the work of the Belgian folkloirst Arnold van Gennep is considered as a *'rite de passage'*. According to van Gennep the whole of the socio-religious process of pilgrimage represents one of the foremost important examples of a *'rite de passage'*.

That short moment of individually felt insecurity did not last long. Many corners of the cavern were dark and obscured. The central area and most of the sacred spots, however, were fairly well illuminated by the countless butter lamps and was candles being offered by pilgrims. Looking around one's gaze met with the same disoriented gaze of fellow pilgrims, and in doing so everyone of us immediately realized other groupings present already being in the midst of the practice of circumambulating the site. This finally provided the orientation necessary as to know where to start from, what to do where, and where to end this ritual practice. At this moment there were present only three groups of Sherpa pilgrims, one Hindu family, one Hindu *sadhu*, and some playing children. The *sadhu* seemed to enjoy fulfilling something like the role of a pilgrim's guide around the various sites on the bottom of the cave. He informed those present - from a Hindu point of view - on the history of the many strange stone formations which make up the distinctive feature of this sacred center.

The groups clustered in several parts of the platform. Each group engaged in performing their own rituals sticking to the prescribed sequence of circumambulation of the interior holy site in clockwise direction. It must be emphasized here that most of those rituals are not performed collectively within one's group. And there are no shrine officials who would guide the devotees

136

through this sacred space and interpret the meaning of Maratika cave, thus controlling the performance of the diverse rituals held there. In consequence of this lack of institutionalized religious power the pilgrims are largely free to wield their own power to pursue ritual practices according to their own designs (which were, of course, informed by the official discourse and its prescribed procedures):

In most cases witnessed one could see individuals standing in front of one of the various rock formations who were deeply involved in their own prayers and prostrations. While praying and prostrating the touching of those natural formations with their body repeatedly, especially with hands and head, seemed to be an essential feature of the rituals performed here individually. Meanwhile the other members of the pilgrim's group stood waiting for their own term to begin with. Pilgrims could be observed chatting gaily and watching curiously other pilgrims' ways of handling the obstacle courses to come. But one could also observe individuals in deep contemplation.

Some of the young Sherpani seem to be very keen upon getting hold of one of the sparsely water-drops falling onto the *'linga'*. We made our various obeisances and proceeded to explore and identify important points of the Halase cave. Each rock seemed to enjoy a distinctive identity and to all of them was attributed some degree of sanctity. The Hindu *sadhu* as well as pilgrims of other groups kindly invited us to test the strength of our faith by attempting the obstacle courses - another central characteristic of not only this pilgrimage place - in this arena. Thus we had to squeeze our bodies on two occasions between two stalagmite pillars only about ten inches apart; on two other occasions we had to disappear into a small hole in the ground and to creep through this in order to reappear in another hole in the ground just a few meters apart; and each of us had to ascend a narrow ledge on the wall of the cave in order to enjoy the blessing of the reliquiary lodged there in the wall above. Of such a kind were the various tests concerning the pilgrim's strength of faith.

According to a learned monk staying at the gompa all these different tests result in creating an obvious division between heaven and hells, good and bad and religious and non-religious persons. It has to be mentioned, though, that the decision upon testing the strength of one's faith by trying to squeeze oneself through the numerous obstacles at this site seems to be reached by the individual pilgrim alone. Having been occupied in this context predominantly by participating in those different tests thus representing a cause for permanent laughter among the fellow pilgrims my capacity for observing at the same time was quite restricted. Anyhow I did not witness any kind of 'moral force' exercised either by

137

specific persons or by the group as a whole in order to ... ke a hesitating or non-willing person undergo those tests of individual faith. However, with the exception of the old people all - younger - members of a group of Shepa pilgrims seemed to be eager to do so.

The interspace between the realm of the 'sacred' and that of the 'profane' does not seem to be clearly delimited in this context. It can only be sensed when witnessing certain practices of the Sherpa pilgrims. Those do not constitute part of the religious rituals performed at Maratika cave but they are nevertheless an integral part of the pilgrimage process. The rectangular paved space giving access to the gate down to the cave as well as to the gompa seems to be the stage for the performance of certain 'social' rituals of importance to Sherpa communities. Here Sherpas, especially old and young Sherpanis of various groups join together dressed in their best festive clothes and perform their dances at night. And this is also the social space for the wealthy to distribute food, 'chang' and home-brewed 'rakshi' being carried all the way down to this place of pilgrimage to the public. Whereas this corresponds to existing social norms in reality those individuals who are offered something on this occcasion are carefully selected. This seems to constitute one of the various social occasions I witnessed in different contexts which are used by Sherpas of high status for their own self-enactment in public.

This paved yard in front of the gate and the gompa as well seems to be the only social space within the realm of the sacred center where on special occasions the diverse pilgrims present create for but a short while a social situation which comes close to what V. Turner categorized as 'communitas'. But this is only the one side of the coin. On the other hand the distribution of food and alcoholic drinks by wealthy Sherpas to the public on festive occasions represents wholly selfish interests. By doing so the distributor gains merit and enacts his or her status at the same time. In performances of that kind there seem to co-exist opposing social forces like solidarity and self-interest, 'communitas' and status.

The climax of the ritual processes taking place at Halase during the Buddhist pilgrimage on occasion of 'losar' seems to be the big pooja on the morning of the Tibetan New Year usually performed by the lama of the small Halase gompa. But in consequence of his absence due to grave illness in this year there was no lama to preside over and to perform that final pooja. After that there happen to take place seemingly never ending gay talks among the various Sherpa pilgrim groupings. Usually this is connected with much drinking offered by some of the women of the diverse groupings present. This is another situation when 'communitas' can emerge for a limited time but that is restricted only to Sherpa

pilgrims who come from different localities. When this kind of social interaction between the groups finally comes to an end time has come to start the journey back home. In comparison with the Hindu pilgrim faction coming to this holy center on a fixed date and just for the length of one day and one night - most of them, in fact, only for the night - the agenda of the diverse Buddhist pilgrim groupings seemed to be far more flexible.

If the Western participant observer is allowed to specify the most remarkable feature of this pilgrimage experience from his personal point of view, I have to emphasize the distinct atmosphere reigning at Maratika cave in the course of this Buddhist pilgrimage. It can easily be summarized as peaceful and relaxed and seemingly free from any serious tensions. It must be added, though, that the same holds true of the Hindu pilgrimage three days before. In my opinion this was due to pilgrims who were above all curious about the place notwithstanding the presence of pilgrims of another creed, ready to be impressed by its mysteries, and eager to gain the fruits of its promises to faithful pilgrims.

VIII. Conclusion: 'Plurality of Discourses', 'Status and Communitas'

The article is concerned with the detailed study of the movement of Sherpa pilgrims from Solukhumbu to and at a particular place which as a manifestation of the divine is considered as imbued with the sacred. Instead of aiming at vast generalizations a la Turner and his disciples[19] I am interested in presenting the findings gained in the course of investigating a particular case study.

The organization of rituals and the interaction of pilgrim groups with diverse imaginings of Halase illustrates the complex interweavings of different religious discourses typical of this place of pilgrimage. Maratika cave apparently emanates an intrinsic religious significance of its own which is illustrated by two different textual traditions. The holy center provides a religious space for the expression of a diversity of perceptions. It is achieved through ritual performances which are shaped by religious and political, regional and national, ethnic as well as class backgrounds. At play in this specific context are definitely not only locally founded individual forms of both 'folk' and orthodox 'high religion'.

Striking to me as a Western participant observer was the fact that the co-existence of different religious discourses concerning the sacred locale, its origins, significance and powers, thus validating different sets of devotional practices, does not lead to any clash of conflicting perceptions. In consequence

of these crucial aspects the holy center of Halase seems to represent a socio-religious space capable of accomodating diverse ideas, concepts, meanings, and practices.

The particular Sherpa pilgrimage to Maratika cave on occasion of *'losar'* includes both an interesting field of social relations and a realm of co-existing discourses that seemingly do not compete for supremacy. It must be emphasized, however, that the research results gained in the context of the Sherpa pilgrimage to Halase do not seem to lend themselves to any sort of generalization. If one tries to identify the specific features of this pilgrimage it is the seemingly easy co-existence of solidarity and self-interest, of *communitas* and status all of which are played out in its course. However, a particular aspect like *'communitas'*, dominating the whole of the pilgrimage process, cannot be singled out in this framework. On this occasion existing social boundaries do not really seem to be transcended; according to my informations the individual pilgrim's outlook onto the world does not seem to have changed fundamentally in the course of a pilgrimage experience. On the contrary, one may safely assume that its experience rather results in the maintenance and even the reinforcement of social distinctions and boundaries. It is this phenomenon that can be considered as the 'social function' of pilgrimage as an important socioreligious institution.

The picture outlined is based upon key metaphores such as 'plurality of discourses', 'status and *communitas*', 'crisis? - no serious 'crisis!', and 'maintenance and reinforcement of ethnic distinctions and social boundaries'. Nevertheless, the presented results do not seem to be too illustrative as to the very particularity of the Buddhist pilgrimage to maratika cave.

Due to the various continously elaborated theoretical concepts and the ongoing refinement of methodological approaches recent research into the topos of pilgrimage has viewed this world-wide phenomenon from a variety of perspectives. Accordingly in order to gain a representative insight into the complexity of the diverse aspects involved in constituting the particular pilgrimage process to and at Maratika cave different perspectives onto the same topic have to be put into play.

These perspectives include questions like 'site, power, and administration', 'diverse groupings forming the cultic constituency of the holy center', 'differences in the pilgrims' perception of the sacred locale usually based on 'local knowledge', 'the complex and often ambivalent attitudes of locals towards Maratika cave and its cult' etc. Detailed comparisons with pilgrimages to other holy sites offer

another approach which might both add insight into the chosen field and to differentiate the chosen perspective.

FOOTNOTES

1. This investigation is part of a larger research project on Sherpa Buddhist pilgrimage sponsored by the Swiss National Science Foundation.
   The article is dedicated to Barbara N. Aziz, to whom I owe many valuable inspirations.

2. A. W. MacDonald was the first to remind the scientific community of this fact and to encourage adequate research into Halase as an important place of pilgrimage. K. Buffetrille-Daum mentions Halase in her 'Rapport de Mission au Nepal' (p.-2). - Recently Namkhai Norbu has published an article on 'The Pilgrimage to Maratika' in his anthology 'Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural light', ed. and introd. by M. Katz. Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Public. 1992, p. 73-89. I am grateful to F. - K. Ehrhard, Nepal Research Center, Kathmandu from whom I received this, but not only this, information !

3. On the history and religion of the Sherpas, see M. Oppitz 1968; F.W. Funke 1968; D. B. Bista 1987; Sh. B. Ortner 1989.

4. Chr. v. Fürer-Haimendorf 1964 and 1984.

5. On the latter Dudjom Rinpoche.

6. Chr. v. Fürer-Haimendorf illuminates this context: "The entire moral system (of the Sherpas) is dominated by the belief in merit and sin, as the two elements shapping their ultimate fate. Like other Buddhists, the Sherpas believe that every act of virtue adds to an individual's store of merit, whereas every sinful act diminishes this valuable store" (1984, p. 106). See also 1964, pp. 272-5.

7. On the importance of gaining merit in the general Tibetan cultural context R.A. Stein 1987, p. 115.

8. In the context of gaining 'merit' by way of religious activities Sh. Ortner ignores *'sonam'* but refers instead to *'payin'* seemingly meaning the same concept (1978:36-41; 1989:76-81). R. Kunwar takes her lead. But he

specifies the purpse of *'phayen'* which according to him does not differ from Ortner's understanding of *'payin'* as 'piling merit for next life' (215). This concept implies the conscious transcending of inner-worldly goals by certain religious activities.

9. See MacDonald, p. 8.

10. See P.H. Prindle 1983, p. 114.

11. On this see B.N. Aziz (pp. 17-19). However, she does not explicitly name Halase in her book.

12. Due to this A.W. MacDonald has already pointed to the fact that more detailed observations *in situ* seem to be long overdue (see p. 5).

13. One of the numerous names of Lord Siva.

14. This is only one of the many caves in the realm of the Himalayas of Nepal where according to tradition Guru Padmasambhava has stayed at for meditation in retreat.

15. D. Snellgrove gives an illuminating account of Mandarava's childhood as the daughter of the king of Zahor. Moreover the specific circumstance are outlined which led Guru Padmasambhava realizing that 'she was a fitting pupil' to come through the air, to manifest himself to her and to give her religious instructions. After some tragic episode, Padmasambhava manifested himself to her father and finally 'accepted the king's offer of his kingdom and Mandarava as his bride' (see p. 173).

16. On the textualisation of *'cedrub gondus'* in the eighth century, on the specific circumstances of its preservation by Guru Padmasambhava as a 'hidden treasure', and its rediscovery in the nineteenth century after a period of more than a thousand years see Namkhai Norbu (p. 89, Fn. 23). - L.A. Waddell mentions 'Halashi' in the context of the description of the 'Raksha' rosary formed of large brown warty seeds. This rosary is used especially by Nying-ma-pa *lamas* in rituals worshipping the fierce deities and demons. Those seemingly abnormal seeds are said to be highly valued by Tibetans, "... who believe them to be the offspring of some seeds of Padmasambhava's rosary, which, the legend states, broke at his Halashi Hrmitage in Nepal ..." (p. 208).

17. C. Jest, see chapter 25.

18. In the main I had a very informative talk with its founder Tshopel Lama, well known as Maratika Lama, on occasion of *'losar'* 1992; and with some monks - two of them being sons of Tshopel Lama - who had been staying there over *'losar'* 1993 due to the absence of the *lama* who had seriously fallen ill and had undergone treatment in Kathmandu at that time.

19. In opposition to the influential approach propagated by the Turners and their following I share the 'leitmotiv' for any research into the realm of pilgrimage in diverse cultural contexts articulated by the late M.J. Sallnow (p. 9):"... the most helpful, pre-analytic image to hold in mind is of a tangle of contradictions, a cluster of coincident opposites."

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BOOK REVIEW

Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur
Dr. Rishikeshab Raj Regmi
Nirala Publications, New Delhi
Price Rs. 150 Indian.

It is heartening to see a book like *Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur* which strives to deal with the archaeological anthropology of the royal cities of the Nepal valley. Written by a well-known social scientist Dr. Rishikeshab Raj Regmi, the book aims to highlight the glorious cultural heritage of the three royal cities of the valley. Keeping in mind the cross-cultural variations in the valley, the writer illustrates some of the central socio-cultural aspects from an anthropological and archaeological perspective. The book has been written with an objective to make people at home and abroad aware that "how far the people of Nepal have travelled, and how far they need to go in the changing context of civilization journey."

In the process of touching the core of the valley culture, the writer observes that it was in the three royal cities viz Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, the early Nepalese civilization flourished and later spread far and wide. Although, the first civilization of the valley flourished in the pre-historical times, the historical details of the valley are available since Lichhavi period. Even these details are not well-documented, and are available only in the lores, legends, chronicles and genealogies. By going into these details, the writer brings home the conclusion that the foundation of culture and civilization which turned golden in the Malla period was laid in the Lichhavi period.

The writer holds the view that the real architectural, cultural and commercial growth of the valley began in the Malla period. Industry grew more significantly and it contributed to the growth of trade. Besides "the city became important through visible cultural elements like magnificent stupas, lofty and beautifully designed pagodas, inspiring Buddhist images." However, as the writer thinks, the other aspects of the cultural growth of the valley began after 1769, when Prithvi Narayan Shah took up the task of nation building. In the process there came a great deal of change in the valley culture. Unveiling the cause of change, the writer says that "these changes emanated from the assimilation of different cultures - the 'parbatia' culture with Newar culture - which was in the process of assimilation." The writer gives much credit to the local Kathmandu Newars who long established themselves as professionals in the area of trade, commerce, craft and industries exclusively. Appreciating the craftsmanship of the Newar people, the writer says that they are a community that has maintained through out the centuries a consistent regard for the patronage of art and culture.

Elaborating the historical details of the different names of the valley, the writer says that the Kathmandu city was founded by King Gunakamadeo in the year 724 AD, but the name 'Kantipur' was first heard in the middle of the tenth century. However, from the 4th century, the name 'Kasthamandap' seemed to signify the whole city. "By the 17th century, a modified version 'Kathmandu' was perpetuated by the new Gorkhali rulers." About the structural details of Kathmandu, Dr. Regmi says that it was not developed according to a formal plan; the city "represents a haphazard growth of hamlets,villages and towns over several centuries." Indeed the process is still on.

Reflecting on the religious aspects, the writer stresses that the thriving city of Kathmandu has its another face too. For, Kathmandu is the domain of the Hindu pantheon. The writer says, "Once a pre-dominantly Buddhist town, Kathmandu's religious past is still evident on some hundred structures called monasteries, although for centuries this has been true only in names. These monasteries, scattered among the houses, serve now as secular dwellings; they still serve as Buddhist shrines. The writer believes that although often found in shabby conditions, the building and their contents are still among the great artistic treasures of the Kathmandu valley. Delineating the religious structures, the writer points out that "interspersed with the viharas, crowding the neighbourhood squares, and especially clusters in the Durbar square are the temples and shrines that house the Hindu gods now numerically and culturally more important that their Buddhist counterparts. In the quiet courtyards and busy streets, at the public fountains, the cross-roads and the squares, the sacred images and objects are familiar adjuncts of daily life. Some are masterpieces left from Lichhavis, some by the Mallas and a few by the Shahs." The book is full of such graphic descriptions.

Similarly the writer describes the origin and growth of Patan, the second most important settlement in the valley. Dwelling on the pre-historical origin of the city, the writer says that Patan is a city originally founded by the legendary king Yalambara of the Mahabharata period. It is because of this reason, Patan is known

as 'Yala' in the local Newari language. Talking about the historical origin of Patan, the writer says that "even before the beginning of the Christian era as a Buddhist community centre, Patan was associated with the tenth century, 'Yala' had spread further further westward and acquired Sanskrit name 'Lalita' and further Lalitpur." Lalitpur is the alternative name for Patan. The writer strives to find out the co-relation between Lalitpur and Patan. He says that "the name Patan is the Nepali simplification of Lalitpattana, and its use dates from the seventeenth century."

Patan, as per the writer, is essentially a Buddhist town. However, Patan has a considerable number of Hindu temples, shrines and images. The writer holds the view that even in rapidly Hinduizing Napal, Patan remains essentially a Buddhist town. Describing the Buddhist characteristics of Patan, Dr. Regmi says that "in Patan's confined area, there are more than one hundred and fifty buildings known as Viharas are regions of related Buddhist monuments - stupas, chaityas and images." All are objects of worship by the Newar and largely by the Buddhist community. Highlighting the characteristics of religious syncretism, the writer goes on to say that "the festivals of Hindu community such as Krishna or Bhimsena celebrated in Patan attract all ethnic community but Buddhist festivals are hold regularly round the whole year."

Comparing the past and present of Kathmandu and Patan, the writer says that unlike old Kathmandu, which is fast dissolving into the greater Kathmandu urban complex, Patan's old form is still intact. Describing the inroads of Patan, the writer says, "a softly coloured huddle of rose bricks, ochre tiles, and weathered wood, it remains a distinct town, in part still surrounded by rice paddies. After the encroachment by Parbatia, Patan's strong Buddhist character inhibited Hinduism." Despite the old characteristics of Patan, yet available, the writer observes that the modernizing current which has affected Kathmandu, is also affecting Patan though in a smaller scale. Nevertheless, Patan still holds the aroma of those golden years which had uplifted it to the optimum height of artistic glory.

Unlike Patan, Bhaktapur is a town where there is a dominance of Hinduism. Providing a detailed description of the Bhaktapur town, the writer says that "in irregular intervals, the road widens to form squares, the most important of which are Dattatreya square in the east and Taumidhi square in the west. The early kings of Bhaktapur had their administrative centre, and their palace in the Dattatreya square. Crossing the river, the road runs into the next valley and then on towards Tibet." However, the writer is sorry to see the present state of Bhaktapur which is striving for its survival. Its cultural heritage is turning into archaeological remains. Once the heartbeat of an important administrative and business centre, Bhaktapur is fading into a primitive village. However, Dr. Regmi is happy to see some development projects trying to protect the soul of a dying culture and civilization.

Focussing on the cultural aspects of the Nepal valley, the writer has encapsulated most of the important festivals as observed by the local inhabitants. In his chapter "Religion : Festivals and the City Community," the writer unravels the fact that by maintaining the age-old contact with the rich glorious tradition, the valley festivals narrate the story of a nation and its people. Festivals in the Nepalese society are not simply the religious manifestation, they are over the centuries, have turned into a periodic means of recreation. Describing some of the typical social institutions of Nepal, Dr. Regmi strives to deal with the age-old family, kinship and social structure in the Nepalese society. In an authoritative tone, the writer discusses the role of *Thakali, Guthis, Fuku* and all other typical social institutions which have been in practice since long.

However, the writer is not at all happy to see the present state of the valley. He says that the valley cities, the homeland of Newar community became a common home for a variety of people of 'Parbatia' origin who settled in Kathmandu for job, Business and education. Besides, the Newars and parbatias, "Ethnic community of Muslims" have played a decisive role in the emergence of a new socio-cultural setup in Kathmandu." Reiterating the impact of migration, the writer believes that "the traditional cultural patterns and value systems are being eroded by the rapid changes in the name of progress." By studying the various social and cultural aspects, the writer brings home the conclusion that the texture of old Kathmandu is changing, due to over-population, pollution and ecological degradation. Nevertheless, the writer is still optimistic, and feels that all is not lost. To him the valley cities still offer much beauty and peace.

Despite the deceiving length, *Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur* arouses curiosity at those places where Dr. Regmi seems more original especially in the areas where he discusses ethnic composition and anthropological details of the valley. In this one-hundred page book, Dr. Regmi has become able to achieve what others have not been able to achieve in a thousand page voluminous book. The writer's attempt to study the different aspects of the valley cities from the age of Gunakamadeo up to the present time, has made the book an important social and anthropological document to collect and preserve. Written with a deep insight and note of authority, the book can be ranked among the few original books on Nepalese culture.

-Hemant Kumar Jha, Ph. D.

Contributors

1. **Gerald D. Berreman**, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Barkeley, the then Visiting Fulbright Professor to the Department.

2. **Krishna B. Bhattachan**, Lecturer, Ph.D. (Sociology), University of California, Barkeley.

3. **Padam Lal Devkota**, Lecturer, M.A. (Anthropology), University of Poona, India.

4. **Rishikeshab Raj Regmi**, Professor, Ph.D. (Anthropology), University of Calcutta, India.

5. **Thomas E. Cox**, M.A., Research Anthropologist, currently affiliated to Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University.

6. **Youba Raj Luintel**, Lecturer, M.A. (Sociology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

7. **Eberhard Berg**, Ph. D. (Anthropology), Department of Social Anthropology, University of Zurich, Switzerland, currently affiliated to the Department.

150

Faculty of the Department

Full-time Faculty Members:

1. **Rishikeshab Raj Regmi**, Professor, Head of the Department, Ph. D. (Anthropology), University of Calcutta, India.

2. **Kailash Nath Pyakurel**, Professor, Ph. D. (Rural Sociology), Michigan State University, USA. At present member of National Planning Commission, Nepal.

3. **Chaitanya Mishra**, Professor, Ph. D. (Sociology), University of Florida, USA. At present member of National Planning Commission, Nepal.

4. **Ram Bahadur Chhetri**, Lecturer, Ph.D. ((Anthropology), University of Hawaii, USA.

5. **Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan**, Lecturer, Ph.D. (Sociology), University of California, Barkeley, USA.

6. **Padam Lal Devkota**, Lecturer, M.A. (Anthropology), University of Poona, India. Currently enrolled in Ph. D. work at the University of Delhi.

7. **Om Gurung**, Lecturer, M.A. (Anthropology), University of Poona, India. Currently enrolled in a Ph.D. programme at Cornell University, USA.

8. **Kiran Dutta Upadhyay**, Lecturer, M.S. (Rural Sociology), University of Philippines.

9. **Phanindreshwar Poudel**, Lecturer, M.A. (Sociology), Banaras Hindu University, India.

10. **Prabhakar Lal Das**, Lecturer, M.A. (Sociology), Bhagalpur University, India.

151

11. **Laya Prasad Upreti**, Lecturer, M.S. (Social Development), Ateno De Manila University, Philippines.

12. **Tulsi Ram Pandey**, Lecturer, M.S. (Social Development), Ateno De Manila University, Philippines.

13. **Bhanu Bhakta Timseena**, Lecturer, M.A. (Anthropology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

14. **Youba Raj Luintel**, Lecturer, M.A. (Sociology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

15. **Smt. Pratibha Gautam**, Lecturer, M.A. (Anthropology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

16. **Surendra Mishra**, Assistant Lecturer, M.A.(Sociology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Faculty Members on Contract :

1. **Gopal Singh Nepali**, Professor, Ph.D. (Sociology), Bombay University, India. Professor Emeritus, Banaras Hindu University, India.

2. **Saubhagya Shah**, Assistant Lecturer, M.A. (Sociology), Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

Administrative Staffs :

1. **Miss Sulochana Thapa**, Assistant Administrator.

2. **Prem Shrestha**, Accountant.

3. **Krishna Karki**, Typiest-cum-Clerk.

4. **Ram Bhakta Karki**, Department Peon.

152