

# Übersichtsarbeiten

## Historic Shift towards Silviculture by People in Asia A Review and Country Case Studies on Community based Forest Management from Nepal, the Philippines and Indonesia

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### Historischer Wandel des Waldbaues durch Gemeinden in Asien: Ein Review und Länderstudien über Nepal, die Philippinen und Indonesien

#### 1. Introduction

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen an unraveling of much of the Asian forest estate. The struggle for forest resource control among politicians, private business interests, government agencies, and local communities is a persistent. Across nations and borders, similarities among the intricate issues of forest management are no coincidence. The problems are deeply rooted in the historical process through which governments and forestry institutions evolved over the last centuries. They reflect concepts of bureaucratic centralization in resource governance, authoritative legislative strategies, as well as management attitudes and practices that have been borrowed from the so-called industrialized world often during colonialism (IUCN, 1996).

Governmental and foreign investments as well as new silvicultural strategies of the past decades have had relatively little impact, as witnessed by unabated rates of forest degra-

dation in Asia. A World Bank report noted, after the bank had spent around \$ 1.5 billion on forestry projects in Asia in the 80's, "the bank's investment have had a negligible impact on borrower's forestry sectors as a whole" (RITCHIE, 1992; IUCN, 1996).

Governmental forest departments have experienced increasing problems ensuring the sustainable use of million of hectares of land under their sole jurisdiction due to limited financial and human resources – and often willingness. Communities with few legal rights or responsibilities over the public forest domain have stood by, while witnessing the rapid commercial exploitation of the last half century. Until now most foresters managed woods and plantations for tree harvesting and were little concerned and trained with scattered people living in or near and from the forests.

But recently more nations are approving initiatives that provide communities or forest user groups with greater rights and responsibilities in forest management and pro-

#### Zusammenfassung

In den letzten fünf Jahrhunderten haben Kolonialismus und nach der Unabhängigkeit die Verstaatlichung großer Teile der Wälder Asiens zum weitgehenden Verlust traditioneller Gemeinde-basierter Waldbewirtschaftungssysteme in vielen Nationen geführt. Nationale und internationale Forstorganisationen von zentralisierten feudalen oder demokratischen Regierungen waren weder in der Lage, die Zerstörung der Wälder zu stoppen, noch diese angemessen zu bewirtschaften und zu restaurieren. Der Überblickartikel zur Entwicklung der Forstpolitik und -praxis in drei asiatischen Staaten, die große Unterschiede in bezug zu ökologischen, sozio-ökonomischen, kulturellen und politischen Aspekten aufweisen (Nepal, Philippinen, Indonesien), zeigt einen wichtigen Wechsel der Verantwortung von zentralisierten Forstbehörden hin zu den Menschen, die im bzw. vom Wald leben. Darüber hinaus werden die Geschichte der Landnutzung, der forstpolitische Wandel und die rechtliche Entwicklung auf der Basis vorliegender Statistiken, politischer Publikationen und Gesetzgebungen kurz vorgestellt.

**Schlagworte:** Waldbau, Community-Forestry, Asien.

### Summary

Over the last five centuries colonialism and after independence nationalization of much of the Asian forests has eroded and alienated traditional community forest management systems in many nations. Centralized feudal or democratic governments national and international forest agencies have neither been able to stop the destruction of the forests nor to manage and restore them appropriate. A review of the development of forest policy and practice in three Asian nations which differ greatly in ecological, socio-economical, cultural and political aspects (Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia) shows an important shift of responsibilities from centralized forest agencies to the people living in, around and from the forests. Land-use history, forest policy change and legal development is outlined briefly on the basis of existing statistics, policy papers and legal acts.

**Key words:** Silviculture, community forestry, forest policy, Asia.

tection. These actions seem to mark a historic shift in Asia's forest management policy and practice (IUCN, 1996).

The paper intend to review the development of silvicultural issues of three Asian countries as example (Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines) which are totally different in ecological, socio-economical, historical, cultural and political aspects. Even so it seems that all are – in different ways and time spans – adapting community forestry approaches as main strategy to change from forest-based industrialization to participatory or people-centered forestry.

## 2. Nepal

Because of its remote mountainous setting, Nepal remained essentially immune to the British colonial administration in India. Forced to accept British authority – but not occupation – the ruling Shah dynasty retreated into isolation in the beginning of the last century (LYNCH and TALBOTT, 1995). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, forest lands were controlled either by local hamlets or by the feudal government of the Rana prime ministers. Since 1927, when the first forest office was established, Nepal has exported timber to India, especially to supply railway sleepers (JOSHI, 1993).

Influenced by British advisers a forest service was created in 1942. The Rana's reclusive feudalism reigned in Nepal until the early 1950's. Approximately one third of the forests were managed under *birta temre* whereby the state granted rights to the forest resources to private individuals tax-free on a hereditary basis (REGMI, 1978).

Nepal was one of the last nations in Asia to nationalize its forests in 1957 (Private Forest Nationalization Act), in an attempt to wrest land from those who had supported the

previous regime. The state restricted access to nationalized forests through its forest administration (in 1959, the first Forest Ministry was established), who was responsible for physically protecting them against "illegal" use of local population. This was only partially successful: many feudal landlords remained in control of forest resources and access to them. In other cases, the threat of nationalization led to large-scale felling of timber to prevent the land being classified as forest land and, therefore, to become government-owned.

Following the failure of the democratic movement and the restoration of monarchy in the early 1960's, a new partyless Panchayat system was introduced. Soon after, the Forest Act of 1961 was formulated. Ownership of the forest land remained with the government and control could be resumed whenever the government deemed it necessary (HOBLEY et al., 1996).

Until the 1970's, it was gradually recognized that it was impossible for the forest department to protect the forests effectively: as local people continued to depend on forest products for their livelihoods, they had no other option than to use forests "illegally" (CHAKRABORTY et al., 1997). During that time the Department of Forestry has neither been able to stop the destruction of the forests nor has been able to manage them appropriate. As one result the government took steps to create a legal environment which was to enable local populations to manage forest themselves. One of the important outcome was the Decentralization Act in 1982 which supported the philosophy of community forestry. However, the Decentralization Act was oriented towards political leaders rather than actual users (JOSHI, 1993).

One of the most important steps towards community forestry in Nepal was made in 1974, as a result of the Ninth

Forestry Conference held in Kathmandu. The proceedings of this conference formed the basis of the 1976 National Forestry Master Plan which reinforced the rulings of the 1961 Forest Act in allocating categories of forest land to the Panchayats. In 1978, the Panchayat Rules were promulgated which then provided the framework for the operation of community forestry projects. The Panchayat system was Nepal's previous form of government. The lowest level was the village Panchayat. This system was replaced in 1991 with the introduction of a multi-party parliamentary system. Since then the Village Development Committee (VDC) is now responsible for village or community affairs (CHAKRABORTY et al., 1997).

In 1988, the Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, inspired by experiences of a multitude of national and international community and social forestry projects was completed. It provides a policy and planning strategy for forestry into the twenty-first century, the first priority of which is to meet the basic forest product-related needs of local people through community forestry and private planting. Based on the Forest Policy of 1988 the Forest Act of 1993 enshrines the concept of User Group (UG) or Community Forestry (CF). It classifies the forests of Nepal into the following:

- Protected Forests
- Community Forests
- Leasehold Forests
- Religious Forests
- Private Forests

In the provisions related to community forestry, the Act states that the *"District Forest Officers may hand over any part of a national forest to a User Group in the form of a Community Forest in the prescribed number entitling it to develop, conserve, use, and manage such forests, and sell and distribute the forest products by independently fixing their prices, according to an operational plan"* (HMG, 1993; HOBLEY et al., 1996).

That is, the control of forest management is transferred to the local level. Nevertheless, the ownership of the forest remains with the state. The User Group is not entitled to sell the forest land – but is allowed to sell the forest products and to fix their prices (HMG, 1993; HMG, 1995; SHRESTA, 1996; CHAKRABORTY et al., 1997).

Until now, the overwhelming majority of 5,5 million ha forests in Nepal are still government managed forests. However, there has been a rapid increase in the handing over process during the last years (see Figure 1).

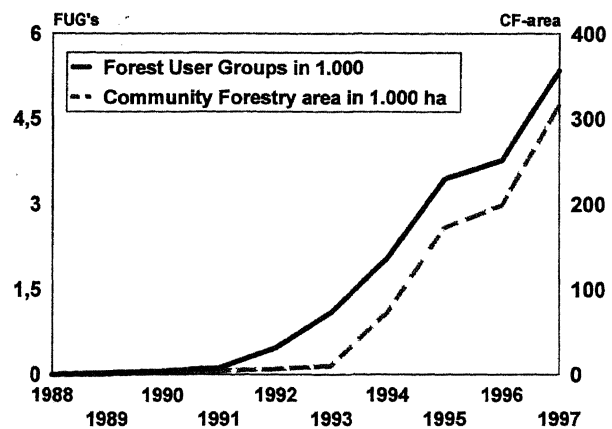


Figure 1: Development of Forest User Groups established and Community Forestry area handed over in Nepal

Abbildung 1: Entwicklung der Anzahl gegründeter Waldnutzerguppen und übergebener CF-Flächen in Nepal

Given the current rate of growth in registration and community demand for acknowledgement, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of Nepal's public forest domain will come officially under community control by the year 2010 if current trends prevail. Aside from officially recognizing community resource users as formal managers, the Forest Department is also undergoing fundamental changes in its orientation. The Master Plan of Forests mandates a conversion of the entire forestry staff to work as extensionists to be carried out through intensive district and regional training programs (HMG, 1992; ICIMOD, 1996; POF-FENBERGER et al., 1997; POKHAREL et al., 1998).

### 3. The Philippines

Formerly more than four centuries a Spanish colony (after a short independence struggle in 1898, Filipinos became the first Asians to throw off European colonialism), it is not surprising that the Philippines are still called the Latin-American country in Asia. When the country was conquered by the Spaniards between 1521 and 1565 the population of indigenous people basically of Malay origin was estimated to be half a million. The forest cover probably was close to the assumed original level of 27 million hectares or around 90 % (SAASTAMOINEN, 1996).

During the more than three hundred years of Spanish colonialism the country was ruled from Mexico and traditional land-owners gradually became tenant farmers in their own country. The spread of commercial crops (abaca,

tobacco and sugarcane) also increased the conversion of forests. In the beginning of the new century European colonialism was soon to be replaced by American colonialism. Among the reasons for the USA involvement (as well as the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1946) in the Philippines was wood (VITUG, 1993).

After the Philippines received their independence in 1946 government policies encouraged forest exploitation, maintaining close ties with the USA. By the late 1960's, there was a proliferation of timber companies, rampant over-cutting, excessive export of raw logs, an underdeveloped wood-processing capability, widespread unauthorized conversion of forest lands to agriculture and the negative impacts of insecure tenure on forest management. At this time the deforestation rate reached a peak of around 150.000 ha per year (RAMOS and UMALI, 1993).

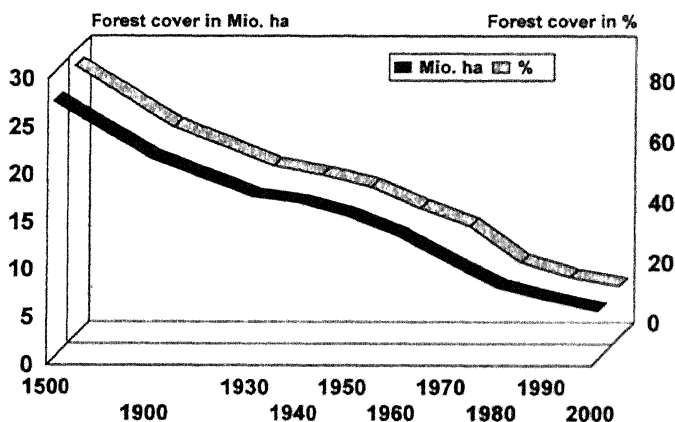


Figure 2: Change of natural forest cover in the Philippines from 1500 to 2000 (Sources: DENR, 1990; NSCB, 1992; UITAMO, 1996)

Abbildung 2: Abnahme der Landbedeckung mit Naturwald in den Philippinen von 1500 bis 2000

Consequently, the first comprehensive revision of the policy of the Forestry Act of 1904 occurred with the Forestry Reform Code of 1974. Primary focus was on the industrial forestry sector including abolition of short-term permits and the granting of 10 to 25-years licenses, establishment of forest plantations and mandatory investment of processing facilities. At the height of this "logging-era", nearly 400 Timber License Agreements were active. The lack of any land reform, the economic recession and the collapse of the sugar and coconut industries, only exacerbated the problems in the years that followed, while unsustainable logging

practices continued to reduce the forest cover from around 70 % by 1900 over 55 % in 1950 to only 20 % by 1970 (POFFENBERGER et al., 1997).

At its highest in 1974, the share of forest products of all exports was almost 25 % and the reputation of the Philippines as the timber empire of Southeast Asia was worldwide. In 1992, this share has dropped down to 0,6 % and first time in the history the import of logs was almost equal to the log production in the country (FOREST MANAGEMENT BUREAU, 1993).

1995 the Revised Forestry Code was issued which, among others, directed the Bureau of Forest Development to start a program for the settlement of shifting cultivators and further strengthened the management of occupancy in forest lands. As result of policy changes, three people oriented forestry programs were implemented in the 1970's by the Philippine government to operationalize the concept of peoples participation in upland management: the Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR), the Forest Occupancy Management (FOM) and the Communal Tree Farm Program (CTF).

With the restoration of democratic government in 1986, several factors have led to significant improvements. The office directly responsible for administration of forest lands and resources is the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which has devolved much of the authority and responsibility previously held by its central office in Manila to more than 200 regional, provincial and community offices.

On July 28, 1982, Letter of Instruction No. 1260 launched the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) for Kaingineros, other forest dwellers and communities dependent on areas classified as forest lands. The ISFP consolidated all previous people-oriented programs and legally recognized the Kaingineros first time as effective agents in food production and in the rehabilitation of the forest lands that they occupy and cultivate. The program provides tenurial security to qualified program participants through a Certification of Stewardship or Certificate of Community Forest Stewardship for a period of 25 years, if they meet certain criteria set by DENR (BACALLA, 1993).

The new Constitution of the Philippines of 1987 clearly acknowledges the inalienable rights of the cultural communities of the uplands and has strengthened the political will to make meaningful policy changes and extent to resident people operational management rights for public forests. Consequently, the Community Forestry Program (CFP) was launched in 1989 to promote direct participation. Yet,

progress in devolving management to community groups has been slow due to the fragmental nature of earlier programs emerging from a diversity of donor and governmental projects over the preceding two decades (SAASTAMOINEN, 1996; POFFENBERGER et al., 1997).

In 1996 Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) replaced commercial forestry in the Philippines as the primary approach to upland management by the DENR under the national Social Reform Agenda. CBFM is now confronted by operational issues as it seeks to implement its national mandate. These include defining the new role of the private sector, the role of communities in the remaining forests and protected areas (less than 10 %), securing funding for social preparation government training and reorientation requirements.

#### 4. Indonesia

The largest moist tropical forests outside the Amazonian region are located in Southeast Asia and, within the region, in Indonesia. As elsewhere in the region, Indonesian forests, characterized by an abundance of valuable timber trees of the family *Dipterocarpaceae*, have been decimated considerably due to extensive logging. In contrast to the well-established and intensive land use systems practiced in the central regions of Java and Bali, peripheral areas of the Outer Islands have been subjected to extractive economies, including exploitation of timber and short-fallow shifting cultivation (KUUSIPALO, 1996).

During Dutch colonial rule, forest land began to be placed under government control and exploitation. Initially, the teak forests of Java were brought under the authority of state corporations in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century. Before colonization community-based forest management was a fundamental element in many of Indonesia's human forest ecosystems intensively to optimize certain product flows, i. e. talun forestry systems of West Java, the damar forests of South Sumatra, the costal sago groves of Eastern Indonesia, and the rattan gardens of Kalimantan (POFFENBERGER et al., 1997).

After Indonesia achieved independence following World War II in 1947, new land and forest land were passed, but many drew heavily on earlier Dutch laws. Traditional community forest rights were acknowledged under the Basic Forestry Law (1967), but only as long as they did not conflict with broader "national development interests".

Since the government of President Suharto in the 1960's, forest policy has emphasized the contribution to national

economic growth through the insurance of forest concession (HPH) and forest utilization rights (HPHH). Suharto's administration developed policies and strategies to achieve economic growth through foreign and domestic capital investment. In the development process since 1975 HPH's were only granted to National Corporations based on a Presidential Decision.

After 1975 HPH's can be granted to the state corporations and to private Indonesian Limited Liability Corporation (Perseraan Terbatas/PT) which fulfill the requirements of the Ministry of Forestry. In 1968, the government awarded 18 HPH concessions in production forest covering around 2 million hectares. In 1990 the number of HPH's has increased dramatically to more than 570 in an area covering around 60 million hectares (HUTAPEA, 1993), which is more than 30 % of the country's land.

On the one hand, the HPH concessions have succeeded in increasing the national income, having stimulated industrial wood production and creating employment opportunities. However, they have created the fastest rate of deforestation and social problems for the communities in and around the forest concessions.

The power of HPH's which limited and even annuls community forest rights derives its legitimation from Art. 6, section (1), Government Regulation No. 21/1970 (cited from HUTAPEA, 1993):

*"The rights of communities and their members based upon customary law, in effect should be implemented in such a way so as not to disturb the implementation of forest exploitation."*

Moreover, section 3 of Article 6 states that:

*"For the sake of public safety within the forest area that is currently being exploited in the context of forest utilization, the implementation of community rights is frozen."*

The regulations mentioned above reflects the government's disregard of customary rights of communities which number around 30 million people, whose lives have depended on the forest ecosystems and its products for centuries. Over the last decades, the implementation of governmental policies and regulations in the forestry sector has resulted in forest-dwelling communities having to break national law in order to sustain their lives. As a consequence, numerous legal (and non-legal) disputes over land rights between communities, the government and HPH concessionaires have broken out. Realizing that the majority of the profits from logging concessions are accrued to the HPH concessionaires in 1988 the Department of Forestry added the requirement of the HPH to assist village development programs in the villages nearest their concession in

a program titled simply "Village Development Program (HPH Bina Desa)", which was enacted through the Ministry of Forestry Decree No. 691 in 1991, titled Forest Concessionaire Role in Developing Communities. The program was established with the primary objective of resettling communities out of the forest and controlling traditional "slash and burn" agriculture which conflicted with the interests of the HPH concessions. No wonder, that HPH Bina Desa often failed (HUTAPEA, 1993).

Another tool for expropriating traditional rights was introduced in 1990, when the Ministry of Forestry began offering Industrial Timber Plantation Rights to private or state firms and to officially recognized cooperatives. Recipients get usually a term of 35 years plus one growing cycle of the dominant species, and they can cultivate and harvest plantation timber on "unproductive" areas of permanent production forests. These concessionaires will, if current plans hold, develop some 4–5 million hectares of state forest lands by 2000 (LYNCH and TALBOTT, 1995).

Here, the concerning Forest Timber Concession Rights states:

*"In order to achieve the development of industrial forest plantations (Hutan Tanaman Industri HTI) and make optimal use of the development of a region, people's participation is required in the development and implementation of the HTI plantation."*

Unfortunately, the form of people's participation was and is still often interpreted by the government and the concession holder as "labor" in HTI plantation activities. Only recently basic forest policies on Indonesia's approach to community and social forestry stipulated in the political guidelines for the 6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Development Plan or Repelita VI (1994–1999) identity decentralization, poverty alleviation, and the ecological stabilization of resource management as priorities for the national development. These bear the following implications for the forestry sector:

- Integration of forestry development into regional and community development
- Transfer of decision making responsibility to regional/local people
- Strengthening participation of the target population in planning an implementation of forestry program

The Forestry Repelita VI (1994–1999) comprises 8 main forestry and environment programs, in between for the first time in Indonesia the program "Community Forest Development" (SARIDO, 1996).

From the viewpoint of the actual Indonesian forest policy understanding, community based and social forestry is still different from other Asian countries people oriented forestry programs. Nevertheless, there is a recognizable shift in forest law and development policy towards a "rehabilitation" of the long experiences in community based forest management systems – but it has to be stated, that the implementation seems to be still weak compared to other Asian countries (SCHULTE and SCHÖNE, 1996).

## 5. Conclusions

Over the last centuries colonialism and after independence nationalization of much of Asian forests has eroded and alienated community based forest management systems in many nations. From the decade of 60's to the middle of 90's, rapid forest depletion swept through Asia in the name of development and economic growth. Timber and fuelwood shortages began to be felt, adverse ecological effects like increased frequency of floods, erosion of slopes and siltation of rivers occurred in catastrophic proportions. Evidently centralized governmental forest management in Asia has failed to maintain the sustainable economic productivity of their forest resources (SARIN, 1995; VERGARA, 1996).

One of the most promising emerging strategies is to promote sustainable forest management policies and practice that enable the active involvement of local communities in forest use and protection. During the last decade of this millennium a lot of Asian nations, totally different in ecological, economical, cultural and political parameters are approving initiatives that provide forest user groups with greater rights and responsibilities in the management of protected areas, upland watershed forests, production forests and timber concessions. For instance: India has come up with the Joint Forest Management Program (SAXENA and GULATI, 1994; SARIN, 1995); Nepal with the user group approach (JOSHI, 1993; HOBLEY et al., 1996; CHAKRABORTY et al., 1997), the Philippines with the Community Forestry Program (BACALLA, 1993; DENR/ITTO, 1996), Thailand with the Village Forestry Program (PRAGTONG, 1993; POFFENBERGER et al., 1997) and last but not least China with the Community Forest Farm Program and many other activities (ZHONGTIAN, 1996).

The concept of "Forests for People" is not new. The challenge is converting this concept into practical programs and projects that make sense to those on whose behalf the concept has long been advocated. Such forest policy reform will

Nepal	Philippines	Indonesia
<p><u>1927</u> Establishment of the first forestry office to supply railway sleepers to India</p> <p><u>1957</u> Nationalization of Forests</p> <p><u>1959</u> Establishment of the Forest Ministry</p> <p><u>1961</u> Forest Act</p> <p><u>1966</u> Establishment of the Fuelwood Corporation</p> <p><u>1978</u> Community Forest Programs Initiated through Village Panchayats</p> <p><u>1980</u> 40 % of public forest land allocated for community based forest management</p> <p><u>1982</u> Decentralization Act</p> <p><u>1988</u> Forest Policy shift to decentralized management with Forest User Groups (FUG) under new forest master plan</p> <p><u>1990/91</u> Democratic revolution and general elections</p> <p><u>1993</u> Forest Act enshrines the concept of User Groups and classifies forests into Protected, Community, Leasehold, Religious and Private</p> <p><u>1998</u> Around 350.000 ha are managed community based</p>	<p><u>1889</u> Definitive Forest Laws and Regulations (Royal Decree of the King of Spain)</p> <p><u>1898</u> US-Administration established</p> <p><u>1974</u> Forestry Reform Code with primary focus on the industrial forestry sector</p> <p><u>Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR)</u></p> <p><u>1975</u> Forest occupancy Management (FOM)</p> <p><u>1978</u> Communal Tree Farm Program (CTF)</p> <p><u>1982</u> Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP)</p> <p><u>1986</u> Restoration of democratic government</p> <p><u>1987</u> New Constitution</p> <p><u>1989</u> Community Forestry Program (CFP) was launched</p> <p><u>1992</u> Nationwide ban of all logging in old-growth forests</p> <p><u>1996</u> Community based Forest Management becomes National Strategy</p>	<p><u>1800</u> Dutch East India Company administers logging on Java</p> <p><u>1870</u> Nationalization of Forests</p> <p><u>1947</u> Independence</p> <p><u>1967</u> Basic Forestry Law (BFL)</p> <p><u>Increasing timber concession leasing</u></p> <p><u>1975</u> Forest Concession Rights (HPH) only granted to National corporations</p> <p><u>1980</u> Log Export Ban</p> <p><u>1986</u> First "Social Forest Project" experimentation on Java</p> <p><u>1990</u> Experimentation with Community based forest management projects in outer islands, i. e. West Kalimantan</p> <p><u>&gt; 570 forest concessions on around 60 million hectares</u></p> <p><u>1991</u> Village Development Program (HPH Bina Desa) as requirement for concessionaires</p> <p><u>1994 – 1999</u> Repelita VI (6<sup>th</sup> Five Year Development Plan) Forest Policy shifts from extractive production to more community based sustainable and social forestry — implementation still weak...</p>

Figure 3: Forest policy trends in Asia during the last centuries: Overview on Nepal, Philippines and Indonesia

Abbildung 3: Forstpolitische Trends in Asien während der letzten Jahrhunderte: Überblick Nepal, Philippinen und Indonesien



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not be easy. Bureaucracies will be hesitant to surrender power exercised for decades and vested interests in the forest industry will be hesitant to accept a new role in forest management. Changing public perceptions will be difficult. Above all, the skepticism, distrust and resentment built up over generations in communities will not be readily set aside (RAMOS and UMALI, 1993).

Nevertheless, the actions discussed in the paper mark a historic shift in Asia's forest management of forest ecosystems from centralized forest agencies to the people living in, around and from the forests – even that the transfer of authority is incomplete and seems to be merely through leases rather than outright ownership of forestlands by communities.

It is often said that deforestation in Central Europe was the mother of sustainable silviculture. If one wishes to find a positive feature in forest ecosystem degradation in Asia at least one can be found: the remnants of forests have almost – with exception of Indonesia – lost their significance in supplying instant profits for the governments and/or private investors. If the community forestry approach fails to protect the remnants of what used to be a luxurious wealth of forests, it nevertheless will not be worse than the former policies during the last centuries (SAASTAMOINEN, 1996).

If one wishes to find a negative feature of the community forestry approach in Asia at least one can be found as well: After the trees and the profit has gone, the forest land is given back to the communities for restoration.

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