

# Forest Fights

In Haripur, Northwest Pakistan



Arjumand Nizami



**Forest Fights  
In Haripur, Northwest Pakistan**

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**Forest Fights  
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### List of Acronyms

CCF	Chief Conservator of Forests
CDA	Capital Development Authority
CDE-GAD	Directorate of Community Development, Extension, Gender and Development
CDO	Community Development Officer
CF	Conservator of Forests
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
FDC	Forest Development Corporation
FDCG	Forestry Donors Coordination Group
FFEs	Female Forest Extensionists
FG	Forest Guards
FSMP	Forestry Sector Master Plan
GoNWFP	Government of NWFP (now called GoKP)
HESS	Household Energy Strategic Study
IC	Intercooperation (now called Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation)
IGF	Inspector General of Forests
IHRD	Directorate of Institutional & Human Resource Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (now called Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, KP)
PFI	Pakistan Forest Institute
PFRI	Provincial Forest Resource Inventory
R&D	Directorate of Research and Development
RFO	Range Forest Officer (also called Forest Ranger)
FI	Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (SAFI):
THB	Timber Harvesting Ban
VDC	Village Development Committees
VLUP	Village Land Use Planning
WOs	Women Organisations

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# 1

## **Introduction: Actors' fights over forests**

When the Indian sub-continent was incorporated into the British Colonial Empire (early 17<sup>th</sup> century), the earlier focus of colonisation was on harvesting precious Sal woods (*Shorea robusta*) in the tropical belts. In 1850, when the British began to occupy the Hazara region of Pakistan situated in the North-West Frontier Province (now called Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, KP<sup>1</sup>), they targeted the foliage-rich Himalayan forests, primarily *Cedrus deodara*. Apart from other uses, these forests provided excellent wood for railway sleepers which were most needed at that time (Richards and McAlpin 1983: 69). Due to this reason, mass exploitation of forests took place between 1850 and 1860 (Tucker 1982: 116; 1986: 18; 1987:329). The second half of the century was devoted to defining forest laws, management policies and land demarcation. The establishment of a Forest department was initiated in 1956 under the Indian Charter on forestry in 1855 (Tiwary 2003: 6). First land settlement was introduced in 1872 and 1873 delineating forests into two categories (Jan 1965: 6). Reserved forests were set aside for meeting the State objectives. The rest of the forests were left out as 'public wastelands' for people's use. These were later termed Guzara<sup>2</sup> forests, meant to provide subsistence to forest dwellers (Azhar 1993: 116). Protected forest category was defined temporarily till the management plans could be elaborated (Knudsen 1996: 3).

The first demarcation of Guzara forests was introduced in 1882 (ibid: 3). It determined that the local people's rights and privileges for grazing, firewood collection and grass cutting were restrained. This was when the first protest was registered in the history of the sub-continent's forests. It was a vocal resistance – clearly pronounced to confront the government's initiative to demarcate lands. The demarcation of Reserved forests in Kumaon (Uttar Pradesh, U.P.) also received a strong protest and coincided with a nationwide outcry against British colonial oppression (ibid). The resistance resulted in the suspension of the initiative. Between all these protests, the felling operations by the government in Reserved forests continued, especially during the first World War (Tiwary 2003: 7). In Kumaon alone, thousands of acres of forest were torched in 1921 as a protest and massive forest fires raged for more than a month (Knudsen 1996: 3).

The process of tenurial reordering and continuous felling under the state control continued over years. The second wave of deforestation swept prime forests during World War II (Tucker 1988: 91) which overlapped with partition of India and Pakistan as two sovereign states, and Pakistan receiving the legacy of British forest management as a young juvenile State of Pakistan. The trend of forest exploitation though was much older than the two World Wars, as Ribbentrop notes in year 1900 making a reference to the situation prior to the

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1 The name of the Province "North West Frontier Province" was changed in March 2010 to "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" (Khyber side of the land of the Pakhtuns). This was an old demand of the Pakhtuns living on the Pakistani side of the Pak Afghan border (separated by Khyber Agency situated between the province and Afghanistan). The renaming received violent reaction from the non-Pakhtun populations living in the province, particularly from Hazara region, where this research was conducted. I will continue to use the name "NWFP" purely for practical reasons since my respondents from Hazara still referred to the old name during discussions. Besides, all the historical records, scholarly literature, government policies and rules refer to NWFP. In order to avoid confusion, please note that NWFP and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) refer to the same geographical entity. The only key difference is that KP is the new name people are still learning to use instead of 'NWFP'.

2 A legal name given to a legal forest category in 1872 – The literal meaning of Guzara is subsistence.

introduction of the scientific forestry in India (1855), “*The forests in other provinces were used as the produce was needed, but no attempts were ever made to conserve and protect them, with the exception of those in the Punjab, where, under the far-seeing guidance of Mr. Richard Temple<sup>3</sup>, the forest rules of 1855 and subsequent years were promulgated first*” (Ribbentrop 1900: 75). The felling task, since early twentieth century, was assigned to contractors through open bidding entailing huge malpractices (Ali 2009). A continuous unilateral management of resources by the State represented by its organisations shaped historical resistance to the State control, and local owners felt justified in managing their forests as they deemed fit (Knudsen 1996: 20). In turn, as Knudsen states, “...selling forests in alienation became the ultimate manifestation of this ownership” (ibid: 20).

According to the NWFP Forest Ordinance of 2002, Guzara is the protected village wasteland meant to meet the needs of landowners and right holders in areas comprising the districts<sup>4</sup> of Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan and Batagram. A Guzara may be owned by an individual / family (called Private Guzara or Guzara milkiat) or jointly by communities (called village commons or shamilat deh). Both types of Guzara forestlands can be sold and purchased. The Guzara of district Haripur is managed by Forest department on behalf of the owners. The department receives 20% of the sale proceeds from timber as a management fee under a sort of Public-Private partnership. The rest (80%) goes to the owners. These proportions were laid out at the time of land settlement, though some adjustments were made from time to time (Jan 1965: 9).

Rafique (1990) reports that in 1990, 81% of Guzara forestlands were owned by 12.3% of the households in this part of Pakistan, with each household owning an average of 80 hectares of Guzara forest. This thesis opens a discussion on the same and ultimately suggests that the situation is now changing to more people becoming owners of Guzara forests, since the owners’ incentive to own large tracts of forests is dwindling due to multiple factors including a timber harvesting ban that came in force in 1993. Since timber can no longer be legally harvested due to the ban, big influential owners resort to other creative means to ensure that they can still reap benefits from the forest. These subjects and multiple actors and their networks are discussed in this thesis in detail.

## 1.1 Complex Meanings

Theoretically this thesis is the outcome of an inter-paradigmatic exchange between political ecology - the study of the mutual interaction between nature and society (Zimmerer and Bassett 2003: 274) – and post-structuralist interpretations of actor-structure relationships (Chapter 2). Political ecology explores social and environmental changes, examining

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<sup>3</sup> Sir Richard Temple (1826-1902) was an administrator of British India. He served as private secretary to Governor John Lawrence in the Punjab in 1855, later as Chief Commissioner for the Central Provinces until 1867. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir\\_Richard\\_Temple,\\_1st\\_Baronet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Richard_Temple,_1st_Baronet) (accessed 22nd September 2012).

<sup>4</sup> A district is the second order administrative unit of Pakistan under a Province. The third tier is called tehsil (also sub-district) and further down is the union council. There are 132 districts (tribal areas and frontier regions not included which have a different status), 596 tehsils and 6000 union councils in Pakistan. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Districts\\_of\\_Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Districts_of_Pakistan) (accessed 24th November 2011).

processes rather than symptoms of problems, stressing not only that ecological systems are political, but also that our ideas about them are further delimited and directed through political and economic processes (Robbins 2004). The scholars of political ecology argue that environmental problems are not simply a reflection of policy or market failure, but are rather a manifestation of broader political and economic forces, simultaneously linking global and local interactions, producing conflicts and consensus, in turn requiring flexible, adaptive style of dealing with institutional complexity and uncertainty (Leach, Mearns et al. 1997: 90; Agrawal 2005: 183). The study of discourses has recently etched a significant place in political ecology, emphasising multiple discourses, implying that different actors have different interpretations of a particular phenomenon. These are manifestations of a political ecology that has shifted to what Escobar (1996: 325) refers to as a post-structuralist political ecology: “*While political ecology studies the relationships between society and nature in the context of power – particularly from the perspective of political economy – it must include a consideration of the discourses and practices through which nature is historically produced and known*”. Chapter 2 gives details on theoretical foundation and the methodological trajectory of this thesis.

I aim to show that relationships between society and nature are dynamic, entail multi-sited struggles among many actors on several terrains and that they are deeply rooted in earlier history.

## 1.2 Prologue (to the complexity)

Ghaat<sup>5</sup> is one of those villages in district Haripur where Guzara milkiat exists. The village is remote, located two hours off the road (on foot) in Khanpur and has 2000 inhabitants. Five major ethnic groups live in the village: Syeds, Awans, Tanolis, Gujars and Karlaals. The Gujars are sedentary graziers and mainly depend on cows and buffalos for their livelihoods. Tanolis and Karlaals own no land and have no big herds/flocks. They are mostly daily-wage labourers or those with little education and exposure, with a job elsewhere in the district as domestic servants or support jobs in village shops. Tanolis, Gujars and Karlaals are more or less at the same social status with little variations.

Nighat and her family are Tanoli. I met Nighat in 2009 for the first time in her house in Ghaat. Her house is built in a compound and has one room with a corrugated roof. The toilet was still under construction, had a curtain and no roof. There was an undulating courtyard, veranda with kitchen on one end and a semi constructed shower at the other. The house had no electricity. A five feet high wall marked the boundary of the compound. The wall is partly made of old cooking-oil tins filled with soil and planted with flowers. Two goats were tied close to the wall and a couple of chicken ran around. Nighat is (at the time) seventeen years old, pale, malnourished but confident, smiling and a verbose young woman. Her mother is a very skinny but a cheerful lady who looked much older than her 35-40 years. I met three of Nighat's nine siblings, the youngest being a three year old girl. Their health was also not very different from that of Nighat's. Her father was dressed in a dark brown, torn shalwar qameez<sup>6</sup> with gaping holes. He is an illiterate but physically strong man, who

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<sup>5</sup> The name of the village has been slightly changed purposely.

earns his daily wages through providing unskilled labour in construction work or (at the time of) crop harvesting in Bhatt or neighbouring villages. The days without any opportunity go without income. Nighat is very confident about her sewing skills. She works on a sewing machine given to her by an NGO<sup>7</sup> which had started work in her village some six months back. Nighat and her family's livelihoods are quite common to most of the people living in the village. Nearly all the agricultural lands and shares in Guzara forests are owned by the Awans and Syeds. The lands were bought by their ancestors from the Abbasis about a century ago (further explained in Chapter 3).

In Ghaat, the owners of Guzara milkiat engage labourers to chop firewood for their households' needs. The labourers are paid in kind. Half of the wood goes to the owner while the other half is taken away by the labourer. The labourer is then free to sell or consume it in his/her house. One can chop at least eight bundles of firewood clipped from shrubs and small scrub trees in a day. Each bundle sells for Rs.100<sup>8</sup>. Nighat's family always buys firewood for their kitchen. I was a bit surprised as one would expect that only the rich and people with elite backgrounds who do not like to go into the forests to chop (no matter how poor they are), prefer to purchase wood. At Nighat's house a new dimension of forest life unfolded. Her family had to buy wood since they did not have permission to take anything for free from the forest. Only when her father is jobless and is home does he chop wood and get to save the family from this expense. With her weak mother and young siblings, there was no one else in the family who had the strength to work for the whole day and earn firewood in this way for the family in lieu of an equivalent amount of wood for the owner. Besides, one bundle was hardly sufficient for a day. Nighat insisted that, "only majbur<sup>9</sup> people buy wood – who do you think can be insane enough to buy wood in this poverty when it is available for free next door? Even the rich don't do that. They ask someone else to fetch wood and pay in kind". The literal meaning of the word majbur is helpless. In this case in Nighat's eyes majbur were those who did not have a strong enough family member to fetch wood, and were the ones who had no share in the forestland.

I wondered what may happen if someone like Nighat rebels and chops wood from the forest without paying for it in the form of half the volume of chopped wood. I was told about Raza, a young boy from a Lohar (blacksmith) family who chopped three bundles of wood from the Guzara of an Awan landlord. He was caught when he was carrying the bundles out of the forest. Two members of the Awan family caught him. They brought the fourteen year old to their house beating him all the way. They let him go after a warning. A few days later it happened for the second time. The issue was raised at the village level. Elders from Awan and Syed families were invited at the aggrieved owner's residence. The owners insisted that this was not the first time that Raza had done this hence this called for a clear solution. One of the Syeds was asked to suggest what to do with the boy. The wood bundles were confiscated and the meeting fined the family (Rs.1500) with another warning for the future. Nighat told me that, "sometimes people do this but they are often forgiven. When they

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6 National dress with long shirt and baggy trousers.

7 Non-Governmental Organisation.

8 About 87 Euro cents in 2012.

9 Word used in Urdu and Hindko having the same meaning - 'being helplessly poor'.

repeatedly catch someone stealing the wood, then they call a *jarga*<sup>10</sup> or people from the department to deal with the criminal”.

For me this entire event also revealed that the Awans and Syeds were close to each other. 20% Awan families living in the village own nearly 100% of the productive land (agriculture and forests). The rest of the villagers only owned their houses where they lived. The Syeds owned a few pieces of land and very little family *Milkiat*. Among others, only the Gujars owned a little *milkiat* on higher altitudes and used them for themselves without engaging any labourer, not the way Awans did.

What is it with the Syeds then that they are so close to the Awans who don't even want to forgive three bundles of wood to a poor family? It occurred to me that the villagers are of the view that two things make a family powerful in the village: either owning most of the land (Awans) or a respectable position due to religious descent (Syeds)<sup>11</sup>. The Syeds did not own much of the lands, yet they preside over most of the *jargas* in the village and dominate decisions. They also often receive wood bundles as gifts from Awans, and sometimes from Tanolis, owing to their respectable status. Most of the decisions went in favour of Awans (e.g. fining a boy for stealing wood and presenting him as a thief).

Why did Raza 'steal wood' rather than earning it through his labour? I searched for Raza and went to meet him at his small hut, "We own a little area, and we have very little wood left there. I cut Awans' wood as they have plenty. If I took four bundles of wood what is the big deal?" At no point Raza sounded ashamed. His mother looked a bit embarrassed, "I was insulted because of this incident in front of everyone but what is one to do, poverty in itself is an insult". She quickly added, "These were once our forests". The boy took over, "We live here, so we can use them. Look at the owners, they even sell them, I don't sell them". His mother interrupted in her son's defense, "They claim in the village meetings that they care about the poor and they will do good things for the village". It clearly appeared that the boy aims to be persistent in his action. His mother also believed that her family had a right on the forests for their personal use due to their being the residents of the village.

Two weeks later, there was a fire incident in the village. One of the hills with scrubs bordering Chir (*Pinus roxburghii*) forests caught fire and lots of damage occurred. It was the month of May. No one could find the culprit. Nighat's family believed that it must be an internal animosity between Awans, an owner may have burnt an area of another. Gujars said that the owners themselves do this for the grasses. The owner blamed the Gujars. The day after the incident, a Forest Guard came to the village and left after a brief meeting with the owner. In the end, like with many other fire incidences that I have witnessed, the culprit was never found and it added to yet another event in the fire conspiracy. There was not much discussion about it either.

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<sup>10</sup> A council of elders and the respected of a village who take decisions after hearing the proceedings of a conflict.

<sup>11</sup> Claimed descendants of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad PBUH through his grandsons Hasan and Hussain ibne Ali. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syed> (accessed 21st June 2012)

There were rumours in the village that Raza had set the fire. The villagers agreed that fire incidences had increased over the last ten years. Within a week, lots of crisp, dry shrubs had been clipped and taken from the burned area. Awan families had most of the wood stacks and I saw a few in Raza's home. The owner said that Raza was engaged as a labourer and he shared half of the wood as his wages. Nighat's family also bought a few bundles from Raza. Both the owner and the landless were benefiting from the dry wood.

Ghaat's story is an attempt to illustrate the complexity of the forest. Multiple actors are involved whose interrelationships are complex, varied and rooted in history. A process of commoditisation of the forests and its products is unfolding. Some people are included in the process and others are excluded. Some of the forest dwellers have conditional access, some are restricted from using the forest and others are enrolled as tenants sharing what is harvested. These practices and relationships are reflected in certain active discourses and deeply rooted in history and in the everyday life. Raza stands for a form of what James Scott (1986: 5) typified as an everyday form of resistance which he legitimises by the claim that these forests historically were the people's forests! In this manner, he is trying to redefine (or extend) his territory. The owners, on the other hand, protect their territory by disciplining the users and harnessing their claim on forest land and products. Forestland ownership unfolds as an important determinant of power. The State is almost non-existent in their stories.

### **1.3 Forest as an arena**

The complexity introduced above, transpires that the forest is shaped by a loosely knit network of actors that are linked together by a kaleidoscope of rights, distribution and relationships which seem to determine the fate of the forest in this village (Chapter 2). There are interrelationships between people, whether weak or strong. In Ghaat for instance, a large scale wood cutting took place after the fire incident. Therefore even if speculations may be just speculations regarding who fired the forest, the phenomenon resulted in redistribution of benefits since fire not only benefited the owners but also enabled Raza (the so-called perpetrator) to benefit from the resource.

Ghaat's picture of the forest is in stark contrast to views held by others. For the State foresters, the forest is a geographical territory or area which is declared as forest by the State. They map territories, erect boundary poles, and distribute responsibilities among themselves and rights and obligations of people according to those boundaries.

Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 388) term this as property rights being textually mediated through registration of land titles and maps based on cadastral surveys, the key texts that provide for clear communication of property rights to and among state authorities. For ecologists, a forest may be defined with respect to species, a minimum tree height and density. As an NGO activist I always understood the forest as a biological resource which people should be able to use for their livelihoods.

I concluded from my fieldwork that a forest as a physical assemblage of trees and shrubs also represents a multitude of different meanings, attitudes, interests and historical claims

which may be contradictory in nature. A forest is a social arena where different actors struggle to gain access and define their rights; an arena which can be characterised by different practices – social and material – and also by different discourses which in turn support and provide legitimacy to the actions. One group of actors claims their discourses to be hegemonic, which in turn are contested by others. The forest thus unfolds analytically as an arena with contesting discourses. I essentially had to deconstruct classical notions of ‘forest’ and this led me to arrive at the concept of “forest as an arena of struggle”. I will dwell upon this in detail in Chapter 2.

The first forest fire that I encountered in March 2008 when conducting my field research in Haripur district of Pakistan, was at hindsight the catalyst for my changed perspective. Forest fires provided me with an entry point to study these struggles. I started following forest fires and tried to deepen my understanding on the politics involved. I came across possible ‘offenders’, forest owners, representatives of the State, and villagers: men and women who lived in and around the forests and who used its various products for their livelihoods. My ethnographic endeavour to understand fires and the various dynamics entailed in accessing forests for different products brought me to (often) contrasting discourses about forest development. Discourses, as I will explain in the next chapter, are in the form of texts but are also embodied in practices. Policy discourses are formulated with the help of expert knowledge (national and international) and consequently set in motion by the State for reordering forest management. Counter-discourses manifest as forest fires, illegal chopping of wood or unauthorised approach to a forest for certain use, which can be interpreted as the materialisation and manifestation of resistance to policy discourses. Resistance is often hidden from the eyes of the bystanders and observers but when looked at closely one discovers the underlying discourses legitimising the forest fights and the colliding interests and interpretations.

#### **1.4 Historical Account**

While exploring and analysing discourses and forest use practices, I learned to appreciate the complexity of history and the usefulness of a historical account. The reason to look into history is manifold. History itself is not linear and it has created situations and conditions in which various texts and regimes were produced and evolved. Ghaat’s example suggests that property rights are embedded in political history (McCarthy 2000: 93; McGee 2004: 22). Why in a village one ethnic group has more land than others, is a question that is dealt with in the historical account of Haripur and forests (Chapter 3). I shall also show that the actors’ configurations have been changing from time to time. It became a journey through time – back to the fifteenth century when Sikhs ruled Haripur, to the present, through multiple discourses. Even now as I am writing, things are still changing on ground. I also encountered skilful ways of particular groups of actors circumventing the ways in which the State has tried to control and exploit forests. The assumed hegemony of the State and the organisational and operational structure and practices of the State Forest department urged me to re-conceptualise the State. I noticed that the State actors in Haripur operate differently in different situations as per their own interpretations and powers. Looking at how the State operates and manages to use its power (through scientific expertise or through sanctions), is another element of the analyses of forest as an arena.

In the process of providing an ethnographic account in this thesis, I remained concerned about doing justice to important issues like deforestation in Pakistan. A lot of research work has been conducted and published on deforestation and access to natural resources in Pakistan (Knudsen 1995; 1996; 1999; Häusler, Schnurr et al. 2000; Steimann 2004; Ali, Benjaminsen et al. 2005; Ali, Shahbaz et al. 2006; Geiser 2006; Ali, Ahmad et al. 2007; Pellegrini 2008; Shahbaz and Ali 2008; Ali 2009; Geiser and Rist 2009; Shahbaz 2009). Forests and deforestation are the core subjects in these writings. Hence whether or not forest degradation or deforestation is taking place and what are its underlying, yet debatable, causes – is not the topic here since a lot of research has already analysed this area from different angles. I also did not hear disagreement on deforestation from any actor during the entire course of the study. Everyone recognised it as a fact and as a problem, but different people had different notions of the nature of the problem, and thus solutions were also varying.

I understand that the problem (of deforestation) can be better understood through taking stock of the involved actors' positions and capacities rather than prescribing solutions based on generalised assumptions. The study therefore touches the core question of changing positions of those involved and how these contribute to the emergence of new discourses which are necessary to consider in multi-actor dialogue on natural resources.

Chapter 2 will explain in detail the theoretical foundation for this thesis. Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of history of Haripur and how forests were legally categorised and distributed. A detailed account of how the Forest department operates in relation with people and resources is analysed in Chapter 4. The subject of forest fire, as a strong manifestation of resistance and also as a tool to manipulate natural resources has been dealt with in different places in this thesis, but particularly in Chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the actors' struggle for land ownership and access to non-timber forest products. Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, is an effort to bring out the gist of my research findings under a microscope and elicits an understanding on forest fights.



# 2

## **Arena, discourses and interventions**

This chapter elaborates the notion of a social arena as the main guiding concept to understanding a natural environment such as a forest. My conceptualisation of the forest as a social arena serves to show how actors operate to make a living, the discourses they use or see themselves confronted with, how they often become involved in fights and disputes about access rights, and how they share the benefits of the forest. Figure 2.1 describes the conceptual framework of this thesis.

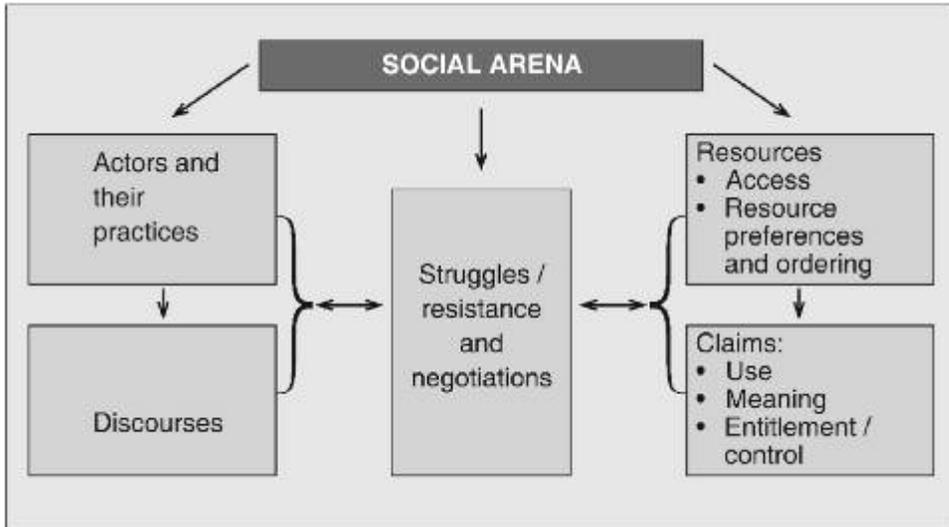


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

The concept of arena is analytically useful as it connotes and involves social actors, their practices and struggles. These concepts are linked with carving everyday access to resources, making claims, controlling and reordering of resources which will be explained in this chapter. I shall trace the history of the notion of an arena in the social science literature. The later sections lay out how I chose to study an arena. After which I shall examine various actors and their practices in the social arena by analysing various discourses. The third section describes the methodological tools applied to conduct the study and introduces my area of study: Khanpur valley of district Haripur in the North West of Pakistan. Lastly, I zoom out of NWFP to position and show the research area in the highly volatile ecological and political circumstances of 2012.

## 2.1 Social Arena

The term arena originates from Latin word harena, meaning "sand", which was usually the primary surface where gladiators battled<sup>12</sup>. Arena is also often used to vaguely refer to any event or type of event which either literally or metaphorically occurs, such as "the arena of war" or "the political arena". In the Oxford dictionary (2011), arena is described as an enclosed space surrounded by seating for spectators, in which sports, entertainments, and

<sup>12</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arena>, 15th June 2011.

other public events are held<sup>13</sup>. The stage where the opponents fight is referred to as arena. The term arena is sometimes used as a synonym for a very large venue or a site. The notion of social arena is a metaphor for the site or place where the action takes place between social contenders. These places are not limited by geographical, natural or administrative borders. Arenas are social locations or situations where issues, resources, values and representations contest with each other. These are either spaces in which contestation associated with different practices and values of different domains take place or they are spaces within a single domain where attempts are made to resolve discrepancies in value interpretation and incompatibilities between actor interests (Long 2000: 190; Long 2001: 59).

I shall argue in this thesis that the forest as a social arena stretches well beyond its physical borders. The notion of arena has been used by several authors even though they have opted for different terms such as field and space (Ferguson 1990; Massey 2004; Massey 2005). The concept of space within the epistemology of post-structuralism has also been useful to describe actors' actions – but conceptually for me they are the same, both arena and space being the products of actors' practices. Both the arena and its boundaries are constructed by social actors in interaction with each other. For me the difference is that unlike space, struggle in the case of arena is more upfront. In fact arena in itself is a field of resistance and negotiation. Social actors, which are not just individuals but also collectives (e.g. groups, associations, confederations, lineages, clans and ethnic brotherhoods) constitute the social arena and there is thus a need to study the nature, intensity and density of the social relationships that link them together. Long (2001) argues that social actors have opinions and interests and they exist in certain institutional and political cultures. They belong to networks and they can move across different spaces.

Social actors have agency<sup>14</sup> and potentially they can exercise power and are able to create some kind of space in which they can to a certain degree manoeuvre freely. Where does structure then come in? According to Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens 1984; Giddens 1986) in social analysis, the term structure generally refers to 'rules and resources' allowing the 'binding' of time-space in social systems. Agents, groups or individuals draw upon these structures to perform social actions through embedded memory, called memory traces. Memory traces are thus the vehicle through which social actions are carried out. Structure is also, however, the result of these social practices. Thus, Giddens calls this "the duality of structure" in order to emphasise its twofold nature as both medium and outcome. Structures exist internally in agents as the manifestation of social actions.

Bourdieu uses the concept of a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 94) where an interplay of relations between force and meaning takes place and where agents and institutions constantly struggle, according to the regularities and the rules constitutive of this space to appropriate the specific products at stake in the game (Nuijten 2005: 3). Every field has its

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**13** <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/arena?region=uk&q=arena>, 31st August 2012.

**14** Agency refers to the knowledge, capability and social embeddedness associated with acts of doing and reflecting that impact upon or to shape one's own and other person's actions and interpretations (Long 2001, 2007). In other words Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. Structure, in contrast, refers to the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available.

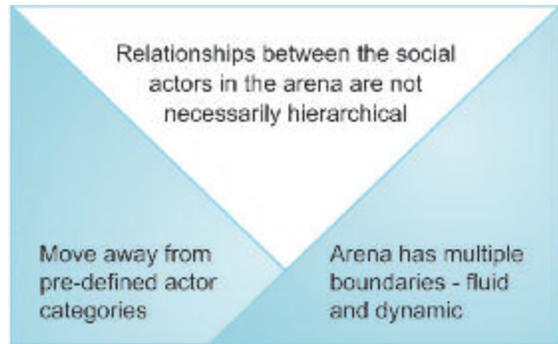
own logic, rules and regularities transforming and configuring forces. Bourdieu's field is a central organising concept to analyse power and status, and for establishing the distribution of material and symbolic forms of capital (Long 2001: 58). Long (ibid: 58-59) emphasises two additional concepts of social domain and arena. Domain and arena permit the analysis of the processes of ordering, regulating and contesting social values, relations, resource utilisation, authority and power. Massey (2004: 5) uses the concept of space as a product of practices, trajectories and interrelations. For her, space is made or constructed through interactions and if that is accepted, spatial identities (such as place, region, nation, and local, global) are also formed in relational and historically dynamic ways. Massey also recognises that space is dynamic and is always under construction (Massey 2005: 9). Hence though conceptually similar, arena assumes resistance while space is constructed and negotiated. Pierce et al. (2010: 67) put forward the concept of networks. They emphasise conjunction of networks, place and politics for understanding socio-spatial processes through which contestation occurs. Woods (2007: 485) by problematising the interaction between the local and the global, speaks of human and non-human (e.g. forest) actants constituting what he calls hybrid spaces in which negotiation and configuration takes place rather than subordination and only vertical relationships whereby the global shapes the local.

The notion of space by McGee (2004: 15) is useful and closely relates to my description of arena in that her approach to space as having histories, constituted by rules and regulations that shape (not determine) access. Spaces have certain power dynamics and offer scope for learning and at the same time for contestation. Resistance is one of the manifestations of contestation to which I will return later in this chapter.

The arena as the site of the struggle is not just geographically confined within natural (e.g. forest) or administrative and political boundaries, but it stretches beyond the locality. Arenas are diverse, they overlap and co-exist, and the boundaries at a given time are defined by networks of relationships between forest users and consumers, and of relationships between the State and forest owners. This thesis will show that the interactions between the involved actors take us beyond forests, into the villages and at the same time into the offices of the government's Forest department in the province. Discourses are also emerging away from a given boundary of the forest. My understanding of arena is not a structuralist space where the room for manoeuvre for different actors is 'structured' and 'pre-determined' by the nature of their positions in society or by certain geographical boundaries. Mutual struggle between actors does not necessarily imply that their position in the arena is fixed; neither is struggle or social contestation a dead end; it may as well create space for new actions, ideas, interrelationships and values. A professional woodcutter for instance may be interested in small forest fires to ease his job, but at the same time speak like a conservationist against heavy forest fires which cause immense damages to small wood. Similar to what Agrawal (2005) encountered in Kumaon, I came across social actors changing their opinions after certain events had taken place. Yet, what I experienced differently from Agrawal was that these positions changed continuously, and not just as a onetime change to an aftermath of an event in the history. There is a series of events, and the nature of each event shapes the course of action and struggle.

Agrawal (2005) argues that there is distinction between what people do and what they prefer to do. To understand this better it becomes important to look at institutions. For me, an institution is a set of rules that regulates certain practices. Institutions are socially regulated by norms and values (Uphoff 1986: 8). Others refer to these as the ‘rules structured for changing or ordering actors’ behaviour (Anderies, Janssen and Ostrom, (2003: 3)).

When considering arena and forest as constructed spaces, there are three inter-related methodological dimensions that are important and need to be considered. Firstly, the need to move away from pre-defined actor categories because actors’ positions in the arena are not fixed. Secondly, the arena has multiple boundaries that are fluid and dynamic. Both of these features have consequences for the methodological aspects of the study: A multi-sited and multi-actor ethnography. Thirdly, the relationships between the social actors in the arena are not necessarily hierarchical despite existing power differences. I describe these three considerations in the following sections.



**Figure 2.2:** Forest as constructed spaces: Methodological dimensions

### 2.1.1 Multi-actor dimension of social arena

The difference between structuralist and post-structuralist notions of arena are important for interpreting social arena and the events that occur. Long (2001) for instance, while advocating an actor-oriented analysis of social change, postulates that society is differentiated, not necessarily in terms of classes and class struggles, but in terms of practices and discourses and how actors struggle to make a living. Long argues that “*social actors must not be depicted as simply disembodied social categories (based on class or some other classificatory criteria) or passive recipients of intervention, but as active participants who process information and strategise in their dealings with various local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel*” (ibid: 13). I identified the following important actors during the study.

**Forest residents, private Guzara owners:** Private owners of Guzara forests have their names noted in revenue records with individual forest property details, like boundaries and plot numbers. They can collect firewood for their own use, get timber for house construction after a permit from the Forest department, collect water, and receive 80% of the revenue when the Forest department conducts commercial harvesting in the forest<sup>15</sup>. Private Guzara owners acquire the title through inheritance (established by ownership granted to their families at the time of British settlement 1872) or through purchasing land along with rights annexed to this Guzara.

<sup>15</sup> This harvesting is banned by the Central government since 1993 under a government notification.

**Forest residents, communal Guzara owners** (also called right holders): These are the owners of communal or Guzara shamilat. Their rights are noted in the wajib-ul-arz<sup>16</sup>. They can access the forest for firewood collection, grazing, collection of non-woody products and timber as per annual quota (for house repair and construction). They also get 80% of the sale proceeds when commercial felling takes place. The main difference between the private and communal Guzara is the larger number of users of the latter. An owner of communal Guzara can become a private owner by buying part of Guzara forest from another owner.

**Forest residents, non-right holders:** These are the families who came to the villages after land settlements took place during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hence their names are not recorded in the wajib-ul-arz. They cannot freely access any of the two Guzaras. Only right of access to water is admitted. If nobody objects, they can access Guzara shamilat (where existing) by virtue of living in the village, even though they do not have a right to do so. They can access private Guzara under a certain arrangement set by the owners, e.g. in some villages on the basis of sharing 50% of the firewood harvested at one time. They can only become legal users when they buy certain Guzara land and get themselves recorded in wajib-ul-arz.

**Non-resident Guzara owners:** Just like resident private Guzara owners they enjoy all the rights. But they no longer live in the same village. They aspire to have a strong hold on commercial and high-value products in the forests (e.g. timber). They usually own large tracts of forests and are often recognised as absentee landowners or landlords.

**Gujars (nomads):** Seasonal or stationary migrants who pay a certain fee (locally called Qalang) to local landowners or forest right holders in order to let their animals graze on those lands. Since their livelihood is based on herding, they totally depend on forests.

**Provincial Government represented by the Forest department (since 1860):** Forestry is a provincial subject according to the constitution of Pakistan. Forests are an important source of revenue for the government. Thus, the provincial Forest department is always under pressure to meet its targets even if it compromises on sustainable forest management principles.

**Provincial government, represented by the Revenue department:** The Revenue department managed forests until 1950. Later the responsibility was handed over to the Forest department. The Revenue and Forest departments have not enjoyed a congenial relationship in the past. For instance there have been protests from the Revenue officers against the foresters' efforts to increase the department's territorial possessions and foresters have resisted conversion of forest property into the property of the Revenue department.

**Central Government represented by Federal Ministry of Environment:** Within the Ministry the 'Inspector General of Forests' deals with forestry issues from the capital city of Islamabad. Even though forestry is a provincial subject, the Ministry is responsible for its

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<sup>16</sup> Revenue records established at first land settlement (1872) and maintained by the government. These records include titles and details of all land owners and their rights.

global commitment on climate change. Since forest is an important component in the climate change discourse since early 1990s, the Ministry of Environment has a role to play regarding the environment at large, of which the forest is a part. Similarly, it was the central government which in 1993 imposed a ban on commercial logging from the forests on the premise that deforestation was responsible for the massive floods of 1992.

**Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs):** There are numerous environmental NGOs, both national and international in the province funded by international donors interested in environmental issues.

**Sarhad Awami Forestry Ittehad (SAFI):** This is a membership based forest advocacy group of local forest owners and users. It is the only social organisation of forest communities that exists in the NWFP beyond a village. SAFI claims advocating for owners' and users' rights in the forests and is very vocal in challenging the practices of the Forest department. Most of the members in SAFI come from forest rich areas of Hazara and Malakand regions of the province.

**International Donor Agencies:** A number of international donors have supported the forestry sector over the past three decades. The re-organisation of the Forest department in NWFP in 2001 was also supported by a number of international donors. Some of these donors are highly interested in supporting natural resource management sector, including forests, most often for their significance in climate change, climate change variability and natural disasters.

**Village Organizations (VOs):** With a variation in nomenclature, in a few areas of NWFP the villagers have organised themselves into VOs. Most often these organisations, called Village Development Committees (VDCs) or Joint Forest Management (JFM) committees or others, are the outcome of a social mobilisation process initiated by NGOs over the last three decades. In the Hazara region there are several VOs which serve as regulatory forest communities (Agrawal 2001: 208) with or without recognition from the Forest department.

**Timber contractors:** Until 1976, the Forest department conducted felling operations itself. This was abolished due to a heavy criticism of the petty contractor system used, which became subject to corruption. The harvesting system was re-organised under a new parastatal body called the Forest Development Corporation (FDC) in 1976. The FDC hires contractors and follows the working plan prescriptions of the Forest department. Most of these contractors are outsiders to the locality where the harvesting is conducted.

**'Timber Mafia':** The term "timber mafia" is a colloquial term used throughout NWFP to identify a network of people engaged in illegal timber harvesting for commercial purposes. They operate in various constellations including local timber smugglers, Guzara owners, former harvesting contractors, local timber traders, sawmill owners, and, at times, forestry staff and local politicians (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009). The fluid and mobile network or networks often engage a variety of actors making the social arena of forest a highly dynamic one. I deal with this aspect in the Chapters 4 and 5.

The actor categories I have identified do not occupy fixed social or class positions, nor are their practices fixed. Their positions shift as much as their practices and relations. What they have in common, though, is that their livelihoods are linked directly or indirectly to the forest and that they often disagree on how to use, define, share and claim benefits from a forest, and how their rights are demarcated even though these may not be formally recognised by the State. The actors' categories therefore are arbitrary depending on the position of the actor and the discourse he or she is part of. I also learned that an actor may be part of more than one social class due to the multiple interests involved in relation to the forests. My list may not be complete. However it does reflect the multi-actor dimension of the arena. The data and ethnographic interpretations do not take these actors to belong to one singular collective classification, for which McGee (2004) warns. I hope to show in following chapters that none of these actors act as a unit – there are diverse positions among the same or different actors who are the subject of this thesis.

### 2.1.2 Actors' practices and discourse analysis

Part and parcel of a research project that aims to unpack the social arena is about identifying the actors occupying the arena, understanding how they present themselves and exploring their practices. The previous sections clarified the arena as a configuration of social actors and their practices, and stated that these practices can best be understood and documented as discourses. Social arenas can be conceptualised as a particular set or configuration of co-existing discourses that continuously encounter each other and are often conflicting. Discourse is defined by Hajer (1995: 44) as “*a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorisations that are produced and transformed into a particular set of practices through which meaning is given to physical and social realities*”. Another definition suggests that discourse is a shared meaning of a phenomenon, which can be shared by a small or large group of people (Hongslo and Benjaminsen 2002: 321). It is internally related to the social practices in which it is produced. Hajer's (1995: 47) work is heavily influenced by the work of Michel Foucault who argued in favour of plurality of discourses. Discourses are connected to or even dependent on each other alongside giving birth to each other as well. Hajer further suggests that the world must be imagined as a multiplicity of discursive elements, a huge arena of discourses (Hajer 1995: 47). The role of a subject in a discourse is also necessary to understand. An individual is essentially a social construction or representation and not necessarily an individual in his own person (Long and Long 1992; Hajer 1995). Long (2007: 79) describes discourse as a set of meanings, embodied in metaphors, representations, images, narratives, and statements that advance a particular version of “the truth” about objects, persons, events and the relations between them. Discourses produce texts – written and spoken – and even non-verbal texts like the meanings embodied in infrastructures and in framing styles and technologies (ibid). Hence discourses essentially frame an understanding of life by providing representation of what the actor sees as ‘reality’. However it is quite possible, according to Long, to have conflicting versions of discourses for the same phenomenon since the actors' ideological positions, their capacity to be creative and ability to translate a meaning may differ and change. This is the element which helps in describing an arena of struggle. Difference is an opportunity to study multiple perspectives and therefore is an asset that must not be overlooked. Text or script is a tool for exercising power – defining a course – dictating how things ‘should’ be done. Actors use their human agency and try to bring a counter-text or change script and negotiate positions. Recognition of

alternative discourses in fact reflects the actors' location or position in the society, as a repertoire of different life styles, cultural forms, and rationalities (Long and Long 1992: 25).

Discourse analysis primarily aims to understand why a particular understanding of the environmental problem at some point gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other understandings are discredited (Hajer 1995: 44). It aims to analyse the ways in which certain problems are presented, differences are played out, social coalitions are formed and specific meanings are produced (ibid). Discourse analysis offers a useful way of exploring the significance of particular ideas and cultural repertoires and how they interact as per situation. Using arguments in a struggle (with each), the actors not only position themselves, they also try other actors to view the problem in their way. This can be one discursive construction which must be noted in discourse formation. Another situation can be a routine practice or cognitive commitment giving permanence to discursive understanding (Hajer 1995: 56). Daily collection of firewood from Reserved forests of Haripur is such an example where the risk persists that this practice is disregarded as a discourse.

Arts and Buizer (2009: 340) suggest that discourse analysis is about putting formal and free-floating ideas (concepts and narratives) in society into text to understand how far they affect social processes and outcomes. My approach towards examining an arena is through analysing multiple interrelated discourses that are not necessarily consistent with each other. For instance, a law defines a policy script which essentially assumes that its application will be uniform and an adherence will be coherent in all the places within its jurisdiction. This is a discourse defined by the State, e.g. Forest department of NWFP, owing to its hegemonic position. Yet this assumption is closely associated with the institutional environment of the department – which may not be coherent, implying that the actual application (due to a variety of reasons) may be different from the script. The actors take it as their routine practice and not as a (counter) discourse to a policy text or script which sees firewood collection from Reserved forests as a punishable crime. In such cases individual stories from the study area have helped in identifying actors' agency, interpretations and politics of meaning. There is thus not one single approach to understand discourses. Scholars (Fischer and Hajer 1999; Iedema and Wodak 1999; Jorgensen and Phillips 2002) confirm this and provide an overview of the various approaches, including an interface of discourse and organisational practices with a meso-level analysis. Arts and Buizer (2009) identify four types of discourses:

**a. Discourse as communication**

Discourse in everyday language is often associated with conversation, discussion or exchange of views with regard to a certain topic. People deliberate on a certain issue and present their arguments. Power of (verbal and non verbal) communication and ability to bring out the best argument determines the outcome. Such public discourses can form a rationale or basis for legal discourses, law systems and administrative powers as reality or truths that subsequently govern society.

**b. Discourse as text**

This is a more 'classical' version of discourse analysis, texts, policy document, language or speech, as well as the basic unit of analysis. This approach confines the study of discourses mainly to what is formally said or written e.g. a governmental document on forest policy or

the debate at a conference on the matter. The main question is which words are used and what meanings or ideologies are implied in those words, in a particular situation, by particular actors.

**c. Discourse as frame**

The actors' history and experience forms a frame in which they live, think and act. Policies become controversial because they do not fit in actors' conflicting and competing frames. Hence in this politics of meaning to the words, human agencies construct new discourses as they fit in their frame of thinking or living. Sometimes these frames may not be directly visible or vocal. The frame also leads to defining a problem, e.g. deforestation for which multiple views emerge.

**d. Discourse as a social practice**

This approach believes that a new meaning to discourses can be given through social practices. Similar to the frame of meaning – social practices can construct new discourses. Power of human agencies is central to this approach. Texts assert power to discipline human agencies (think, speak and act in a certain way). Social practices come into being either due to individual or societal preferences, or as a result of interpretations of texts. These practices are socially constructed. Social practices also constitute institutional arrangements; the way institutions perform and power processes (individual or collective).

The above typified categories of discourses have been quite helpful in understanding the concept. However, their descriptions give a rather static image of discourse, and the authors do not relate these categories to the concept (or practice) of a social arena. In fact, similarly to the way actors' positions change all the time within an arena, the discourses also are highly dynamic in nature. For me, the concept of discourse is also not formal, rigid and limited. One example is to see discourses as frame. Actors understand or interpret discourses as per their own frame built by their history and experiences (of thinking, or the way they live and act). The concept of arena however suggests that the frame could also be determined per situation. At times claims of resources are made in view of the history (e.g. *these were our forests*), at times in rebellious thinking without any link with the history (*what difference does it make if I took a few bundles?*) or using formal discourses where they are useful (e.g. *we are the owners, you can take firewood but not the tree*). Another experience that I have encountered in the field is that there is not one type of discourse active at one time, but that there are multiple discourses that are either in support of or contesting each other. My study brings examples from all types of discourses and their encounters.

Discourse analysis helps to understand how the State coerces its power for 'reordering' society (Scott 1998) and in response, various forms of resistance/struggle (Scott 1986; O'Brien 1996) emerge which are analysed with a reminder that actors' change their positions in their political struggle and relationship to environment (Agrawal 2005). The following sections further elaborate on these aspects.

### 2.1.3 Resistance and negotiation in a social arena

The third important dimension of a social arena is how to interpret the relationships between social actors. Long and Long (1992: 24) while referring to Giddens (1984: 16) point out that “*all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence the activities of their superiors*”. I have elaborated on this in detail in Chapter 4, since often the ‘subordinate’ actors have not only constructed their own social realm; they have also influenced the arena where they unconsciously or consciously trigger new (counter)discourses by other actors. Discourses of struggle and resistance are usually not complete; they open into new discourses, or they are linked with others. Some may be quite inert from the looks of it, but at a later stage a link with another critical event emerges and it starts making sense. “*The battle is never over since all actors exercise some kind of “power”, even those in highly subordinate positions*” (Long and Long 1992: 24).

Resistance is a socially embedded process (Long, (2007: 70) just like discourse which is constituted through social interaction. It characterises struggle of power and authority (not necessarily hierarchical in a classical way, between the dominant and the dominated) as a self-organising process and decision-making based on interpersonal network and informal normative commitments to access resources. However, Long continues, ways in which people engage in particular actions, counteractions and discourses, need to be specified. “*These elements compose the fields and arenas in which struggles take place, and are themselves reconfigured by the particular actions and negotiations that ensue*” (ibid: 72). Social struggles emerge from actor defined issues and critical events. This relates to Scott’s concept of everyday forms of resistance (1985; Scott) but where it differs is that Scott seems to believe in fixed positions of actors (one who coerces power while the other is suppressed and resists) while in the social arena that I have defined for the study, there exist suggestions that these positions change.

O’Brien (1996) refers to a scholarly work by Jeffrey Herbst and James Scott, and describes various forms of resistance. The first is popular resistance – expressions of negation or demand for legitimacy, conflict positions and actions by people lacking resource, to institutional politics. Forcing marginalisation of officials and economic elites, defiance of national rules are examples of popular resistance. However, O’Brien argues that the contentious politics is not always about two well-defined groups (the State or elite vs subordinate classes). He uses the notion of ‘rightful resistance’ and explains a variety of forms of struggles which may emerge due to various reasons (O’Brien 1996: 32):

- Discontented exploiting divisions among the powerful. In such a position, the classical ‘subordinates’ acquire a position of ‘super-ordinates’.
- Sometimes aggrieved citizens employ government commitments and established values to persuade the concerned elites to support their claims. Such resistance stems out of elites taking liberties with the symbols and assets in which they have invested the most. This is based on an alliance between the aggrieved and the ‘dominant’ – hence the classical categorisation of dominant and sub-ordinates breaks down (Scott 1986). These ‘resisters’ use someone else (more powerful, e.g. the State) for mediation and remain a little in the background.

- In-between forms of resistance when defiance against the dominant (e.g. the government) is not the purpose, but their purposive actions clearly seem to circumvent the rules of the game as determined by the government.
- Reasonable radicalism refers to an extremist position to bring change – articulating that there is a need for change. Actors are capable of remaining rational, and presenting their case with logic.
- Reformist activism – resistance is aimed at bringing a vital change in the power balance and distribution of assets; there is a clear rhetoric to curb power.

I have dealt with these classifications in various places but more prominently in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 which are the core chapters producing results from the research.

Scott (1985; 1986) elaborates that everyday forms of resistance often stops well short of collective outright defiance. He argues that resistance fails to organise collective action due to opportunistic behaviour among actors. My study area is a case of a collective, though uncoordinated, defiance amongst local people, based on opportunistic decision making. People seem to follow the same course without much coordination with each other, and explain those acts as conventional practices with more or less similar norms. Specific examples come from firewood collection by women, and the opinions voiced by people regarding forest fires. The form of resistance that people choose to follow depends to a considerable extent on how aware and serious they are about their rights. In fact there is a need for a certain degree of consciousness regarding rights, right to claim access and derive benefits from the resources (Ribot and Peluso 2003). Most of the motivation for everyday resistance in my study area comes from the users' daily needs and their relationships with the owners of resources. These relationships are not one sided, they are subject to struggle but also alliances depending upon situations. At the same time, the so-called owners when unpacked from their collective form also seem to struggle amongst themselves (see Chapter 6). Hence analysis of discourses must capture these changing positions within the politics of environment.

Scott (1986: 6) explains that everyday forms of resistance require little or no coordination and typically avoid any direct symbolic confrontation with authority or with elite norms. He also suggests that such actions can only marginally affect various forms of exploitation, which cause resistance. Hence everyday forms of resistance are subtle expressions of defying and rejecting norms, without necessarily having the potential to change them in a vital manner. They try to remain invisible and retain their anonymity, despite the fact that everyone contributes to the same actions individually. The example of Non Timber Forest Product is one such example in this thesis (Chapter 7).

Scott quotes an example: a poor man was given lesser wages than he expected. He said nothing to his wealthy employer but spoke badly of him behind his back, saying, "*Poor people can never complain; when I'm sick or need work, I may have to ask him again. I am angry in my heart*" (ibid: 14-15). Due to economic dependencies many people refrain from raising their voices against certain exploitations – yet they adopt other ways to 'punish' the perpetrators. I will elaborate this through ethnographic accounts from people in different chapters. Collection of firewood from Reserved forests, which as per government rules can

be classified as 'theft', is one such action. This kind of theft is also explained as one form of everyday resistance, despite it involving no well-coordinated collective action or decisions. However, the fact that nearly all the households living close to Reserved forests do this, and everyone knows that the practice is widespread – makes it a kind of collective defiance that potentially changes the resource use regime from an official discourse. In the history of forest management in the Hazara region where the study was conducted, we can see all the options employed from time to time, narrowing down options for the State to respond to everyday forms of resistance. A few examples also appear at national level when the State tried to reform its policies but instead, those reforms invigorated new forms of resistance (Chapter 4). These are defiant actions – silent or violent, singular and multiple in a series – but there is an expression of resistance in them all. Herbst (1989: 199) suggested that certain institutional arrangements and goods are always amenable to political pressure, which only the weak and unorganised can bear. A forest is one of those goods which can be very political, e.g. in terms of access, use and ownership.

A lethal form of alliance making forest even more political is the State and elite joining together to further suppress the sources of daily subsistence for the users. The people in my study area have been more successful in exploiting the divisions between various powerful actors within the alliance, than trying to change the status quo in a frontal way. Turton (1986: 36) coined a term 'middle-ground', as everyday forms of resistance are too vast in scope and their expression can be passive, open or collective defiance. The middle-ground is an arena of struggle which is in between every-day and exceptional forms of resistance. This concept very well explains the case of forest fires which I see neither as everyday resistance nor as violent, outspoken, open confrontation.

The case of forest fires shows some of the ingredients of everyday resistance such as non-coordination, and anonymous actions not powerful enough to bring complete reforms. Yet, the action of putting forests on fire is an active decision, which does not take place in the everyday life of a forest stakeholder. It is vital enough to largely manipulate the rules set by the State (e.g. ban on green felling). Access to Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) is another example of trying to find a middle-ground. Women access these resources without becoming visible, without challenging powerful actors – and at the same time, remain extremely vital as the backbone for the business which reaches up to the national market (Chapter 7).

#### **2.1.4 Resources: Access, claims, reordering**

The concept of a "bundle of rights" has been presented by many authors as useful for analysing the component of property rights and obligations (Fortmann 1985; Schlager and Ostrom 1992; Fortmann 1995; Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999). In contrast, Ribot and Peluso (2003: 153) bring the concept of access, defined as the ability to derive benefits from the resources. Rights are more associated with property while ability is akin to powers or actors' agency in social arena. I stop short of further elaboration of the concept of access by the authors in a 'bundle' of powers: constituting material, cultural and political-economic strands within the bundle to configure right of access to resources. In the arena it is not essential that power comes with a pre-defined composition. Neither is it essential that the bundle of powers rests with one actor and all are deployed to access resources. For me, the

ability to derive benefits from resources and making claims using history as a background are important. Chapter 6 shows that territories are being redefined by people for acquiring space for themselves in the arena. They decide selectively and opportunistically in a dynamic way to manoeuvre their access to forests. In this access, the concept of actors using their agency seems more relevant to ensure access to resources.

While in Haripur, forest users are busy in finding ways to legitimising their claims and carving their access to resources, the State continues to reorder its administrative control using various tools and procedures. This phenomenon is very well explained by Scott (1998) describing the establishment of German scientific forestry management. Using the metaphor of the State forest, he argued that in the process of coercing control, its tunnel vision misses out parts of the forest that is subject to human interaction (e.g. NTFP). This is also what this thesis explains in different places, but more in detail in Chapter 7. Scott explained four elements which usually bring tragedy to the State initiated social engineering (ibid: 2-6):

**a. Administrative ordering of nature and society**

The State forestry service in united India, and later adopted by independent Pakistan, was organised with a command and control system and the authority to implement a new forest governance regime. In 1872 when the then colonial government of British India territorialised large areas of forests and Reserved part of the forest for the State, certain trade-offs were also announced and rules and procedures for rights over and access to forests, were defined, such as cutting or planting a tree, extraction of non woody produce, grass cutting and selling. A hierarchical organisation was established for forest administration – initially under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, and later shifted to foresters with magisterial powers. At the same time, silvicultural systems were devised for different forests bringing an order to forest management which could lead to determining annual yields and planting targets. Working plans were introduced to implement the systems. These working plans were executed by foresters who were held accountable by the provincial administration if they were not properly implemented (see Chapters 4 and 6).

**b. High modernist ideology – mastery of nature based on science and technology**

Nature experts design various systems to manage resources in a certain fashion on the basis of their technical or scientific wisdom. They do not speak for nature – but in fact what they are devising in ‘technical’ terms contributes to manipulating it. In their normative view of nature they define the ideal forest, how a tree should look, which tree species are preferred, how the forest will be exploited etc. Scientific forestry as introduced in the South Asian subcontinent in 1855, was mainly influenced by the German school of forestry (Scott 1998: 12). It was based on yield calculations of the most commercially viable timbers. All other trees and undergrowth were generally excluded from this view as they did not carry any major potential for earning revenue for the State. However, this part of the forest with undergrowth was very important for the local population for subsistence and income – a fact that was recognised through allowing local people’s subsistence use of “minor forest products” (non woody products from the forest). This is where the dimension of gender and inclusion becomes important in access to forest in India and Pakistan (Chapter 7).

**c. Authoritarianism – using the power of State machinery to implement the above**

All forest use was controlled through punitive laws defined during 1855-1878 (Tiwary 2004). Most sanctions are related to stealing timber or causing damage to the trees. Fire was a major offence punishable by fines or imprisonment based on the wisdom promoted by British scientists (and eventually laws) that fire is always bad, except for those that are set by the Forest authorities. The culture promoted within the forest administration was amazingly well controlled and standardised in the sub-continent. The designations of staff indicated the power of high officials like inspectors, conservators, rangers, and guards. This was primarily done through ensuring that all senior foresters were commissioned in the service through competitive exams. All successful candidates then passed through the same educational institute. The Forest Research Institute (FRI) of Dehra Dun (1878), India has been associated with forest research and education in South Asia for over 100 years. Until the 1960s professional forest service staff of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka was sent to FRI for their officers' training. It was only in 1969 that Pakistan established its own, separate training establishment - the Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) at Peshawar, which followed the same pattern as FRI. The PFI is also now the only State recognised institution teaching forestry. A rigorous military-like discipline, strong hierarchical structure and working ethics are promoted in these places (FRI, PFI). Students are taught to take pride in their superior scientific and technical knowledge, and to implement forest legislation to the letter, the emphasis being on punishing offenders. The current teaching curricula include modules on participatory approaches, yet the influence of past teaching remains strong with many individuals now occupying senior positions in the forest services of South Asian countries. Their training has instilled in them an attitude of superiority and a belief in top-down decision-making, based on the concept of the State being the most appropriate sole manager of forest resources. It has ill-equipped them to appreciate the need for multi-stakeholder processes in forest governance, or to deal with the complexities involved (Carter, Schmidt et al. 2009: 21).

**d. A non-functional civil society**

Scott (1998: 5) called it a prostrate civil society, which has no or little capacity to raise its voice. An authoritarian government does not encourage development of a strong civil society as it is unwilling to be challenged on its actions. The development of civil society varied in different regions of India and Pakistan, with the NWFP being one of the last regions in the sub-continent for an active civil society to emerge (Nosheen 1997: 5). The first few NGOs claiming to represent civil society appeared on the scene in the 1970s, mostly with USAID support. However they were not very well recognised as civil society by common masses. This was in large part because they were perceived to be associated with Western values who did not chime with closely-knit traditional tribal, Islamic society. The first environmental movement was witnessed in 1980s with regard to forest conservation. Attention from donors has since grown in seeking to address a climate change / biodiversity conservation agenda. Under a discourse framed in the history of NGOs as a vehicle for delivery quicker than the government, the NGOs were associated with international donors and their identities. This image is further distorted due to religious fundamentalists who insist that NGOs promote foreign agenda incoherent with national values. A tension between the State and the NGOs is visible in Pakistan since the State sees NGOs as competitors for international funds. In general, an organic civil society development in the country is hampered by several challenges, including a lack of encouragement from the State. During

the last twenty years when a number of massive natural disasters occurred in Pakistan, NGOs became more of an implementation tool for the State as project contractors. This implied that NGOs started to look up to the government for their survival and viable continuation, rather than acting as one element of 'civil society', taking strong opposing position and keeping the resistance warm. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

For Scott (1998) the above four elements are historical phases of reordering of a society. In my view, these are different, but at times simultaneously applied ingredients of coercing power and they are very much present and valid in contemporary world. The State sees things in its own way and continues to introduce administrative reordering to achieve its vision. But parallel to this, other actors also determine how they see the State and the resources they need, and change their strategies and positions in a creative manner. Boundaries are fluid and new ideas based on modern knowledge still confront realities on the ground. Coming back to the notion of arena, the preceding summary of the State's reordering also explains that the State tries to construct an arena but in doing so, it is creating the very foundation of resistance. Scott's authoritarian government is aware that in this process it will face opposition and therefore the controlling measures get stronger and stronger with each reordering. In my thesis (Chapter 4) we see that the idea of a prostrate civil society would actually also fit the controlling authority itself since it has no or little capacity to implement its reordered administration.

## 2.2 Research Objectives and Questions

Nature is perceived in this thesis not as separate from the social, but rather as the place specific co-production of the social and the natural. The underlying processes of mutual transformation are in essence dynamic, rooted in history and given shape by the multi-sited struggles amongst and between many actors at various levels. The forest is thus not characterized by one reality but rather by multiple realities that are represented by different discourses of development. The core objective of this study is to understand the multiple realities of a forest. The concept of a social arena is taken as a useful methodological device as this allows an analysis of the multiple, coinciding and at times contradicting discourses. With this objective, the study on the one hand contributes theoretically to a post-structuralist political ecology; on the other hand the thesis sets out to unpack the forest in a different way from policy makers and practitioners. I argue for a more historically and politically grounded understanding of resource use, rights and entitlements. This is best captured through a type of discourse analysis that examines the practices of the various actors involved, such as forest dwellers, elites, forestry officials, and policy makers. Their actions (or non-actions) provide key insights into their role in the forest arena. Practices, the self-construction of notions, politics of language and the interfaces at various levels create a battlefield of knowledge and interaction (Long and Long 1992) which are the subject of this study. There arise two main questions:

1. How is the social arena constituted by actors, practices, and discourses?
2. What kind of new spaces are being created in the social arena, and how do they contribute towards defining the forest?

## 2.3 Methodological trajectory

The fact that the social arena is shaped by actors, discourses and interactions has consequences for the methodological trajectory. The arena manifests itself in different forms of resistance and negotiations. The discourses are about resources, access and rules set by the State to which people are refusing to prescribe, while making their own rules. This study is based on analyses of multiple discourses at various levels in the forest arena. It is based on what I observed, heard, read and discussed over a period of five years (2007-2012). I hasten to add that, more importantly it is founded on how others saw and interpreted things regarding forest use, forest fires, deforestation, and interaction among actors. Hence actors' perspectives were equally important as were the social practices that I came across and recorded ethnographically.

My first data note on the forest fire in Bakka village (2008) was an ethnographic account. I could not have noted these data in another way. At this point I decided that ethnography as a means of analysis and illustration would be appropriate for this thesis. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3) describe how "...*ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and /or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artifacts...*". They further suggest that an ethnographer draws on a range of sources of data, though he / she may rely primarily on one or more. Ethnography as a method is useful when complex social processes need to be understood in detail in the social arena. I tried to write various accounts a number of times using literature to remain consistent to what I extracted from my data; this was not quite easy though. None of the events could be written in a linear manner, since all the events were recorded without being selective in what to record. This on one hand brought richness to my data, but on the other overloaded me with a lot of details which mounted the challenge of writing on specific aspects. The main essence of methodology was to inform myself of critical events taking place in the arena, interact with multiple actors and explore details. This took me to understand parallel discourses and counter discourses. I have made an effort to understand actors' practices, subtle, tactful and outspoken struggles and relationships. The emphasis has been on understanding local interpretations of policies, manipulations to circumvent rules enforced by the State or the local elites, alliances and power relations, and how various actors make use of such alliances and relations. I have also tried to take into account people's knowledge and their forest practices and the role of various actors and everyday life realities of those responsible for resource management. In doing so, I used a combination of data collection methods during this study: Individual or group interviews, focused group discussions, case studies and participant observation. The data were then used to produce the ethnographic accounts (Chapters 3-7).

### 2.3.1 My position as a researcher

Working closely with the communities for 19 years on various development projects, my affiliation with Intercooperation<sup>17</sup>, and my academic background as a forester moving into development sociology have shaped my research and have been both helpful as well as problematic in conducting this study. I grappled with the concepts in social science to give

the right interpretation to my data, adequately benefiting from my forestry knowledge. Amongst others, a few factors greatly helped me in data collection:

Intercooperation was engaged in a development project in Haripur when I chose the district for the study. However, most of the activities were concentrated in the Eastern part of the district. My prior knowledge of Haripur and its people was an advantage. Khanpur valley of Haripur was new to me hence keeping an open mind regarding the area and people, was helpful. As an old inhabitant of NWFP, my feeling of an insider is equally important since I have a special association with the people living in difficult valleys and rich forests. I had been interacting with several district level players, both senior and junior. They were open to share their views and concerns regarding their interaction with local actors. The most useful information came during informal moments such as taking a casual walk around the village, or over a hot cup of tea. It was also relatively easy for me to access official information and records due to my employment in an NGO working in natural resource management.

I felt highly at ease with honest responses from some of the State officials of the Forest department and the Revenue department. This was possible due to my history and former working relationship with the NGOs. Almost none of them expressed any concerns or worry regarding my use of the information they provided in this thesis.

Being a woman was an advantage in my interacting with women since local culture does not allow male researchers to directly interact with women without their male relatives' presence or consent. As a Pakistani woman, I was respected for the same cultural values which women in Haripur enjoyed and hence at no occasion my interaction with women was monitored<sup>18</sup> by the presence of family men in the surroundings. I also consider the visits of my husband and children to the village to be a major ground for gaining villagers' trust, as my family's visits solidified my credentials as a respectable married Pakistani woman.

I benefited from two research assistants<sup>19</sup> in the field mainly during 2008-2009. These assistants were employed by Intercooperation as interns. Roshan Ara had completed her Masters in Development Sociology from Allama Iqbal Open University, Peshawar. She studied Gender Analysis of Entrepreneurs in Najafpur, in the wild pomegranate value chain. Amina Ijaz was a diploma student in Disaster Studies at the Peshawar University. She studied the impact of forest fire on wild pomegranate cultivation and local income in Haripur.

We pre-discussed our work, observed together but took notes independently or spoke to different people when on a walk in the forest or in a large group. We shared our observations in the evenings. We often had a lot in common in our notes from a common event but yet

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**17** Intercooperation and Helvetas merged themselves in Switzerland in June 2011 to become a large Swiss NGO named "HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation". Helvetas had no development operation in Pakistan. Intercooperation therefore continues to operate in Pakistan but with the new name.

**18** Family men did not voluntarily join an on-going interview with a woman. Their presence would have been a disrespectful act against me as a woman who was not related to them. At several occasions, I requested the family's presence during interviews (e.g. son or other family men) to arrive at a complete overview, or to observe the relationship regarding decision making. At times young boys (aged 12-17) would hang around during the interview in curiosity but never intruded/dominated any meeting.



**Picture 2.1:** Participation in pomegranate collection in Kurwali



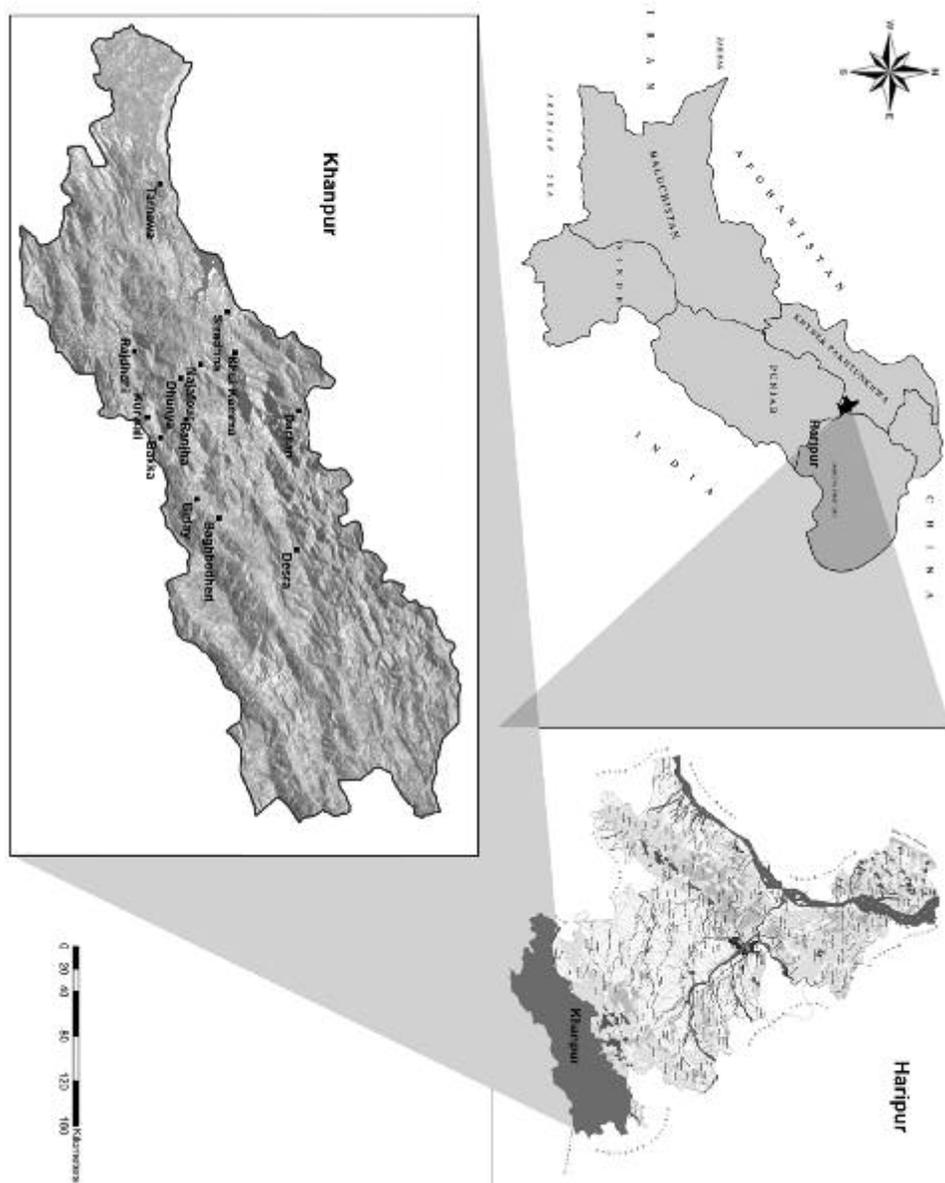
**Picture 2.2:** Roshan and Amina with Shah Jahan of Najafpur

there were also some highly useful additional elements which each one of us would bring in. The main fieldwork for this study was carried out during 2008, 2009 and 2010. Despite difficult political and security conditions of NWFP during Pakistani and international military operations in border areas against insurgents (especially in 2009 and 2010), I could conduct over a hundred interviews with respondents including young people aged between 11-20 years, elderly aged between 65-102 years and other villagers, men and women in fourteen villages. Around thirty interviews were conducted with field staff of Forest, Agriculture and Revenue departments and local NGOs.

Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, is conveniently a common medium for conversing with people in Haripur, especially with men. I have fairly good skills in Hindko and hence directly conversing in Hindko where appropriate, especially with women was not a problem. I never needed an interpreter, which made me very comfortable in having direct access to the information that the actors were sharing with me. I also found people who had settled in Haripur from elsewhere and spoke Pashto, a major language spoken in the North-West Frontier Province. On several occasions my skills in Pushto helped me while seeking access to archives or secondary data.

### 2.3.2 Selecting Khanpur and the village as research site

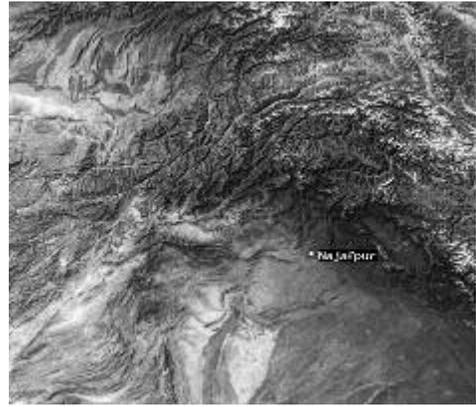
Looking at the problem and research questions, a clear choice in the beginning was to select a district where different types of the State-managed forests are found, especially Reserved, Guzara and Protected. During the district selection process, the security situation in Pakistan deteriorated dramatically and narrowed my choice down to fewer districts accessible to me as a woman and as a researcher from a foreign university. Haripur became an obvious choice where the State managed forests (Guzara and Reserved) thrived, mostly in Khanpur which is located in the south of the district. In Khanpur there exists a visible dependency on natural resources. An additional criterion to me was that the selected area should not be overwhelmed with donor-funded project interventions since I was interested in studying things in their original settings that were not much influenced by external projects. Khanpur shares its border with the capital city Islamabad. There is an artificial lake in the middle of



**Map 2.1:** Pakistan and Haripur district (top) and Khanpur valley (bottom) with research villages.

the valley formed by a dam constructed to store and supply water to Islamabad. These are indicative of the economic significance of this watershed for the capital.

In 2008 I decided to choose one village, richly endowed with natural resources, where I would concentrate my study. In 2008 I selected centrally located Najafpur village in Khanpur. The village inhabits about ten thousand people. Soon however, I could not confine the study to one village since various discourses crossed village boundaries and by following a trail I ended up in other villages. Forest fire, forest land and access to Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) were three issues which took me to several other villages that were not pre-selected for this study. The study therefore gradually spread its canvas from one to fourteen villages in Khanpur which included, Siradhna, Dhunya, Kurwali, Bakka, Ranjha, Birlay, Rajdhani, Baghbodheri and Desra, and to some extent Khui Kamma and Dhartian. In addition, I took a detour to another Village Ghaat in Beer Union Council of sub district Haripur, neighbouring Khanpur. On certain occasions I also interacted with people from Tarnawa, which is the business centre of Khanpur situated at the opening of the road leading further onto Najafpur.



**Picture 2.3:** Najafpur village in Khanpur valley

### 2.3.3 Phases of data collection

There were two main phases to my collecting the data, relevant to the topic:

#### a. The starting point

I began in January 2008 with casual conversation as an opening point. During the village selection process, casual exchange with the villagers was limited to the history and demography of the village, their daily life issues and country's political and economic circumstances. These conversations gradually grew into detailed open discussions with several informants, women and men separately as well as together. I interacted with people as individuals and in groups, workshops, and through participant observation. I took regular transect walks with the villagers and field staff of Forest department during different seasons, days and times. The purpose was to know the villages and the people well in relation to the forest. I had the opportunity to interact with people freely. I was often invited to join in their social activities, which was a privilege as I enjoyed being a guest in the research villages. A number of the elderly in the village provided detailed first-hand accounts of their personal and village history. While I proceeded with my work, I also obtained comparative satellite imageries of Khanpur from the Monitoring Directorate of the NWFP Forest department for initial discussions on deforestation trends.

**b. Turning point – narrowing down to critical events**

I organised two workshops in the village Najafpur separately for men and women<sup>20</sup> in May 2008 with an open invitation so anyone in the village could participate. Except for the Rajas, considered to be the superior most ethnic group in Najafpur, all other groups were represented in the workshop. I requested the villagers to help me draw a map of their village, which could be later used for data collection. Deep down, the purpose was not to accomplish a fine and definite map, but to get closer to the villagers and seek a mutual introduction for the months and years to come. I felt that this exercise had somehow catalysed the villagers' own research potential in such a way that they learnt to put their thoughts together, use their knowledge and encourage each other to remember things using various symbols. Some referred to a few critical events to remind others of certain locations within the village. These critical events did not appear as critical for everyone. I observed how the villagers accomplished the map and what kind of arguments went on in the process. It was a pleasure to see many happy faces at the end of four hours of exercise each as they were looking at their village's map for the first time in their lives.



**Picture 2.4:** Process of preparing Najafpur village map with forest boundaries

The turning point was how people within the meeting grouped together to shape their village. This 'created event' hence turned out to be more than an introduction. I could identify some entry points for my data collection such as a fire incident in an olive plantation, wild pomegranate (anardana) seeds processing units held by a few individuals, and important pastures in the research area. My agenda hence enlarged soon after this event as the details of their stories started to flow in.

Another turning point was the first forest fire which I personally encountered in early 2008 (see Chapter 5). The complexity around the issue enhanced my interest in forest fires. In following the fires, I came across much more than the evolving discourses around fires. Several political dynamics unfolded which helped me unpack and understand the forest arena. I encountered most of the expressed views, popular opinions, and some fixed ideas based on received wisdom (Leach and Mearns 1996) from ecologists or history, but also completely different voices from those at the margins.

<sup>20</sup> The map was produced in the first meeting with the men. This map was then presented in the second meeting with women. They commented on the map, made corrections and added notes.

### 2.3.4 Data collection techniques

#### Interviews

Each interview was pre-planned with a number of main guiding questions. However, the exercise was kept flexible as it was important to observe the respondent's own flow of thoughts and how he/she prioritised sharing their knowledge. Each interview opened avenues for more interviews which became necessary to complete the partial picture provided by one respondent. It was necessary for me to find the different pieces of puzzle that fitted together. The trail continued to change and moved on to different locations and actors. Therefore many times respondents were selected in the field, which was not necessarily easy to manage logistically. These interviews were documented and ordered later in tabular form with key words to identify gaps and the need for more interviews for deepening my analysis. Interviews were often conducted in two or more phases.



Picture 2.5: Forest fire in Bakka village (2009)

The first interaction with the respondents was often informal, in a group of two or more individuals. In the later phase, individuals were interviewed individually in order to deepen a certain aspect which had been left out for some reason. Some interviews were repeated in



**Picture 2.6:** Jindad wood cutter Dhunya, Iffat from Rarla Mohalla, Bakht Jan from Najafpur

the light of other interviews later conducted with other respondents. Focus group discussions were also useful as a tool to examine social relationships and group dynamics

### **Participant observation**

I moved on with the view that every situation was unique, worth observing (Burawoy 1998). The observer can participate in several ways as Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain: a complete observer, an observer as participant, a participant as observer, and a complete participant. In my case I shifted between all four situations. However, the most frequent cases were of participating as an observer and observing as a participant with women and men together, sometimes more women than men activities, government meetings, meetings between villagers and government, etc.

### **Mapping activities**

The very first mapping activity with men and women was conducted in Najafpur for the purpose of coming closer to the people, to identify some entry points and to identify issues occupying people. This exercise turned out to be very useful for many reasons other than for a village map. At a later stage in the research, different kinds of maps became important. For me these served as means to deepen my understanding on the subjects of land access and boundaries. A genealogy of the Raja dynasty was reproduced to fill the gaps in the data that the Revenue department had provided (Chapter 6 and Appendix 1).

Another map shows distribution of Guzara and Reserved forests in the study villages



**Picture 2.7:** Village mapping exercise with women in Najafpur

(Chapter 6). A map of the wild pomegranate value chain was also prepared for understanding positions of different actors, including women (Chapter 7). A comparative pair of satellite imageries of Khanpur was also available from the Forest department that helped during initial interviews. The maps clearly show a loss of forest cover between 1998 and 2008 (Map 2.2).

### Revenue records

For me authentic historical records were absolutely crucial for this study. How to claim that forest fires are increasing? Or that a family tree<sup>21</sup> (*Aks-e-Shajra*) of the Raja dynasty is no longer as relevant since large amounts of land were sold to outsiders (revenue records). Ironically, while the entire State defined discipline and access to resources were reportedly based on systems produced in the history (e.g. land settlement 1872 and onwards), their records were hardly available with the concerned departments<sup>22</sup>. Once those records were found from various sources after a lot of struggle, I discovered that some of them were handwritten in Persian in a poorly preserved manuscript that was hard for me to decipher. I consulted a *patwari*<sup>23</sup> who translated large parts of those records. I had to then refer to the revenue records to find later divisions and distributions. Those records turned out to be even more difficult to access. In a huge graveyard of smelly, decayed and worn out maps and records, the revenue officer had little clue about what he could find where.

I discovered that the staff employed in these departments had inadequate skills to read and translate those old documents. They kept referring to some retired colleagues who would do this for them and charge for their service. In Haripur, the *Aks-e-Shajras* are close to being blind and land maps have nearly lost their writings. This is quite an alarming situation since these records are not only physically decayed; their interpreters will also shortly no longer live in this world<sup>24</sup>. This in itself was a revelation and manifestation of the root cause of conflicts on land issues. I will explain this further in Chapter 6.

Seeking access to *Aks-e-Shajras* was initially challenging but my repeated interaction with the staff of the Haripur Revenue department made it become relatively easier. I also tried to access some of the known living leaders of the Raja dynasty to supplement and cross check information. Through them I could reach people who then added much valuable information. Yet, I could not find one single *Aks-e-Shajra* with a complete knowledge of the land distribution up to the present to quantitatively support my ethnographic accounts on

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**21** In Revenue terms this is called *Aks-e-Shajra* (a family tree drawn on paper). It is done to determine ownerships. *Aks-e-shajra* is a family tree coincided with inheritance records of land property. These records are maintained by Revenue department. This is a private document which gives details on family property and how it is distributed (within or outside a family).

**22** The land settlements conducted in 1872 and 1901 had taken place before partition between India and Pakistan (1947). I assume that the creation of a new country may have definitely had an impact on the archived records, which became available to the later users in whatever form.

**23** *Patwari* is land record clerk in a *tehsil* (district sub-division). He is the lowest state functionary in the revenue collection system. This designation terminology is used in Pakistan and India since the creation of the Revenue department by the British. See Chapter 6.

**24** The Revenue officer requested me to help them preserve some of the crucial data. This, he said, would cost only Pak.Rs.60,000 (around 522 Euros in 2012). It shows that the public funds do not cater for such investment.

land distribution from one to several owners. As I continued my ethnographic journey, and ended up with several examples from different owners that strengthened my argument and supported villagers' claims about redistribution of forest lands (Chapter 6).

### **Taking notes**

Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, is conveniently a common medium for conversing with people in Khanpur, especially the men. Most of the women could only speak Hindko. Hindko is not dramatically different from Urdu and is very close to Punjabi. Without an interpreter, I could understand what women said and partly communicate in their language. I always took notes in Urdu. Many men and sometimes literate women were curious to see what I was writing. Many times my notebook was taken (in a very friendly manner) by some literate respondents whenever I would put it aside. They just looked at my notes but never commented on them. Yet I felt that an easy access to my notes created a relationship of respect and trust with the people. The fact that I could not be possessive about my notebook meant that I had to keep a lot of material in my memory as there was always a fear of it being 'contentious' in the given circumstances. Voice records gave some support. However at times, using mechanical devices can be a technical disaster. Besides, it was avoided whenever it seemed possible that the respondent might be distracted or give a different opinion due to the presence of a recording tool. Hence I learned to rely on a notebook and personal memory.

### **2.3.5 Elaborating cases to illustrate forest fights**

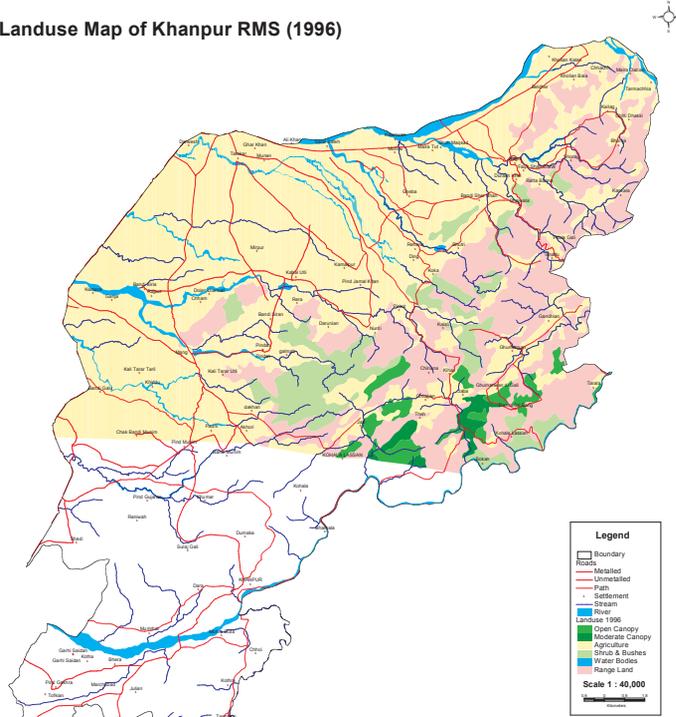
The rationale behind my extended case approach was to link all pieces of a puzzle of various phenomena and describe a case of a discourse or inter-related discourses. One case opened a debate for understanding implications in relation to the other cases and in this manner, these cases do not have a closed end (Burawoy 1998). Taking stock of earlier work and the work done by Campbell (1975) and Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that cases develop context dependent knowledge ruling out the possibility of epistemic theoretical construction.

I have stories which build strong contexts and can be interpreted from various theoretical angles. I have case studies within these extended cases as illustrative tools rather than an argument for generalised conclusions. The case studies are meant to make sense of the meaning of broader issues in peoples' everyday lives, whether they are villagers, government officials, or other actors. These cases have emerged from the data I collected in the field and secondary records extracted from the various government offices and the Archives Library of Peshawar. These also included some of the old colonial records which revealed a great deal of how forests and people were administered in Khanpur in the past.

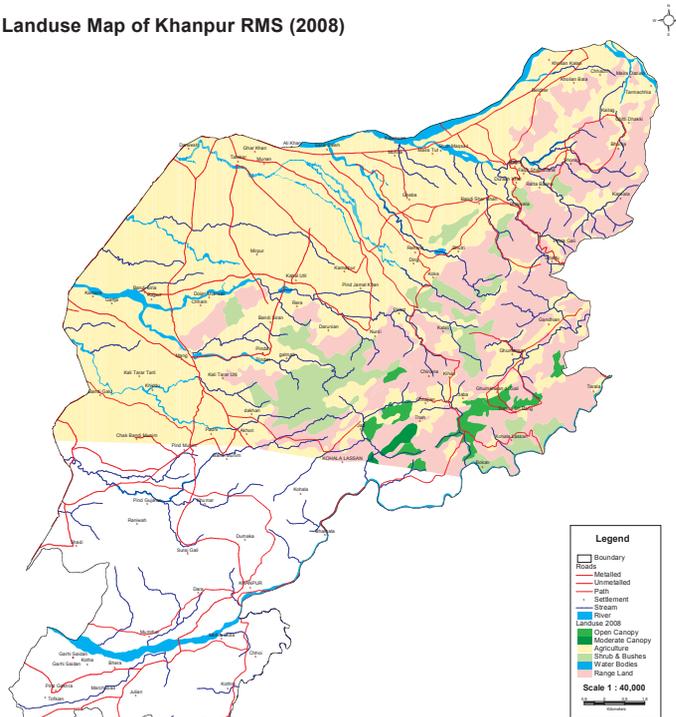
### **Major views and outliers**

The nature of my study urged me to be sometimes selective in zooming in on certain events. The most frequently made statements or a dominant opinion, were important. It was more important, though, to deepen the story behind the unique responses, the outliers: Actors who spoke differently than others who brought new dimensions to my understanding of discourses and counter-discourses. These were the people who gave different meanings to the critical events and understood things differently. They deviated from a dominant explanation and were important so as to understand the various dynamics and multiple

Landuse Map of Khanpur RMS (1996)



Landuse Map of Khanpur RMS (2008)



Map 2.2: Comparative forest cover 1998-2008. Source: NWFP Forest Department, GIS lab.

interpretations within a discourse. There are several examples in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Further cross-examining helped to understand the dynamics and extend the case to explain an action from various angles.

### **Use of metaphors**

Some phenomena are outspoken reflections of struggle and resistance, such as forest fire. This thesis does not look into ecological explanations for forest fire or fire as a singular means of expressing resistance. It is a metaphor – a forest fire in the physical and ecological sense creates a socio-political ‘fire’ in the forest as a social arena, within the State departments or even between actors with various frames of meaning. ‘Forest fire’ led me to understand different perspectives and consequences for multiple actors, relationships and their everyday manipulation in social and ecological contexts. Similarly, the subject of NTFPs which is usually ignored in forestry discourses led to different actors involved in a unique discursive relationship. This subject was particularly interesting due to the large involvement of women as well as landless people – hence my studying their involvement with non-timber issues was a conscious choice.

### **2.3.6 The Ethics Involved**

Often I got contradictory information, for example widely differing respondent reports on village and forest boundaries, which had implications for determining a correct understanding of user rights. Within these contradictions, self-perception and interpretation were indicative of how people aspired to use and govern resources. The struggles became apparent from the fact that territories were being defined by individual and group interests. As an external researcher, I had a unique opportunity to validate these interests with the villagers. Many times I felt that they used this opportunity to authenticate how they approached natural resources. My position was crucial in this complex landscape as I felt chiefly responsible for making sense of the multiple events and discourses. I have tried my best to present all the views, including their contradictions. This in itself tells something about everyday forms of resistance, yet I am afraid that dealing with all the information in an equitable manner was not easy in this complex setting. Scott (1986) insists that instead of definitional matter, an everyday form of resistance is more the interpretation of the whole range of actions, which historically rests at the core of everyday class relations. This provides a lot of breathing space in fact, but in a situation where several interpretations were encountering each other, it led me to understand that Khanpur was an active landscape where everything was to be heard, recorded, understood and put into certain perspective.

In writing ethnography, one issue confronting me was that of ethics. A frequent concern about ethnographic research is that it involves making things public when they are said or done in private (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). In most of the interviews, informants shared details with conscious decision and trust, knowing that I would write about the things they had said. However, in cases where data were produced through my observation of events when speech, expressions or actions were being recorded, I struggled with the challenge of ethics. Some information (even when shared in an interviewing environment) can be rather problematic. I had no choice but to change names or places of people in such cases to avoid landing people into trouble. This was done in a non-scientific manner; a choice made as a

person and as a citizen, consciously selecting what can be of harm or can cause trouble through what was being transmitted. Unfortunately I was not able to change the names of positions held within the government departments in most of the cases, since that would change the sense of discursive situation, which I am trying to present in this thesis. Government departments are public services, their officers being accountable by law to the public. Therefore, writing about functional issues in this thesis is not meant to involve the actor as an individual.

### **2.3.7 Methodological challenges**

In the absence of a proper record of forest fire incidences other than what was kept by the Forest department, it was difficult to establish whether fire incidents have really increased over years and that why do they occur. A variety of methods were deployed to gather data for this purpose. Interviews were conducted with villagers and with junior forest officials, and supplemented by field observations over the three fire seasons<sup>25</sup> of 2008, 2009 and 2010. The secondary data from the department on fire incidents was available for a limited number of years. At some stage the concerned staff even started denying any fire incidents in Haripur during years 2009-2011.

Landowners of huge tracts of lands were difficult to involve in my research. First, it was hard to reach them as they always had elegant excuses to avoid outsiders trying to ask questions. Secondly, they do not easily reveal their relationships with stronger and weaker players in patron-client relations. The picture that they portrayed of themselves often showed only positive aspects. The analysis of land distribution was initially a challenge due to lack of availability of records. Big owners were reluctant to share details owing to their political position or other reasons. However, this problem was solved to quite an extent with the help of archival data with Revenue department and talking to a few new occupants of land, owners with medium sized estates, and common villagers particularly women.

Another challenge was cultural. The people of Haripur have a high self esteem and pride. I term this as *wazadari* – which is explained by the fact that even if they are poor and are suffering acute deprivation, they assert their fullest energies to avoid seeming very poor – very rarely expressing their deprivation and suffering openly and not the least, keeping their animosities as their own business. It took me a great deal of time to understand these finer sentiments and to make some sense out of them. Women were relatively open in sharing their situation. Besides, it was easier for me to seek insight in their family situation since I always had a chance to meet them at their homes.

### **2.4 National tragedies and discourses relevant to this thesis**

During the course of my study, a number of very crucial national tragedies occurred. Their impacts were overwhelming and at times directly related to the discourse of deforestation. These major events are mentioned in different ethnographic accounts of this thesis.

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**25** The main forest fire season is the dry period of May till the end of July.

### **Security and conflict**

Pakistan has experienced its worst security situation during 2008 and 2009. Over 30,000 people were killed in various unpredictable incidents (Nizami and Mulder 2012). Everyone became a victim of anxiety and uncertainty caused by bomb blasts (random and targeted), kidnappings (for ransom and negotiation with government for alleged terrorists) and other extremely disturbing events. The military operation against armed groups in the districts of Swat, Buner, Dir and tribal areas (2008-2009) resulted in the largest internal displacement of people after Independence in 1947. These people were hosted in Peshawar, Haripur and several other relatively peaceful cities of NWFP and Punjab. The people returned home in the second half of 2009. Many lost everything in the process. Along this national tragedy is the phenomenon of mass deforestation allegedly conducted by the Taliban in Swat (the allies of Al Qaeda) within a period of three months of insurgency. The conflict which was ostensibly being fought to impose a conservative version of Islam, was more than a war of religion (Sehgal 2009). Deep down it was also a movement to clear certain old accounts, e.g. land ownership issues in Swat. Several owners were either killed or were threatened in this process. District Swat is not part of this study, however the situation in the district illustrated that resistance can turn into a mass bloodshed and it is therefore crucial to revisit the classical notion of forest. The synthesis of data on access to natural resources includes the backdrop of the volatile situation faced by everyone in the country. Linked with this, although Haripur remained calm itself, the situation in neighbouring cities determined feasibility to travel to the field.

### **An environmental disaster**

This tragedy occurred in Gilgit-Baltistan region, close to the Pak-China border in the North. A massive land-slide of approximately 1.5 km long wiped out two villages in Atta-abad valley in January 2010. It completely blocked the Hunza River which began to turn the River at the upstream into a huge lake of about 26 km long. This lake engulfed more than 10 villages and the catastrophe started widening. The increased size of the lake created yet another threat to the villages from Atta-abad downstream as the blockage gave way to the huge quantity of water accumulated in the lake, threatening to wipe-out many villages downstream. The environmental map of Atta-abad changed with a higher vulnerability for the villagers. Fortunately the lake did not burst in summer 2010 and the water continued to flow from the spillway. The entire event however raised critical questions about poor forest management. A blame-game started, based on the assumption that the land-slide was caused by deforestation and fingers were pointed at the Forest department.

### **Historical floods of 2010**

The third tragedy was much bigger – big enough for people to nearly forget about Atta-abad. In July - August 2010, a massive flood hit the entire country. The origin of the floods was in the North-West of the country. Climatologists insisted that it was a climate change phenomenon, a shifting of the monsoon to the south where absorption capacity for rains was very low, and that extreme climatic events taking place were due to global phenomena. Besides this climate discourse, a fuming debate once again erupted on the role of deforestation in enhancing the negative impact of the floods in Swat and other neighbouring forest-rich districts. Last time this subject took a political move was after the 1992 floods when the Central government imposed a ban on green felling, holding deforestation as the main cause of floods (Chapter 4 and 5). This time, the blame-game went even further,

exposing corruption in forest management and the engagement of jihadists in indiscriminate felling of trees in the Swat district. A huge debate among civil society and foresters is still on-going regarding deforestation as the main factor responsible for floods in Pakistan. Most of the discussion is held through e-groups established by NGOs. The exchange of views and language reflects the aggression and anger in the forest arena, an outspoken evidence of actors' confrontation of ideas, knowledge and experience. I have included some part of this electronic discourse analysis in this thesis (see Chapter 4).

### **A staggering political scenario**

The critical political situation in the country inevitably influenced this research. It was ever-present in discussions, reflected in people's actions and emotions. Methodologically it was challenging. Skyrocketing food prices and food shortages have created tension in daily lives. The disappointment of the nation-state was complete when energy crises escalated in the country, resulting in a huge wave of unemployment in the private sector. I quote the 80-year old villager, a father with two sons having low-income jobs in Punjab to describe what I mean, when I asked him in August 2008 how things had changed since his childhood:

“People were good in olden times, we had no politics. We earned little incomes but we had limited needs and more peace. Now, people are greedy. Nobody wants to lead a simple life. People are selfish and materialistic.” Abdul Qayum, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Najafpur.

Qayum was also frustrated that the real issues faced by people are shadowed by discussions that do not interest common people,

“When I listen to the radio, they only talk about dissolving the government – no one talks about hunger, inflation, corruption, unemployment and human rights”. Abdul Qayum, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Najafpur.

And a grazier said,

“It is hard these days to live in a dignified way. I work so hard, but I still cannot face my wife and children for how little I bring to them”. Akhtar Zaman, 12th January 2009, Dhunya.

I had a feeling that the respondents at times stepped out of their individual realities and related their personal circumstances with the country's overall situation.

## **2.5 The Study Area – Khanpur in Haripur**

### **2.5.1 Geographical Location**

The research was conducted in Khanpur, a southern tehsil (sub-district) of Haripur district in the NWFP, Pakistan. NWFP is one of the six federate units of Pakistan<sup>26</sup>. In the North NWFP is locked in by the Pamir range of the Hindukush mountains. To the South it is



**Picture 2.8:** Two views of Khanpur Lake - Source: Rizwan Qureshi (2010, 2012)

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26 Among others, Balochistan, Sind, Punjab, newly declared Gilgit-Baltistan and federal territories including FATA and disputed Kashmir.

bordered by Balochistan and Punjab provinces. East is Kashmir and the West is Afghanistan. Haripur district falls in Hazara region of NWFP situated in the Eastern part of NWFP, adjoining Kashmir. Hazara is rich in terms of natural scenic beauty, blessed with forests, pastures, rivers, lakes, springs and snow-clad peaks. Until 1901 Hazara was annexed with Punjab and was then attached to NWFP. Haripur is the gateway to Hazara bordering with Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. Haripur is divided into three sub-divisions namely Haripur, Ghazi, and Khanpur. These are sub-divided into 44 Union Councils with a total of 327 villages (GoNWFP 1998). Two districts of Punjab province, namely Attock (South-West) and Rawalpindi (South-East) are also situated on the borders of Haripur. This explains the location of the district to be quite important in terms of locals' exposure. Haripur is prolific regarding the involvement and mobility of women in different activities, unlike several other districts of NWFP. This could be due to a better education compared to many other districts of NWFP and proximity to Islamabad. Several national and international NGOs have worked in the districts on several aspects of development, mainly due to highly cooperative behaviour of community to international organisations, although their work usually remained focused on one tehsil (Haripur). Hindko is the predominant language in the district, representing more than 88% of the total population followed by Pashto (8.9%). Urdu is understood by everyone and most of the people can also converse in Urdu.

### **2.5.2 Physical Features**

Haripur district extends from an elevation of 600 meters to 2100 meters. The Harroh is the most important river in the area. It is formed by its two main tributaries i.e. Dhund and Karal Harroh. The water of the river Harroh and its tributaries is used for agriculture and watermills. At Khanpur, a dam has been built in the Harroh River which is used for storing water for drinking and irrigation purposes. In the dry months of the year, the springs dry up causing an acute shortage of drinking water for human as well as for animal consumption.

### **2.5.3 Climate and land use**

Haripur experiences weather extremes, which are increasing in intensity (Nizami, Hussain et al. 2010). The Meteorological Department of Pakistan forecasts 10-20% drop in average annual rainfall in the region where Haripur is situated (2009). The total area of the district is 1725 sq km which includes 41% of cultivated land, 17.3% forest, 33.5% pastures and 8.3% of other forms of land use (GoNWFP 1998). The main source of income for locals is 20% on-farm and 80% off-farm. Agriculture, comprising mostly wheat and corn, is practiced under predominantly rainfed conditions. Haripur is also well-known for its fruit crops (particularly citrus, litchi, loquat and pomegranate). Cultivating trees around farmlands is also popular.

### **2.5.4 Demography**

The total population of the district is 875,000 people (GoNWFP 2011). Only 12.0% of the population lives in urban areas while the rest (88%) lives in rural areas. The literacy ratio is 70.5% among men as against 37.4% among women (average 53.7%). Farming in Haripur is characterised by small-scale, terraced production, limited by the small size of landholdings

and the rugged terrain. It is common for one or two members in Haripur families to seek employment opportunities outside in the neighbouring districts. The most popular occupation for young men is to join the Pakistan Army in low ranking positions due to their lack of higher education. Another important factor is that Haripur has the largest industrial estate in the province called Hattar which generates a lot of local employment opportunities. Poverty<sup>27</sup> is a wide spread phenomenon in rural Haripur with 30% unemployment rate in the district (PRSP 2003). In several areas, there is an acute problem of accessibility due to very few roads constructed in the rural areas (GoNWFP 1998). The census report highlights that 78.8% of the households use wood as a source of fuel for cooking and heating. This suggests that forests serve as an important source of energy for rural households in Haripur.

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27 I am taking poverty in relative terms. I understand poverty as the lack of access to basic services, water, and land for producing food, and education. For me poverty is also about access to other livelihood assets (political, social, human and natural) and it is much more complex than merely the availability of financial and physical means. In terms of the standard definition (World Bank definition of less than a (US) Dollar a day) which is followed by the Pakistani government, 42% of the population is reported to be living below the poverty line in the district (GoNWFP Haripur Census report 1998).

# 3

## **Historical Transition of People and the Forest**

Michael Hathaway (2005: 182) while commenting on Agrawal's (2005) article<sup>28</sup> suggested, "...we need to account for the 'prehistory'... identity categories may critically influence the possibility or the appeal of certain practices to particular groups". Agrawal's article takes an example from Kumaon India, and explores the relationship between government and subjectivity and shows how people transform their roles. He draws evidence from the archival record and fieldwork conducted over two time periods. Hathaway's comments are focused on the view that history mediates participation of people in forest governance. Many authors have talked about history, not just being limited to how forests were managed in the past but also how societies have emerged in their olden times, as an important contextual setting which determines the course of politics of nature (Tucker 1982; 1984; 1987; Sivaramakrishnan 2000; Dove 2003; Berkes 2004; McGee 2004; Geiser 2006; Sivaramakrishnan 2009). Fairhead and Leach (1995: 1024) are critical towards sociologists saying, "The production of history serves many ends. What will become clear is that social scientists have been complicit in producing a view of history as one of increasing tension from a harmonious past. Treating this past as a model and set of objectives for the resolution of today's tensions, they have been forging links between social and environmental conditions in a way that assists in relieving those subjected to their study of what little resource control they have." The point to make here is that history matters. However, one should not make presuppositions since history is not linear.



**Picture 3.1:** Historical accounts (left to right): Khalil (102), Mother of Jindad (85), Shah Jahan and daughter Surayya (81 & 62), Zareena (89), Qayyum (80), Madsood (72)

This chapter is an attempt to summarise an account of the region's and the district's history from word of mouth. I have also consulted old records with the Forest department, old British writings and accounts written by historians and have tried to make a link with what

<sup>28</sup> Environmentalism: Community, intimate government, and the making of environmental subjects in Kumaon, India." *Current Anthropology* 46(2): 161-190.

people say. I have tried to produce an account of the pre-colonial context which reflects the making of a society in Khanpur whose existence may have mediated the actions of the British Empire regarding governmentalisation of natural resources. Hence the chapter has two main parts: the events which took place before 1872, and what happened in and after 1872 when the forest land settlement was conducted.

### 3.1 Critical events from 14th Century AD to 1872<sup>29</sup>

Hazara formally came under any rule in 1399 AD (GoPunjab 1883-84). A Central Asian conqueror named Amir Timur of Turk origin, on his way back from his Indian campaign, appointed Karluki Hazara Turks<sup>30</sup> in Hazara to rule this region (Rose 1883-84: 20). Amir Timur was a conqueror of Western and Central Asia, and founder of the Timurid Empire and dynasty (1370–1405) in Central Asia, which survived until 1857 as the Mughal Empire of India. Turks gave their name to this district (Hazara Karlak) which is similar to historical evidence that another branch of Turks gave their name to a large tract in Afghanistan, also called Hazara (GoPunjab 1883-84). These Turks continued to rule Hazara until early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor, referred to Turks as *Zamindars*<sup>31</sup> in his book called “Tuzk-e-Jahangiri” (Rose 1883-84: 20). In 1472 AD Prince Shahabuddin, a descendant of Amir Timur, came to Hazara to lead these Turks and formed a state known as Pakhli Sarkar including part of an adjoining district, Hasan Abdal, next to Attock (current towns in Punjab neighbouring Hazara) and Kashmir. In 17<sup>th</sup> century Karluk Turks initially lost their control from Hassan Abdal, Attock and then from Haripur until the complete collapse of their rule in early 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup> (1703 AD). Until 1738 AD, the entire region remained in a state of anarchy between various tribes. The old Turk families lost their hold against aggressive Afghan races, which had been living there before the Turks arrival. A few major incidents are quoted in this regard in the following.

An Afghan origin religious leader Syed Jalal Baba, the son-in-law of the last Turk Ruler Sultan Mehmud Kurd, organised his followers in Swat Valley (henceforth referred to as

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**29** Section 3.1 has been produced from three main sources: Gazettier of Hazara which was published by the then Government of Punjab in 1883 when Hazara was part of Punjab in the sub-continent; Imperial Gazettier of India (1883), and historical accounts of senior villagers from various clans I recorded in Najafpur. The last was important since written history could be linked through various stories old villagers could tell.

**30** The Karlugh or Karluk Turks are a prominent Turkic tribe. This tribe still resides in parts of Hazara region of Pakistan. The Turks formed a Turkish dynasty and ruled the State of Pakhli Sarkar for over 200 years.

**31** Zamin, a Persian word meaning ‘land’ and dar symbolised as ‘occupant’ or ‘owner’. In simple terms, Zamindar refers to a landowner. During the Mughal Empire, a Zamindar was an official employed by the ruler to collect taxes from peasants. The Zamindari system was a key economic and political institution of the Mughals to implement the sharia-based Islamic rule. This practice continued under British rule with colonial landholders. After independence, however, the system was abolished in India and East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) while it is still active in modern Pakistan.

**32** Some of the descendants of Turk rulers still live in several villages of Hazara. One of the descendants was Raja Amanullah Khan, Speaker of NWFP parliament in the 1980s.

Swatis), West of Indus (Malakand region of today's NWFP Pakistan) to create a revolt against Zamindars (landowners). Being an insider, he could provide some crucial information which helped Swatis to overthrow the already weakened Turks from upper Hazara (Mansehra and Batagram districts of today's Pakistan) in 1703 AD. At the same time Tanolis crossed over from the West Bank of the Indus and settled themselves in Hazara region in a place called Tanawal and founded the state called Amb. The Jadoons from the East Afghan origin claimed dominance on Hazara and announced to have replaced Turks. Kharals and Dhunds (also called Abbasis) also started asserting themselves for independence from Gakkhars (Rajas) in Khanpur and together captured several villages<sup>33</sup> from them. Dhund successfully dominated Haripur. Gujars<sup>34</sup> lived as a minor ethnic group who had newly settled themselves as graziers from Rawalpindi. They were totally dominated by the Tareens (also Afghan origin) living in the plains of Hazara. They invited Utmanzais (native Pukhtuns living across the Indus) to strengthen their position and to get rid of the Tareens. All of these smaller factions continued to fight, dominating different places and eventually took over lower Hazara.

The events took place at roundabout the same time turning Hazara into an anarchic state<sup>35</sup>. The Gazetteer of Hazara (1883-84 :21) describes this period of Turks as "...a weak family finding its territory the subject of harassing demands and attacks from poor but braver tribes in the neighbourhood; unable to defend its territory, it calls its neighbours for help. It gives lands in return of arms and men. But in the course of time, the zamindars were substituted by the aiding tribes and dominated by more aggressive trans-Indus tribes...", referring to Jadoons and other tribes from Afghan and Pukhtun origin While the Turks were still ruling, Khanpur became Gakkhars/Rajas' centre in Hazara region towards the end of 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The founding chief of Gakkhars in Khanpur was Dewan Fateh Khan who was the son of Said Khan, the Chief of (neighbouring) Rawalpindi Gakkhars (Rose 1883-84). At that time, three tribes were present in Khanpur, namely Dhund, Gujars and Kharals, all from Hindu origin and later converted to Islam. Gakkhars were the most ancient occupants of this region and Rawalpindi. They survived the changes in the rulers down to the Sikhs. Although many of their living descendants recall that they remained more loyal to the Mughals than to Afghan rulers.

### 3.1.1 Birth of Haripur

A very interesting historical account was shared by Raja Khaliq Nawaz of Najafpur (15<sup>th</sup> January 2009), which was further augmented in several other interviews with the elderly persons in the village.

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**33** It could not be traced whether those villages were recaptured by Gakkhars or not. Major links to Tareens and rarely to Abbasis were found in the villages that I have studied.

**34** The Gujar, possibly a branch of Hephthalites, appeared in northern India about the time of the Hun invasions (half of the fifth century). Now they live in Afghanistan, and several parts of Pakistan and India.

**35** It is documented in several places that these tensions took place between late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. But the exact order of how they came about is not known due to the absence of records.

In 1738, the Durranis (Afghan origin) after invading India, came to Hazara and ruled the region till 1820 AD. This period was relatively stable since they opted to rule through existing tribes. Meanwhile the Gakkhars provided military services to the Durranis in lieu of allowances. Durranis became weak during the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. A Sikh general Ranjit Singh first took over neighbouring Attock in 1811 AD and then Hazara in 1818 AD from Jadoons. In 1819 AD, he moved on further from Hazara and took over Kashmir and ruled the entire Punjab as the first emperor of the Sikh Empire after defeating Mughals. He appointed Raja Hari Singh Nalwa initially as Governor of Kashmir and later of the entire Hazara region. Hari Singh founded the town of Haripur (meaning Hari's town, today's district Haripur of Pakistan) in 1822 AD. He built a fort in Sarai Saleh in Haripur. The selection of this site was strategic in nature. Some of the most ferocious encounters with the tribes inhabiting this region had been fought by the Sikhs in this vicinity.

During Hari Singh's period, rebellion movements continued from local tribes, who suddenly united to defeat a common enemy. Most of the wars were fought because of revenue collection by the Sikh empire. A battle at Serikot (1824 AD) is a very important event which had implications for the future landscape of tribal set-up of Khanpur, a battle in which Hari Singh almost lost his life. It was fought by the Jadoons supported by Gakkhars of Khanpur. Hari Singh while languishing in the Jadoon's prison suggested that he should be set free to continue to rule but this time under their terms since Ranjit Singh would certainly take fierce revenge for this defeat. Also he feared that he would not be spared for his failure in the battle. The Jadoons agreed with Hari Singh's proposal. They decided to surrender the Khanpur area solely to the Gakkhars as a reward for their assistance, also because they did not trust the Sikhs. Later, Gakkhars fought a battle with Dhund (Abbasis) and captured 84 villages of Khanpur. Raja Hari Singh<sup>36</sup> died in 1837 AD and the Sikhs quickly shrunk to Hazara in 1847 AD. In 1847 AD, Raja Gulab Singh, the last ruler of Sikh Empire, gave Hazara back to Lahore throne in exchange for Jammu in 1847 AD, and then Hazara passed on to the British in 1849 AD.

The British Governor of Punjab Henry Lawrence, established a cantonment in Murree (at that time called Misyaree), a tourist destination hill station in Punjab bordering Kashmir, in 1851 AD. Dhund (Abbasis) owned Murree at that time. The British purchased Murree from Abbasis for Rs.140<sup>37</sup> only. Sultan Muqarrab, the Chief of Gakkhars at that time heard about the British invasion and decided to chase them away. The British came to know of his plan and prepared themselves. The battle was fought at Salgaran in Murree. Sultan Muqarrab, despite his full-fledged preparation, lost the battle and 30,000 of his soldiers. His nephew Raja Najaf Khan, based at Khanpur in the village now called Najafpur, rushed to his uncle's help. He observed the tragic scene on the battleground. At that time Najaf had no choice but to trick the British commander saying that he had come to support the British against his slain uncle. The British announced as a reward that 84 villages where Najaf ruled as a descendent of Gakkhars, would not be taken over by the British. This event took place in 1850 AD. In 1857 AD after the mutiny and war between the Mughal emperors and the British, the Mughals were completely evicted and the British Crown established its rule on

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**36** Although the Hari Singh period is remembered as one of the most disturbed eras of Hazara, the formal records and people's account mention that Haripur was the sole example of a planned town in this region until the British built Abbottabad as a cantonment many years later.

**37** 1 euro 22 cents in 2012.

the entire subcontinent. These 84 villages however, remained largely untouched, and the rulers remained thankful to the Crown for this favour.

### 3.1.2 A Closer Look at the Gakkhar / Raja dynasty in Khanpur

Reconstructing the history of Rajas and other inhabitants of the Khanpur was a time consuming process as little is documented from other sources than the Rajas themselves. Yet, the fact that different people had different historical reconstructions being passed on from their forefathers, is a reflection of living a specific background than what is told by others. Some of these will reflect in this section too.

The preceding pages reflected that Rajas came to Khanpur in 1699 when the Turk dynasty was falling apart. Dewan Fateh Ali<sup>38</sup> was the founding Gakkhar in the area. The original inhabitants of the area were Abbasis (Dhund) who then tried to resist them during early 18<sup>th</sup> century AD and captured a few villagers to bring under their control. However, since Khanpur was a remote, isolated area from the rest of Haripur, and the valley was geographically close to Rawalpindi where Gakkhar dynasty was strongly rooted, they soon established themselves in Khanpur without much interference. A more firm dynasty was established only in 1824 AD when Jadoons formally appointed Gakkhars in Khanpur as a reward for their loyalty in the battle against Sikhs. They also survived the British rule and retained control over 84 villages of Khanpur (1851 AD and then 1857 AD). Gakkhars are the oldest inhabitants of this valley. They have never become rulers of the whole Hazara region though. They maintained their status through supporting major rulers by providing military support. When land settlement was being conducted by the British (1872), they were the main occupants of the lands and the major negotiations in Khanpur were held with them (see section 3.2). The Rajas became almost the sole owners of the forests as per *wajib-ul-arz* in the 84 villages, referred to by several Rajas (interviewed during this research) as their natural right (as the rulers and original owners of the entire land). Some Gakkhars claim that they are Iranian by origin, hence some also call themselves Kianis. This however contradicts with the theory that originally they have come from Rajput patri-lineal clan of India with Indo-Aryan origin; they were known as a “fiercely independent and war-like clan” (Kapadia 2001), who formed a feudal aristocracy over the territories they controlled in different parts of India.

“...nearly 150 years ago they lived here and their houses were in hundreds. Now many live in urban areas. They were loyal to British. We had to stamp their loyalty and follow them since they were the powerful ones, even though we wanted to resist the British.” Khaleel (Mughal, age 102), 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008, Najafpur.

Local inhabitants still remember Gakkhars / Rajas as very ruthless rulers,

“They were pretentious of their position... nobody could dress in white since it was only meant for them, they were rich – but never left a penny of their *lagan*<sup>39</sup>”

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**38** A full genealogy from Dewan Fateh Ali till Raja Iruj Zaman (Chief of Gakkhars at present) has been reproduced in this thesis (Chapter 6, Appendix 1).

from their tenants. Even their proud Munshis<sup>40</sup> over-recorded our crops and we were forced to pay. We could never sit next to them, we were to sit on the floor...” Khaleel (Mughal, age 102), 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008, Najafpur.

Several accounts however, also indicate of a change in the Rajas’ circumstances:

“We measured our power and dominance with the number of villages (we owned). But today, it is not like that, people are just proud of the acres they own, the bungalows in Islamabad and some orchards in Khanpur. Not much is left now, it is a tough job to maintain orchards and agricultural crops, times have changed. It is hard to find people who can manage all this for us.” Gul e Rukh (wife of late Raja Sikandar Zaman ex-Chief Minister of NWFP). 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010, Khanpur House, Rawalpindi.

The status associated with owning a number of villages, was the main symbol of superiority. Rajas were not keen to sell their lands to outsiders and especially to non Gakkhars. Marriages also took place strictly within Gakkhar families. Although the trend is changing fast, and lands are being sold to any interested clients, marriages are still an internal affair within the Gakkhar clan. The new generation of Rajas is less keen on agriculture but still interested in keeping their feudal identity through owning prime lands in expensive towns.

“Now I am left with 5 hectare of land in this village. We have never been farmers ourselves and we will never be farmers. If we don’t find people to cultivate our lands, we sell them. We have to maintain ourselves. We are not rulers anymore but for keeping our status we have no way out but to sell our lands.” Raja Khaliq Nawaz (age 52), 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Hence although Rajas own majority of the agricultural lands and forests even today, the situation is changing fast due to selling of lands for buying properties in attractive urban areas, participating in the country’s politics and socially maintaining themselves as long-standing rulers. The mirroring question is who is buying their lands. The change in the status of Rajas is linked with the change in status of other ethnicities due to land entitlement (Chapter 6). The history is therefore changing its course.

### 3.1.3 Other social groups in Khanpur

As of today, there are five major ethnic identities living in Khanpur namely Gakkhar, Dhanyal, Awan/Mughal, Tareens, Gujar and Bhattis.

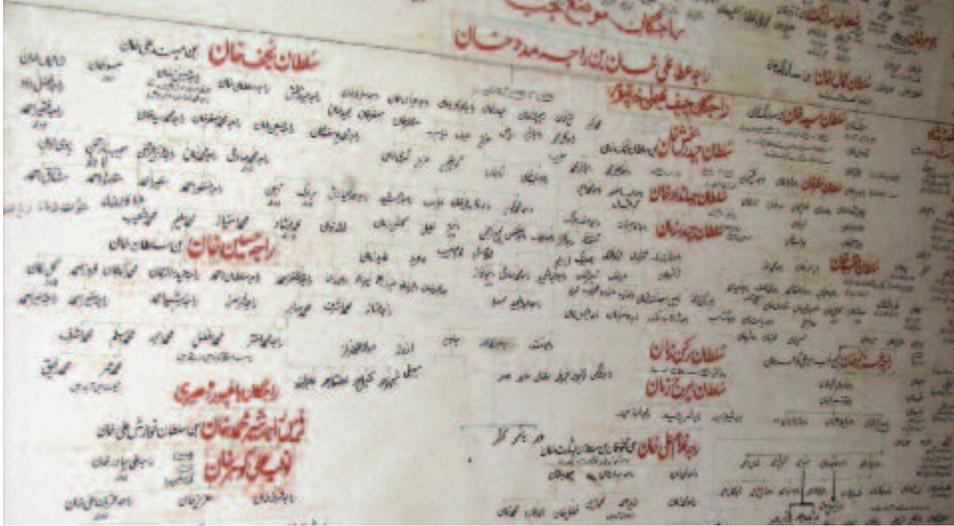
#### **Dhanyals**

Dhanyals have hardly been visible in the written history records. These were the frontline warriors living in the hills and often joined the battles as soldiers either employed by

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<sup>39</sup> Agricultural tax levied by owners from the tenants who cultivated their lands. The most probable rate of lagan was half of the product (any kind of harvest from land e.g. crops, poultry, milk, forest).

<sup>40</sup> Clerks appointed by Rajas for calculating and receiving agricultural tax.



Picture 3.2: A complete overview of Raja dynasty maintained at the residence of Raja Sajid Zaman in Siradhna village Khanpur



Picture 3.3: An old magestic place of Rajas turned into ruins (village Baghbodheri). Right is a basement view in the palace people say was a private prison

Gakkhars or by joining the armies of the Mughals or the British. Even today, the most popular profession among Dhanyal men is to join the national army, besides other employment such as civil services. Dhanyals claim to have descended from Sufi Moazzam Shah, a Saint who lived in lower Hiamalayas who went to Dhanni (Chakwal hills of Punjab) and then to Multan. His followers supported Emperor Ghorī in a battle against Rajput Dogra in 13th Century. Dhanyals enjoy a very close relationship with Rajas due to their loyalty and historical support at all war occasions, as was expressed in one of the interviews.

“Had the Dhanyals not been there (to help us), we would not have existed in Khanpur today.” Raja Khaliq Nawaz (Age 52), 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Due to their loyalty with the Rajas, the Dhanyals were titled respectfully as Sardars<sup>41</sup> often employed as their Munshis or tax collectors, and appointed as Numberdars (village headmen) in their village. Some Dhanyals though, do tell about tensions with the Rajas. According to an 81 year old lady,

“I have heard from my elders that the Rajas were cruel. If they had any animosity over property or any other issue, they used to kill their enemy. And they always got away with such acts. We went through many tensions with the Rajas, they even put a check on our right of trespassing – we sued them... it went on for 60 years. Finally my grandfather legally pursued it in 1880 in Dehli and got the decree that at least Najafpur village (from amongst 84 villages that the Rajas owned) was free of their cruel rule. But now we live together comfortably. And by the way most Rajas are now poor. They are powerless in Najafpur.” Shah Jahan, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Najafpur.

Dhanyals were amongst the first ones to buy lands sold by Rajas. Farming was their second favourite profession and could never become their main source of living. They remained job oriented in nature and preferred to seek employment with others.

“We first look for jobs; agriculture is just for ourselves if we have some land. We want to buy agricultural lands whenever we have the money.” Haroon, 25<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Najafpur.

Talking to people from other ethnicities, it appeared that many perceive that Dhanyals have acquired tendencies similar to those of Rajas. Najafpur village is a living example of the fact that Dhanyals today find themselves in a much stronger position than Rajas who once ruled the village. They are however, still socially inclined towards Rajas and pay respect for raising their position in the past.

### **Awans**

The history of Awans has been quite vague in the region. There are three theories about their origin. Most Awans claim that they have descended from a ruler of Herat, Qutub Shah (a non-Fatmi descendent of the Prophet's cousin Ali) whose sons came with the conqueror Mahmood from Ghazni and settled in the salt range of Pakistan. Historians have written (and this is what Dhanyals and Gakkhars believe as true) that they are either the remnants of Greeks (325 BC) or they were Jats and converted to Islam. Gakkhars and Dhanyals claim that the Awans who live in Khanpur are not the “real Awans” – they are actually kasabdars (artisans), mostly weavers, who travelled from Punjab and settled themselves here and announced themselves as Awans. Awans are recent in Khanpur. Their history of existence in research villages was reported to be less than a century old. Awans are mainly involved in agriculture and small businesses. They are hardworking people (also highly regarded by Dhanyals in this regard). The two co-exist with each other, yet Dhanyals and Awans share a history of tension over religious issues (owing to Awans' doubtful descent) from time to

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41 Head, authority, noble.

time. Whenever the conflicts arise, Gakkhars were always on the Dhanyals' side. Only rarely a family relationship is built between Dhanyals and Awans through marriages<sup>42</sup>.

### **Tareens**

Tareens have an East Afghan origin, although they do not speak Pashto or Persian (languages commonly spoken in Afghanistan). They are limited in number in Haripur now, while in Khanpur they are rarely located. One of the most notable Tareens has been Field Martial Ayub Khan, the first native army chief of Pakistan, who became Pakistan's president in 1958 through a military coup. Most of the Tareens have resorted to politics and other services. Tareens, though not Pukhtun by origin, are closely allied through custom and tradition (GoPunjab 1883-84).

### **Gujars**

Gujars (but also Dhunds commonly known as Abbasis) claim to be natives to Hazara. Most of the Gujars live in hills, pastures and remote parts of villages and were always considered as nomads. Their social position is not high due to their history as graziers, labourers and unsuccessful warriors. Many Gujar families also came from Punjab and are mostly engaged in farming and livestock keeping. Gujars did not get ownership benefits during land settlement since they were only considered as occupants of lands (as graziers), and not the owners.

“Currently they are the most frequent buyers of lands in Khanpur where Rajas are selling lands fast in small pieces.” Hanif Khan, retd. Forester, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

Interestingly, some Gujars have also shown success in politics due to their dense concentrated population in some specific areas of Haripur and Mansehra.

### **Bhattis**

Bhattis are considered to be the most inferior and the poorest tribe in Khanpur. They are taken as the 'working-class' of the area. Most of them live in remote hamlets close to Gujars. Many Bhattis are also employed by Gakkhars, Dhanyals and sometimes Awans as woodcutters for a regular supply of firewood for home consumption. A person employed for firewood cutting receives half of the wood chopped, which is either used at home or is sold for cash income. They are landless and have no share in forest produce legally.

#### **3.1.4 Hazara and Pukhtun link**

Pukhtuns claim to be the largest and most powerful ethnicity of the NWFP. Hazara region also has a mixed population of Pukhtuns (minority) and non Pukhtuns (majority). There have been histories of conquerors from Afghan origin coming to various parts of NWFP including Hazara and ruling various regions (e.g. Durranis, Jadoons). Hence there have been

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<sup>42</sup> There are instances of Awan girls being married in Dhanyal families, but never the other way around. This is based on patriarchy in which it is believed that a generation is taken forward by the father's blood and name.

strong ties between Hazara and Pukhtun in some ways. Due to the fact that Hazara is located and administered under the auspices of NWFP, it is necessary to briefly describe the Pukhtuns. In a lucid account of “Pukhtun Economy and Society” by Akbar S. Ahmed (1980), the author writes about Pukhtunwali and its associated traditions. It is self-evident according to him that social structural change can be measured or examined in relation to an anterior form of social reality. He then continues to describe Pukhtunwali as the most anterior form of social reality that persists in tribal culture of Pukhtuns.

The main spirit of Pukhtunwali according to him is to gain political domination at lineage level. Hence politics plays a central role to gain status and honour (Namus) in a society and not the economic position, even though this may come behind political domination. His thesis postulates that Pukhtunwali survives political and administrative encapsulation. He presents three main ingredients of or principles of Pukhtun social organisations:

- Tarboorwali which ensures a ceiling to the wealth and power an individual may accumulate (otherwise there are fights, enmities to achieve a balance);
- Second is an intense spirit of democracy that finds ratification in the tribal culture (such as jarga<sup>43</sup>, modern forms of democracy fall out of this purview);
- The third is the honour based on Pukhtun code of conduct, particularly regarding women and their chastity.

The central issues in Pukhtun society, he explains, revolve around the pursuit of power, status and honour, a pursuit that is closely related and limited to agnatic kin of the tribal genealogical charter. “The symbolism of uni-lineal descent from a common apical ancestor is effective in articulating a great deal of the organisational functions of these groups” (Ahmed 1980: 5-7). Pukhtun tribal life is a continuous struggle to dominate, conquer and capture. Being conquered or captured can be temporary and against honour, while fighting back to regain honour is a tribal norm. This account explains traditional structures of a Pukhtun tribal society, however NWFP being largely a Pukhtun society by its roots, does have these values deeply rooted in its history. As an example, access to women in rural areas for development is limited. In majority cases only women staff can access women, yet most of the government offices in Pakistan, particularly NWFP, employ very few women in their structure. This could be due to several factors, e.g. hard to find equally qualified women. Yet, it cannot be disregarded that male dominated government set-ups breathe in the same values which do not encourage women to easily cross their boundaries. Hence the condition of honour may continue to apply in modern state organisations. As per Pukhtun code of conduct, women must be protected within the boundary of a lineage. This explains the issue of participation, notably involvement of women.

The second example comes from domination – quest for conquering – fighting back, an inclination towards not being governed. Hence a modern concept of governance (post colonial systems of democracy, government systems, rules and policies) are not quite

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<sup>43</sup> A council of elders which takes decision on behalf of the community – a de facto court at a defined level formally recognised by the State in cases of tribal areas.

enchanting in tribal culture. Barth termed this as a stateless system (2007) while analysing Pukhtun society in Swat.

“The central issue, as I saw it, was how best to understand how the patterns come about that make up social organisation. Do they derive from cultural rules and norms that enjoin the particular forms of behaviour that are practiced, or are they the outcome of a more complex play of considerations taken into account by political actors? Society is no doubt a moral system, but the political alignment of the persons within the polity in Swat could be shown as the aggregate result of myriad individual tactical decisions. There existed recognised forms of descent, property, and regional identity, but no man’s membership in any particular politically corporate group was ascribed to him” (Barth 2007: 3).

The British colonisers were quite aware of Pukhtun conquering history spread over centuries. The history of forests in NWFP shows that this was the only province where a special category of forests was established<sup>44</sup> by the British to be in good terms with the populations. Shabir Hussain (senior staff of the Forest department) put it in these words about Hazara:

“This area was considered sensitive since it is situated on the boundary of the former British Empire. They did not want to bring stringent laws and introduce a management which creates any trouble for them from the people who are born warriors. In other areas of the Empire, laws were rather stringent.” Shabir Hussain, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2010, Peshawar.

I would like to raise a word of caution here. One cannot generalise a Pukhtun society as it may look in this section so far. Lindholm (1986: 3) for instance presented a case of opposing results from political transformation in two neighbouring districts of Swat and Dir (both Pukhtun dominated) with one general remark: separation of church (mosques in case of Islam) and state has never been an Islamic percept and that political actors in NWFP use indigenous Islamic categories in their struggle to gain power. This is true even today. The account from Ahmed (1980) on Pukhtunwali is also explained in the frame of religion. In case of Hazara, there are several things which differentiate them from Pukhtuns. The language, the culture, greater social mobility for women, and openness to the idea of women engaging in earning an income, are few examples. However, one must note that even though non Pukhtun Hazara people insist that they are different from Pukhtuns, several values have permeated in each other’s cultures and traditions. In case of Hazara for instance, the issue of honour is as sensitive as in Pukhtun areas, though less pronounced, Jargas operate in most of the cases, and in many cases, social conservatism, especially in remote areas, is as high as in any other Pukhtun dominated society.

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<sup>44</sup> This division in forests was only marked in areas largely dominated by non Pakhtuns. However in rich forests, this was the only opportunity available to the British to extend a positive gesture to the entire region. Hazara borders with Pakhtun dominated areas where most of the forests were owned by the princely states.

One must note that there is a clear agitation from time to time between Pukhtun and non Pukhtun (Hazara) tribes on political issues and dominance. The most vocal being the recent agitation in 2010 against renaming of the Province from North West Frontier Province to Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (Khyber side of the land of the Pukhtuns). I had mentioned earlier that Hazara tribes mostly insisted on loyalty with the rulers, yet in this case, their resistance was vocal, out-rightly rejecting dominance. There are two ways to see the direct and indirect Pukhtun influence in Hazara region.

One: Hazara is partly inhabited by Pukhtuns (e.g. district Batagram). Secondly, the majority of the political decision makers, bureaucrats, and senior staff in various government departments in the province come from Pukhtun descent. This may have two implications. First, without generalising, the people governing the State functions are often victims of a duality. Personally, they are born from the same social fabric which does not approve participation of women and people at the lowest social tiers, and which promotes the idea of few wise elders making all the key decisions. In a duality like this, reforms of any kind, based on modern principles (such as participation) sound alien. The second is to do with inherent tension on cultural differences between Pukhtuns and Hazara, which I earlier described. It seems that people have learned to live with it.

### 3.1.5 Forests in Haripur – History of classification

Before the British took control over the sub-continent, the forests were used and managed by local users under a traditional community based tenure system. These systems provided ownership to the users. The forests were used for hunting and for family needs. After the British occupation, major changes were introduced in land revenue systems, trade, transport and communication networks resulting in transformation of agricultural systems, increased population, prosperity and peace (Tucker 1982). The farmers of the area responded to these changes by cultivating more land and the cropping pattern changed mainly from a mixed cropping pattern for subsistence to more commercialised crops. For a hundred years the clearing of brush, shrub and forest proceeded in the interior districts of Bombay (Tucker 1982; Richards and McAlpin 1983; FAO 2006). In order to stimulate agriculture, colonial policymakers gave titles for large amounts of fallow or untilled land to any farmer willing to plough it, thus changing the traditional land tenure systems, resource use and management. By 1840s British entrepreneurs began to penetrate much higher, into the mountainous valleys. By 1850, forests in lowlands of India had lost their best timber (Sal, *Shorea Robusta*). Followed by that, some of most prime Deodar (*Cedrus deodara*) tracts in the higher valleys were heavily cleared of their marketable trees (Richards and McAlpin 1983).

Land tilling for commercial agriculture was the most important single element of changing forest conditions in those decades. Haripur was taken over and annexed to Punjab in 1847 after being surrendered by Sikhs to the British. It was clear who owned the village but the ownership of land was not determined. The tribes inhabiting the tract could cut trees and cultivate the land at their free will. This way of land use conversion was termed as notorr. They paid taxes to the owners (Rajas). It was only after gradual change from a nomadic to a settled way of life that the need for having land with known limit was recognised.

Gradually the people began to appropriate only as much land as they could manage through manual agricultural operation through clearing hill slopes from tree growth for cultivation and pastoral use. Similar conditions prevailed in other mountainous tracts.

The 1850s began with the realisation that resources have started dwindling. The British then came up with the idea of scientific forest management. The then Governor General of India under British Crown, Lord Dalhousie (1847-1856) established a board of administration in 1853 (Ribbentrop 1900; Jan 1965) and a charter of forest management (1855) for the conservancy of forests which covered Hazara districts besides other places of pre-independence India. Elaborate forest conservancy rules for the Hazara districts were sanctioned in 1857, under which tree-bearing lands were placed under the control of Deputy Commissioner, Hazara. These rules conferred on the government all powers to manage forests, regulate felling and prevent further extension of notorr in these areas. Foresters believe that Lord Dalhousie's Charter on Forestry 1855 and the first Indian Forestry Act 1865<sup>45</sup> gave a firm basis to Indian forestry,

“...these two documents were the key intellectual revolution at that time” (Sinha 2006: 1).

The beginning of the Forest department's establishment was made in 1856 in the sub-continent (Rajan 1998) with a detailed organisation set up finalised in 1871 (Ribbentrop 1900: 75). It was considered to be the most sophisticated forestry service in the world at the time of the sub-continent's partition in 1947 (Tucker 1982: 112). Ribbentrop notes,

“In December 1862 Mr. Brandis was placed on special duty with the Government of India to assist in organising forest administration in other provinces, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1864 he was appointed the first Inspector-General of Forests to the Government of India. This was the break of day for forest administration in India, and our history dates from this period” (Ribbentrop 1900: 75).

### 3.2 First regular land settlement – 1872 and afterwards

First regular land settlement of the districts was introduced in 1872-73 under Lord Dalhousie's charter of forest management (1855). That was the first official realisation from the British that the state has to intervene in matters of general welfare in India if the British rule was to be sustained.

Creation of vast network of roads, rails and other physical infrastructures were a reflection of this conviction (Sinha 2006; Sivaramakrishnan 2009). Forest Regulation No.II of 1873 under the provisions of which the tree bearing lands were classified as Reserved forests and public wastelands (soon to be known as Guzara forests)<sup>46</sup>. A total of 10553 hectare area of

<sup>45</sup> The Indian Forest Act was amended in 1878 and then again in 1927.

<sup>46</sup> Reserved forests are forestlands where restrictions from the State are the highest. State is in full control of these forests. Communities only enjoy rights which are granted by the State. Guzara forests are also managed by the State but these are communally /privately owned and allow meeting local needs of the rural communities.

Haripur forests were declared Reserved of which only Khanpur had 6643 hectares. These forests were very rich in their productivity, thrived on higher altitudes with dominant and commercially important species of Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) and Blue Pine (*Pinus wallichiana*). *Guzaras* were written in the name of already existing landed owners (mainly Rajas). The documentation was done in land revenue records (*wajib ul arz*). The ownership was determined by the ownership of agricultural lands. A few forests were left for local communal use (*shamilat* or *shimilat deh*). The forest-users names were also written down in *wajib ul arz* as communal owners but with no right to sell these forests. These communal users / owners still have a right of timber based on annual quota as per *wajib ul arz*. Only recorded communal users have a right to timber while quotas are issued by the Forest department. Another category of forests (mainly scrubs) thrived on private lands which could not be cultivated. These were not included in *Guzara* forests, but were left in the custody of private owners as *ghair mazrua*<sup>47</sup> lands, locally called *Dhaka jat* or *Milkiati Guzaras*<sup>48</sup>.

Land settlement needs to be understood in the light of postcolonial history. The main premise for land settlement was based on the understanding that local use is causing forest degradation and if not controlled, forests will be lost. Ribbentrop (1900) writes in the opening lines of his monograph, which laid the foundation for forest policies in pre-independent India:

“The existence and distribution of forests in a country depend, in the first place, on its geographical situation and configuration, and consequent physical conditions, or, shortly expressed, the climate, and, in a secondary degree, on the interference of man” (Ribbentrop 1900: 1).

Following independence, for a long time colonial regulations were not changed. Many local people do not consider the new “inclusive” forestry approach by the State as legitimate to control “their” forest resources (Shahbaz 2009). Vandergeest and Peluso describe such territorialisation as,

“... all modern states divide their territories into complex and overlapping political and economic zones, rearrange people and resources within these units, and create regulations delineating how and by whom these areas can be used. These zones are administered by agencies whose jurisdictions are territorial as well as functional. The territories are created by mapping; thus modern cartography plays a central role in the implementation and legitimacy of territorial rule”. Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 387).

In case of Haripur as well, this was the first time when the State declared its official control on forests legitimising it through introducing land settlement that seemed to have taken care of everyone’s access to forests. Yet, the settlement also founded a segregation of owners and

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<sup>47</sup> Uncultivated lands or agricultural wastes.

<sup>48</sup> One has to be careful since in Haripur, privately owned *Guzara* forests are interchangeably called *Milkiati Guzara* or *Milkiati forest*.

non-owners and created new spaces for struggle at various levels. It gave emergence to patron-client relationships within and outside formal institutional structures, which is a basis to an understanding of today's landscape of forests and forestry in Pakistan. This thesis will analyse social complexities arriving from this point and see how different users relate to forests, including the landless who rely on forests for fuel and non-woody products.

### 3.2.1 Land demarcation and history of regulations

The Guzara forests in Haripur have not been properly demarcated. Demarcation refers to a process by which the government erects boundary pillars on the ground to declare boundaries of Guzara forests within which breaking land for agriculture would no longer be allowed<sup>49</sup>. Revenue records of these forests are rather old and most of the maps do not tally ground boundaries and formal maps. Hence the exact boundaries of Guzara forests, has always remained an issue. Abdullah Jan, in the first Guzara working plan<sup>50</sup> for Hazara writes about the policy revisions after the first land settlement,

“The forest policy was extremely considerate of local interests for the obvious reason of avoiding discontentment in the tract which had exposed and often disturbed frontiers. It was only for this reason that considerable areas of wooded lands were set apart as Guzara for the use of the villagers, primarily for meeting the domestic requirement of the owners and other right-holders for timber, firewood, grazing and grass cutting” (Jan 1965: 41).

This reflects that the concept of ‘right holders’ was quite overriding in the decisions made for Guzara. The basis for identifying right holders is therefore necessary to understand in the context of access to and decision making for natural resources. He continues and explains that along all these rights allocated to the right-holders, it was considered necessary to ensure State control,

“The government however, asserted and established its right to conservancy, management and to a share of sale proceeds (seigniorage<sup>51</sup>) from these forests. After the settlement and completion of the reservation measures, management of the forests notified as Reserved was vested in the Forest department and the Guzara forests were retained under the control of the Deputy Commissioner” (Jan 1965: 41).

The Hazara forest regulation No.II of 1873 was subsequently replaced by regulation No.IV of 1879 which made no alteration in the status and management of the Reserved forests. With regard to Guzara forests, however, this regulation conferred powers on the government

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49 Converting forests to agricultural land is not a punishable offence if outside the demarcated areas in all Guzara forests.

50 This document gives forest management prescriptions for a prefixed period of time (10, 15, 20 years). It serves as the prime book of the forester deputed to manage this forest.

51 Seigniorage was a fee collected by the State from the sale revenue of the tree. The fee was fixed by the State in percentage of revenue. The fee wavered for different species or varieties.

to demarcate selected areas of Guzaras as village forests and to subject them to somewhat strict but elastic system of conservancy. Section 8 of the regulation provided,

“The wastelands of certain character must be set apart by the Deputy Commissioner to issue management orders providing for cutting, improvements, felling, grazing and grass cutting in the village forests so demarcated”. The section 12 of the regulation provided, “all the wasteland of a village which remained outside the village forests so demarcated shall be free from all control.” Section 8, regulation No.IV of 1879

Hence within Guzara, two new categories of village forests and wastelands emerged in 1873, both having slightly different control and management regimes. For some reason, action in accordance with these provisions was delayed till June, 1882 when Mr. Forrest, Assistant Conservator of Forests was deputed to demarcate the village forests. He did so for nearly 150,000 acres of village forests in 299 villages from 1882 to 1884 and made recommendations to erect boundary pillars around the demarcated parts and to prohibit cultivation and impose some restrictions on felling, lopping and burning of charcoal within these areas. These recommendations were issued for construction of the boundary pillars around the wastelands so demarcated. The local people agitated against the demarcation and openly expressed their anger towards the State. In response to this, Colonel Wace, the junior financial commissioner of Punjab appointed to judge the situation, recommended abandoning the demarcation and to reverse the arrangements to what was in force in 1873.

Work on the construction of boundary pillars was suspended. In the meantime the question of fresh revision of the forest regulation II cropped up and ultimately, the forest regulations VI was introduced in 1884 (Jan 1965: 33). This regulation reasserted the policy of wasteland demarcation and confirmed Mr. Forrest’s demarcation. The only significant distinction left between the demarcated waste (known as mahduda) and the un-demarcated waste (known as ghair mahduda) was that while in the latter extension of cultivation was permitted, in the former it was not. Other management orders regarding felling and lopping of trees applied equally to the demarcated as well as un-demarcated wastelands.

Mr. Forrest’s demarcation returned in force and remained in operation till the second settlement of 1904-05. For various reasons such as inclusion of cultivation in the demarcated area and faulty boundary lines, the old demarcation was revised during the second regular settlement and the demarcated area was reduced from 150,000 acres in 199 villages to 83,782 in 252 villages. The demarcation was confirmed by regulation No.III of 1911. This last enactment is still in force as of today with only minor amendments. The Deputy Commissioner remained the sole in-charge of the Guzaras from 1872-73 to 1950, when these were transferred to the control of the Forest department.

### **3.2.2 Two phases of Guzara forests, the recent history**

#### **a. Prior to 1950**

In 1936 Hazara Forest Act, Reserved forests were declared as an absolute property of the government and hence the people’s rights were recorded. The government allowed certain

rights and concessions in these forests (grass cutting and grazing). Yet, a lot of local users accessed these forests just as Guzara forests, hence de facto use of the forests differs from what is “legally defined” in the documents. Abeedullah Jan records a brief history.

“Haripur forest division, in addition to government Reserved forests deals with vast tract of wastelands commonly called Guzaras. These wastelands as defined by Hazara Forest Act 1936 include all uncultivated areas except for Reserved forest, village sites, graveyards and other sacred places. Prior to 1950, these Guzaras were managed by the Deputy Commissioner, Hazara with the help of revenue staff and protective establishment known as Muhafiz. Later on it was realised that Guzara, like government Reserved forest, should also be managed by the Forest department. For this purpose Guzara rules were framed in 1950 and in the same year the management was handed over to the Forest department” (Jan 1965: 1).

Prior to 1950, the entire district was divided into Northern and the Southern Circles. Each Circle was placed under the charge of Naib Tehsildar<sup>52</sup>. The Naib Tehsildars were assisted by the village Patwaris, Numberdars<sup>53</sup> and other protective establishment called Muhafiz<sup>54</sup> who were paid by the owners of the Guzaras in cash or in kind at the time of harvest. The Deputy Commissioner made some special management orders in 1895. These orders were fixed for granting a maximum of four trees per family as the limit for “agriculture and domestic needs” and brushwood was defined as being the wood of all the trees not included in the seigniorage fee list. It was also permitted that the villagers could fell the trees in the mahduda and as well as ghair mahduda areas. After notifying their intension, the Numberdars and Patwaris, made a brief entry in a special register known as ‘chob’<sup>55</sup>. The non-residents of the village who had rights therein had to obtain special sanction of the Deputy Commissioner to fell the trees. There was neither any restriction on grazing and grass cutting nor on the use of brushwood and dry-wood for fuel purposes. The sale of such wood was permitted only with prior sanction of the Deputy Commissioner Hazara. Mutilation of trees and setting forests on fire were forbidden acts and extension of cultivation in demarcated areas without permission of the Deputy Commissioner was banned.

The Naib Tehsildars who assisted the Deputy Commissioner in the management of Guzara forests, were drawn from the revenue staff. They had neither the requisite technical knowledge nor the capacity with adequate protective staff under them to manage the valuable forests on proper scientific lines (Jan 1965: 34). In case of felling by the villagers for domestic requirements, the only condition was to notify the intention to the village Patwari and the Numberdar. The interesting feature of this system was that Numberdar and the Patwari had

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**52** A Naib Tehsildar is the deputy of Tehsildar. Tehsil refers to the sub division of a district which was a revenue collection denominator during Mughal era. ‘dar’ in Persian is a suffix meaning ‘holder of a position’. The role of tehsildar continued during the period of British rule and was subsequently used by Pakistan and India following their independence from the British.

**53** Village headmen – also a revenue position at village level.

**54** Muhafiz were guards who looked after forests areas.

**55** Register on which felling records were noted.

no powers to prevent such felling even if these were unjustified. However, they could bring the matter to the notice of the Deputy Commissioner who had the power to close the Guzara forest to any kind of felling and allow felling only on special permits issued from his office. In the management orders issued in 1895, it was laid out that the trees to be felled by the villagers were to be marked with a government hammer but this provision was never observed and remained virtually ineffective. The result was that the choice to fell the trees rested with the villagers who naturally chopped from wherever they liked.

The Mohafiz who were required to protect Guzara could not adequately enforce proper protection because they were paid by the villagers and therefore, they could not afford to cause displeasure by reporting against them. In case of sales from the Guzara, the trees were marked by the Naib Tehsildars often randomly, based on villagers' convenience, doing more harm than good to the forest. During the World War II, large scale exploitation was allowed in accessible Guzara on such pretexts by the owners as contributions to Red Cross, war affectees and grow-more-food campaigns. Besides felling, encroachments for cultivation in the mahduda areas were also numerous. The boundary pillars of mahduda lands, which were erected against the will of the locals at the time of demarcation, ultimately disappeared with the result that the demarcation lines remained only on the Patwaris' maps. The absence of the demarcation pillars from the ground invited further encroachments because it was difficult to say whether the extension in cultivation was legal or not. The choice to prosecute a person encroaching rested with the Patwari alone as no one else knew the boundaries of the demarcated waste except him. Jan documents the history as follows:

“The Deputy Commissioner, the manager of the Guzara forests had neither the requisite technical knowledge nor the time to inspect the forests and supervise the work of his subordinates. Inadequate management on one hand and wanton felling of trees by unscrupulous villagers on the other resulted in gradual depletion of Guzara forests. This caused understandable concern to the government which ultimately decided to entrust the management of these forests to the Forest Department” (Jan 1965: 45)

He also reports that the rationale of scientific management for handing over forests to the Forest department was presented many times by the department. However it was strongly opposed by main influential owners (e.g. Rajas). The government was not keen to let this opposition grow and hence delayed to entertain the request of the department, until 1950.

#### **b. Management handed over to Forest Department 1950**

In 1950, the government decided to transfer the control of Guzara forests from the Deputy Commissioner to the Forest department. However, the government thought that the new manager cannot be less competent in political power than the Deputy Commissioner. Therefore, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) was vested with certain powers of the Deputy Commissioner under the Hazara Forest Act 1936 for the purpose of carrying out the management of the Guzaras. A separate Guzara Forest Division was created under the charge of a DFO, together with the requisite technical and other subordinate staff.

To start with, the posts of 3 Forest Rangers, 14 Foresters and 48 Forest Guards were sanctioned. Each Ranger was responsible for one geographic unit with a number of staff working under him. Elaborate rules called the Hazara Management of Wastelands (Guzara) rules 1950 were framed by the department under the authority of section 53(1) of the Hazara Forest Act 1936. These rules did away with the old procedure of cutting trees by simple expression of intention to the village Patwari. A new procedure was laid down for cutting of



**Figure 3.1:** Forest department district set up in 1960

of trees for domestic requirements by submitting a written application duly certified by the village Patwari that the applicant is a rights holder in the Guzara forest. It was to be further verified by the forest staff for the actual requirements of timber before it was sanctioned by the DFO. Trees in the Guzara forests were marked in advance by the Ranger and villagers only felled trees when permission was granted by the DFO. There was no restriction on grazing, grass cutting and on the use of dry wood or brushwood for domestic consumption by the right holders and even by the non-right holders as long as the right holders did not have any objection or the Conservator of Forests did not consider this an interference in the interest of conservancy. Sale of dry wood and brushwood was however, not permitted except with permission of the Conservator of Forests. Notorr in the Kaghan valley was declared as a totally prohibited act.

The Guzara forests were closed for commercial exploitation for a period of 20 years commencing from the date of enforcement of 1950 rules but the Conservator of Forests had the authority to sell trees from these forests wherever deemed necessary in the interest of silviculture<sup>56</sup> alone. This provision had put a stop to frequent requests for sale of trees on pretexts such as liquidation of debts, education or children's needs, marriages etc. After the Guzara forest division started functioning, it was realised that the staff sanctioned was extremely inadequate to cope with the task of affording proper protection and adequate management to Guzara forests which were spread far and wide in Hazara district.

The number of staff was then almost doubled: Rangers were increased to 6, Foresters to 20 and Forest Guards to 110 (1951). Soon after this, it was felt that one DFO was also not enough. On the premise that the management operations and frequent inspection of Guzara forests on an extensive jurisdiction was a tough task for one person, it was decided that 4 divisions be established on geographical grounds (rather than Reserved and Guzara separate

**56** Science of tree raising or tree culture – the sentence implies that the Conservator would decide based on his knowledge, if cutting is necessary to help forest grow better, he would order so under his specific instructions.

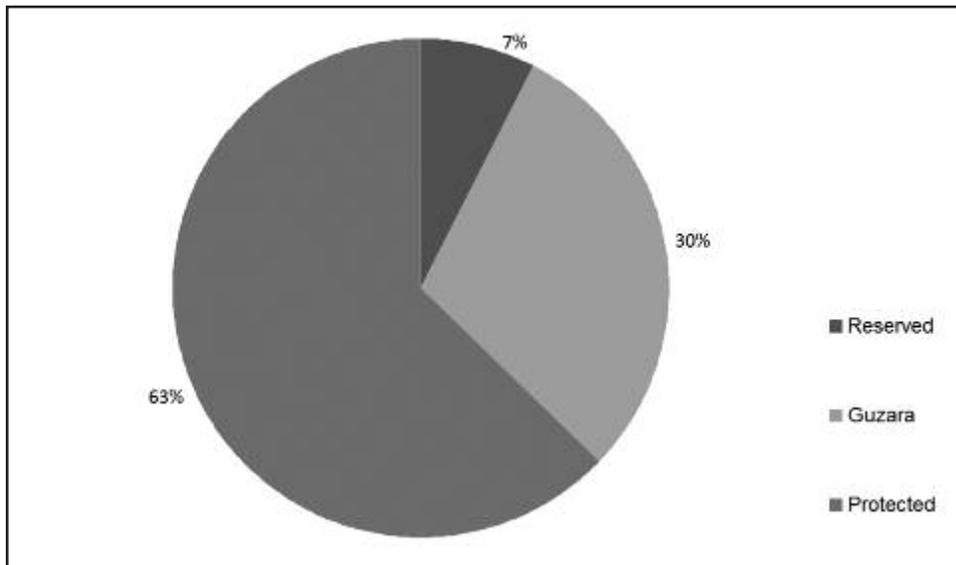
as one each). This decision came in view of several events when in case of illicit damage, the Guzara staff blamed the Reserved forest staff and vice versa, making it very difficult to fix responsibility in overlapping forest units. One single Guzara forest division was abolished in 1953 and was divided into four divisions namely Kaghan, Siran, Galis, and Haripur.

The first Guzara working plan was prepared in 1965 for a period of nine years. The working plan consistently uses the terms “wasteland” for these forests. The preface of the same document is a reflection of deforestation history (mainly attributed to increasing population) and admits lack of reliability of statistics which in the writer’s opinion appear to have over-calculated harvesting volumes:

“Commercial exploitation of these forests must end and the forest should be maintained primarily for protective purposes and for meeting the domestic and agricultural needs of the fast increasing population of the tract. Due to a very low volume available for sale, realisation of yield will be periodical instead of annual, as is generally the practice.... the available statistics for growth of the conifers and hardwoods are not very reliable. This deficiency is not, however, of immediate material importance as the condition of the forests does not warrant their utilisation on a sizeable scale, the element of conservatism evident in the figures adopted will obviate the possibility of unduly taxing the resource which in the present conditions, has extremely low productivity” (Jan 1965: ii).

### 3.2.3 Other post-independence developments and debates

As of today, Pakistan has only 5.2% of its total landmass (GoPakistan 1992b) legally left as forest. Forest area under the management custody of the NWFP Forest department (FD) is



**Figure 3.2:** NWFP forests under the management of provincial Forest department (source: Ficsher, Khan et al. 2009)

841,517 hectares. Of the total area, 7.6% (63,915 ha) are State-owned Reserved forests, 29.7% (250,106 ha) are Guzara forests owned either by community or private individuals and 62.7% (527,496 ha) are Protected forests<sup>57</sup> (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009: 12).

Forests have always been an important source of livelihood strategies of the local population of Pakistan (Barth 1985). The forests both shape their livelihood strategies, whilst the strategies that they adopt impact on the forests and the result is not always sustainable. Some thirty years ago (1980s), foresters in Pakistan realised that a policing and controlling attitude in forestry was not helping (Fischer, Saleemi et al. 2005). The ideas of involving local people started emerging based on the realisation that the ownership, or at least management control over forests, is critical to responsible management – local people have no incentive to manage forests over which they have no tenure rights. Based on these ideas promoted by international donors and NGOs (GoPakistan 1992a), some of the major policy documents, such as legal acts, state rules and even project documents submitted by Forest department for public funding, were revised. All these revisions recognised the “the needs of the natives”. Hence rights to subsistence use of forests were maintained, as witnessed by the Van Panchayats<sup>58</sup> of Himalayan India (Ballabh and Singh 1988), and the Guzara forests of Pakistan (Jan 1965). These have supposedly also impacted the department’s everyday procedures vis a` vis staff interactions with people living in and around forests and forest owners.

The management prescription identified in forest policies however, remained influenced by neo-Malthusian<sup>59</sup> assumptions. Hardin’s (1968) Tragedy of the Commons, was largely believed to have been true for Pakistani forests, attributing unsustainable use by local people and population growth for loss of forests<sup>60</sup>. Despite all the efforts to keep the people’s pressure away from the forest under strict centralised control, forests continued to disappear with the passage of time (Javed, Khattak et al. 2002). A recent study shows that the forests in NWFP alone have reduced by 107,009 hectare since 1996 proportioning to the total reduction of 15.8% in forest cover (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009: 14). In 1993, the State imposed a ban on commercial harvesting – as a desperate effort to stop deforestation (GoPakistan 1993). After this initiative, several steps were taken in NWFP to bring reforms in forestry sector.

### **Dilemma of the Sub-continent**

India and Pakistan both became sovereign states in 1947. Both the countries have been struggling with similar issues and several changes have been introduced to the systems during post-independence time. What went different in India was the introduction to land

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**57** Protected forests formerly were under the jurisdiction of the princely states. With the merger of these states into the territory of Pakistan, these forests were transferred to the Forest department.

**58** "Panchayat" literally means assembly (ayat) of five (panch) wise and respected elders chosen and accepted by the local community. Traditionally, these assemblies settle disputes between individuals and villages.

**59** The Neo-Malthusian population theory claims that poor nations are stuck in a cycle of poverty which they cannot get out of, unless some sort of preventive measures of population checks are engaged.

**60** Personal communication with the forest officials during workshops, meetings and one to one contacts during my 18 years of work experience with them.

reforms after independence. This resulted in reducing the dominance of the elites since they mainly invested in land to gain power<sup>61</sup>. In India there are claims that political power is more diversified. In Pakistan on the other hand, the country is largely feudal in its governance culture and a few elites have a strong hold on power. Pakistan could never engage in any effective land reforms since the powerful elite mainly invested in lands and wanted to retain their position by maintaining their hold on productive assets, (mainly lands) (Aljalaly 1992).

One major post-independence development was the restructuring of NWFP Forest department which was completed in 2002. This was accomplished with an addition of five thematic units with additional staff members appointed at various levels. The restructuring was aimed at getting closer to the people and forest users and to engage them in forest planning and implementation interventions. A concept of land-use planning was introduced which in various phases expanded from forest to non-forest resources (Chapter 4). This was done to ensure greater participation of forest communities in forest management.

Despite these policy changes, deforestation in Pakistan remains a subject of contestation and controversial claims. The revised policies were seen as remnants of old colonial policies which were primarily aimed at centralised control over forests for commercial timber purposes (Ali 2009) in a paternalistic manner. Several authors reported that a lot of trees were cut and taken from the forest for feeding the commercial interests, by the governments and local contractors (Tucker 1982; 1984; Knudsen 1996; Gohar 2002; Ali 2009). Some of the studies conducted elsewhere in the world but in similar contexts, build the case that increasing population pressure will result in environmental scarcity leading to violent conflicts and global issues such as global warming, as Homer-Dixon suggests,

“Half of the world’s population of 6.0 billion remains directly tied to local natural resources. Sixty to seventy percent of the world’s poor people live in rural areas (.....) 50-60% rely on (...) biomass fuel for at least some of their primary energy needs. Unfortunately in many regions, where people rely on renewable resources, they are being depleted or degraded faster than they are being renewed” (Homer-Dixon 1999: 13).

He further suggests,

“Currently, the human population is growing by 1.3 percent a year. This figure peaked at about 2.1 percent between 1965 and 1970 and has fallen since then. (... ) Combined with global population growth, Earth’s total economic product is increasing by about 2.3 percent annually. With a doubling time of around thirty years, today’s global product of about \$30 trillion should exceed \$50 trillion in today’s dollars by 2025. A large component of this two-thirds growth will be achieved through yet higher consumption of the planet’s natural resources” (Homer-Dixon 1999: 13-14).

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**61** Personal communication with Jane Carter (2010), Former Advisor Forestry in Nepal (1990-95) and India (2000-2004) for community based forestry programmes, Intercooperation.

Such views are analysed by Peluso and Watts (2001: 5) who reject automatic simplistic linkages between increased environmental scarcity causing conflicts and violence. According to Hartmann (2001), it is much easier and politically convenient to put the blame on the poor for degrading the resource for their subsistence needs. In her critique she suggests,

“The automatic equation of population growth with increased resource demand is problematic. It does not necessarily follow that if there are more people, they will consume more – per capita consumption could fall for a variety of reasons. It also may be that increased resource consumption has little to do with demographic factors but instead with increased demand in external markets for a particular product” (Hartmann 2001: 45).

A direct connection between resource depletion due to local use, as claimed by Homer-Dixon, is also challenged by other studies which move the debate to another extreme,

“...The majority of local people were not dependent on natural resources (forest, land, water etc.) for their cash income – contrary to a popular assumption – but had instead adopted diverse non-natural resource based activities such as migration, labour, small business, etc. Nevertheless, forest-use patterns demonstrated that the majority of respondents were dependent on forest wood for their household needs (for example wood for house construction/repair, fuel wood, fodder and pastures for livestock, etc.). It can therefore be argued that the forest resources contributed to local people’s subsistence (or non-cash) livelihood strategies. Therefore these results partially contradict the popular assumption that rural people living in and around forests depend on forests for their livelihoods. Instead people have adopted multiple (non-natural resource based) livelihood strategies according to the available assets” (Shahbaz 2009: 58).

This finding that since the role of forests in income-oriented strategies is negligible, does not automatically confirm that subsistence does not cause damage and someone else is responsible for deforestation. One needs more arguments to support this claim since the situation is far more complicated and has deeper historical roots. Knudsen (1996: 20) has put it in the following way:

“...deforestation becomes entangled in social, economic and political webs which are not only difficult to come to grips with, but often outright impossible. The plural causes of deforestation in Pakistan illustrate this complexity and represent a challenge to sustainable forest management. This does not mean that Pakistani authorities are uninterested in promoting sustainable forestry. They are, but the odds are great” (Knudsen 1996: 20)

The webs Knudsen talks about are to be seen in historical context. This will help in understanding today’s complexity – although not necessarily solve the problem.

### 3.3 Is the colonial past still influencing forest service of Pakistan?

The sub-continent is not alone in this history. Colonial influences also include the colonisation of Latin America by the Spanish and Portuguese (with the important difference from other European colonisers in that they never left), of what became the Soviet Union by Russia, of parts of Africa by the Arabs, and more recent “colonisation” of some countries by the USA (Carter, Schmidt et al. 2009). There is a need to reflect on this for analysing why people inclusive initiatives were so needed in various parts of the globe, including NWFP.

I take a little detour to a wide-spectrum hint of the colonial past in forest-rich developing countries. European colonisation of Australia commenced in 1788, much later than the sub-continent. Prior to this, indigenous Australians inhabited the continent and had unwritten legal codes. However, the Aborigines did not have any form of political organisation that Europeans could understand as being analogous to their own institutions, and the British could not find recognised leaders with the authority to sign treaties, so treaties were not signed (in contrast to other British colonial practices in many other areas in Africa and South Asia). The first test of terra nullius<sup>62</sup> in Australia occurred in 1827, when the native inhabitants were declared subject to only English law where the incident concerned both natives and settlers. The rationale was that Aboriginal tribal groups already operated under their own legal systems. In 1835 Governor Bourke implemented the doctrine of terra nullius by proclaiming that Indigenous Australians could not sell or assign land, nor could an individual person acquire it, other than through distribution by the Crown. Meijl and Benda-Beckman (1999) continue,

“The property drive of colonial governments, European settlers and industrialists did not go unchecked. The continuing use of lands and natural resources held under customary property rights was frequently tolerated or condoned, and sometimes even officially recognised, as long as it did not directly block the economic policies of the colonial elites, and also for pragmatic political reasons.” However, this was just the beginning. “Most formerly colonised states gladly retained their colonial heritage after independence and claimed state control and proprietary interests over immense tracts of natural resources within their territories” (Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999: 4).

A common emphasis throughout was on commercial exploitation, with a strong focus on forest management in timber production and extraction). In case of Indonesia, Forest legislations were written in Dutch and were in use until 1950s, when translated. Only from the 1990s the rethinking of these regulations began for true ‘Indonesianisation’. Legislators are still struggling with some of the terms which cannot be translated from Dutch to Indonesian. Cameroon was colonised by the French, British (Southern part) and Arabs (North). In the case of ex-Soviet states, laws are also still largely written in Russian (although

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<sup>62</sup> Terra nullius is a Latin expression meaning "land belonging to no one", or "no man's land". This is a territory which has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state. Sovereignty over such a territory may only be acquired through occupation, though in some cases this is a violation of international law or a treaty. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terra\\_nullius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terra_nullius) 20th June 2010

this is at least a widely used and understood language in the given context); more significantly, forest administrations tend to remain Soviet in structure and in attitude<sup>63</sup>.

There is a variety of influences which colonialism has brought. Some of the common examples include (Carter, Schmidt et al. 2009: 22):

- Territorialisation and prescriptions based on scientific grounds systematically subordinating or even wiping out indigenous people (much of Latin America, parts of Africa and Asia).
- Colonisation has created a mind-set in which staff from a single institution (Forest Research Institute of Dehra Dun, sub-continent) are trained to consider themselves superior, more knowledgeable on scientific forestry, and the only appropriate custodians of the forest. Highly hierarchical systems, imposed from outside (India and Pakistan). In countries colonised by Russia, the enforcement of centralised planning and an institutionalised “top-down” approach.
- It also created little or no acknowledgement of local rights, practices, knowledge (although a few exceptions – e.g. van panchayats in India; often highly punitive legislation against local people for minor use of the forest (sub-continent)).
- Due to colonization, different ethnic groups forced into rivalry with another (many countries – “divide and rule”). Wood from a forest was placed as a centre of scientific management. Hence the forest was not seen primarily as a resource for local people, but as a timber creation unit for the state
- On the positive side, often good historical records, maps (even boundary markers still on ground) and yield calculation methods evolved. These tools however strongly legitimised state prescriptions.
- In some cases quite detailed botanic / taxonomic and silvicultural research and also records of indigenous uses can be found, which helped in scientific prescriptions.

This is the reason that it becomes important to look at other examples where centuries of colonisation have left certain traditions which new states have inherited. In many developing countries, colonial legacies, (concepts, laws, regulations, terminology, power-distribution, structures, training, etc.), still influence development processes concerning natural resources and local communities.

Forest governance was only a recent idea. In 1994 Community forestry was introduced in the South – yet the concept is not yet fully internalised in daily workings.

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<sup>63</sup> Notes from an international conference in Bhutan: Forests, landscape and governance – the roles of local communities, development projects, the State and other stakeholders. Punakha, Bhutan – September 3-7, 2008.

### 3.4 Conclusion – learning from the history

History helps understand the political alliances, power struggles and social conglomerate of the region, the district, and sub district Khanpur where I conducted my study. I have also tried to trace back the intervention of the State during British rule in introducing a new management regime for natural resources in the region that changed the entire social landscape of Khanpur. The State has most often seen people as a source of pressure on forests interfering with nature. This premise lays foundation of mistrust between people and the State. Contrary to this, the initiatives to introduce people inclusive forestry governance are based on the realisation that the ownership, or at least management control over forests, is critical to responsible management by the people. However, local people have no incentive to manage forests over which they have no tenure rights. In the case of NWFP too, all the initiatives (either donors or state-led) towards inclusive forest governance have suffered this continued underlying mistrust and tenurial conflicts between the local population and the state (Chapter 6).

On the other hand, the trained foresters from one single training institute are not ready to implement the new legislation in its actual spirit. In sum, the present situation of forestry in NWFP is one of tension, mistrust, and the existence of unrelated forest governance regimes (customary procedures; state/donors approach). The official forest administration does not show any inclination to practice the inclusive forest governance discourse (Chapter 4).



# 4

**Lets' face it!  
The State owned  
forest enterprise  
is dying**

In March 2011, the planning workshop of a Project working on integrated natural resource management was held in Peshawar. The members of the Forest department constituted the majority of the participants since the department was in lead to implement the project. I participated in the workshop as a member of the international NGO that technically supported the project. The discussion started with the question: "What is it that we want to achieve? Where do we stand as a department?" These questions were pertinent to ask since the project was mainly engaged in strengthening local level planning methodology and structures within the department. The initial hours were a little formal, and the participants seemed aloof. Subsequently, the discussion became more informal. To my surprise, the interaction was different from what I had observed in the past. People became highly self-critical and the views were shared with an open mind. The result in the two hours plenary was a dismal situation characterised by distress, hopelessness and an acknowledgement of an utter failure. I try to reproduce a brief picture from the discourse here.

One of the participants expressed that the forest management led by the Government Forest department, is at a cross-road of "make or break"; one commented on inertia in the department and said "it is in a state of coma". Agreeing, another person said, "There is a lack of leadership; there is an inertia which is impeding the department". A few said that there are strong personalities in the department but the institution is weak. "Capable and good people are serving in the wrong posts". They also acknowledged that the organisation is not oriented and structured to practice what it preaches. And more importantly, entrenched attitudes clearly demonstrate contradiction to the preaching, so there is no action, and thus no affirmative results. There is an inadequate ownership for promoting coordination and collaboration with actors outside department. At the same time, there is a sense of frustration amongst departmental staff that policies are made by a few at the top, without wider consultations, they are not well understood by the staff and hence they are not implemented in the field. No appropriate tools are provided to implement them either. Some went a step further and challenged the ones who argued about the lack of consultation, and added, "There is inconsistency between policies and ground realities hence even if we understand such policies; it is embarrassing to push for their implementation". Some voices were critical of the department's way of planning its agenda and the resources it had in order to fulfil those plans; "we plan in isolation and set targets which are not aligned with ground realities".

"There is a growing vacuum in human resources with the competent people leaving and no fresh inductions for the last two decades." The same concern was raised by another voice, "The department is losing institutional memory fast." This pointed to the dilemma specific to NWFP Forest Department. For the last twenty years, no fresh recruitments have been conducted due to reasons internal to the department – experienced people are retiring and their positions are being filled by pulling staff from junior cadres. The department does not recruit competent people from the market, based on merit and experience duly required for senior positions. The organisation has become a pawn in the hands of the politicians, whose vested interests influence every level, from the top of the State to the lowest tier". Hence they are thwarted in building any coherent professional competences in their job. "People do not see any career ladder and they are frequently transferred due to political orders." No change is foreseen in a visionary

manner, everything is imposed from the top and there is always an emergency to meet political orders. "Communities have stopped expecting things from the department". Finally, the director of the project stood up and I quote his last sentence, "If all this continues – we will be redundant and dead – let's face it."<sup>64</sup> Some participants also pinned their hopes on a few positive elements. They were happy that the department is undergoing a change. It is ahead of other provinces since it has reorganised itself. The department has, for the first time, opened its doors for non-foresters, by hiring sociologists. Women are being inducted at least in the field. Hence one can hope that an important actor so far left out in forestry development schemes can now be actively engaged. Also there is an increased outreach to communities and this particular aspect has been 'institutionalised' in the forest rules by the provincial department.

From which level did such vocal participants come? None from the top leadership! Most of these officials came from senior cadres who are fairly involved in decision making, the mid cadres who simply implement the orders from the seniors, and their subordinates who served in the field in the districts, sub districts or villages.

#### **4.1 Unpacking the State - What does it tell?**

The opening section shows that some of the State actors are expressing their worries on how the State has not been able to "perform". The State sounds almost oppressed and dysfunctional. I have experienced during my field studies how the state performs now as well as in the past. I argue that any analysis of performance needs to go hand and hand with an analytical perspective that views the state not simply as a monolithic institution but rather configured by various kinds of alliances amongst and between groups of bureaucrats within the state apparatus. I will focus here on the Forest department. Turnhout (2010) explains how participation is a performative practice in which different actors perform their roles as per their interests, aptitudes, understanding and external forces such as policies. The concept of performativity fits well on the government players as well. Within the actor called "State", there are individuals or groups who may be more interest-representing, more vocal, or more behind or in front of the scene. Some are creative, some passive or others might be influencing. They perform their roles according to certain frames (script) but that does not happen in reality. Firstly, that all the roles cannot be defined in the first place, and secondly, one cannot predict how those actors will react or interpret those roles (and create a definition of the self). This way, performativity is about creativity. In this process of creativity, there are several spaces which the State actors create for themselves to translate policy discourses in their interest according to their situations. This manoeuvring takes place in various networks and propels multiple reactions. The essence of this chapter therefore is in explaining that the State is not a monolithic actor (Ferguson 1990; Mosse 2003). This will minimise the fear of generalisation and help understand the chemistry of resistance at multiple levels.

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<sup>64</sup> This statement concluded the discussion and led the moderator to open the working sessions. I have not quoted the name of the officers who were engaged in this discussion, particularly the last whose bold statement makes for the title of this chapter. A frank discussion by the participants was extremely useful.

The Forest department (as a repertoire of the State) has changed its course from time to time in the history as an organisation, which Agrawal (2005) termed as new technologies of government. In order to be successful in its objectives, the department redefined its political relations and reconfigured the institutional arrangements to transform environmental subjectivities. Scott (1986) says that the State either retains its norms and frame conditions with little reinforcement or positive incentives, or recasts its policies with more realistic expectations to satisfy people's reservations, or it simply chooses to employ more coercion. This, Scott says, could be the ways in which government responds to resistance. These views from the scholars however, seem to suggest that the State is a singular entity. The State redefines itself, chooses to be more coercive, reconfigures itself using a technology of rule to discipline people and to turn them into (environmental) subjects. However this is happening often in a chaotic manner in which the top and the lower level cadres are not sharing that discourse of disciplining in a similar manner. Partly, because they do not believe in it, and partly, because they do not and cannot have a uniform understand of the discourse. The State is much better understood as an often chaotic and sometime stable set of alliances between groups of actors. In this chapter I am taking the Forest department as a repertoire of the State. I tried to unpack the department to find out that the State is plural.

There are several internal struggles, divisions, manipulations, frustrations, fears, and quest for more power which one encounters in this journey. I gauged that the journey has been rather turbulent since transformation into new technologies of governing is a difficult process for a complex entity. If the State is a tree and the individuals sit on different branches, each has a different view of various discourses, have their own interpretations and they selectively choose how new technologies are adopted (or ignored). Another problem in the singular treatment of the State is that it disregards multiple alliances between the State representatives and elite or non-elite villagers, in various situations. Hence the State, does not remain within its formal bureaucratic boundaries per se, but engages other actors in its government(ality).

From the beginning, the Forest department has been organised in a very complex manner. This is probably not a surprise (section 4.3). What is surprising is that the members of this service believe that it is a rather straightforward job, or would be if only there were no political interference at work! They keep it fairly simple for themselves, because the technical and scientific version of the State enterprise functions on paper are well laid out, but in practice as such do not include local people. This understanding varies from person to person, and in different tiers of the department (and amongst stakeholders). There are disparities between local and provincial levels and even within these two. There are hegemonic differences owing to different levels of interactions between themselves, with common villagers, with local elite, and other members of society based on their individual interests, aptitudes and interpretations. The Forestry system laid out on scientific knowledge in the sub-continent has never been scientific – this was an encounter of science with politics. Today what we see of the organisation (namely the Forest department), which implements these prescriptions is a conglomerate of fierce political interests and a struggle for survival within the arena called the forest.

#### 4.2 The ‘Forest department’ as an organisational / historical entity

In Pakistan, the provincial governments through their Forest departments are the custodians of all designated forests, and exercise legal powers. Forestry as a discipline was introduced and managed in a very territorial way by the British in 1855. The profession was named as the “Imperial Forest Service” as reported by Ribbentrop (1900). Each district had a forest officer in charge with a crew of foresters at various levels and Forest Guards for every village. At the central level, a position was established which was designated as “Inspector General of Forests” in 1871.

It is important to note that the similar designations also existed in police service of the empire and it still exists in modern Pakistan (Inspector, Inspector General Police, Guards, etc.). The governmentalisation of the resources (Agrawal 2005) was first achieved in nineteenth century when a State institution was created equipped with a set of technologies comprising silvicultural methods, surveys, volume and yield tables, working plans and lots of other associated tools. Initially the service was created as “forest conservancy<sup>65</sup>”. However, as such it has not much to do with “conservancy” but rather with a hierarchical, militaristic set up with imperial powers to extract and transport timber in a transnational political economy (Agrawal 2005). This is how the service is still organised in the entire country even after sixty-five years of independence. Forest Departments in all the provinces of Pakistan have been structured and administered in a strict hierarchical line of command. The following diagram is an example of NWFP Forest department. The same structure prevails in other provinces, with little differences.



**Figure 4.1:** Forest department in NWFP (post independence, 1947)

**65** The term conservancy emerged from the term conservation, which is defined by many foresters as using the forests but without abusing the resource. Reading the old documents e.g. Ribbentrop (1900), the term means preserving the resource rather than using.

Administratively, the Secretary (to Provincial Government) is the highest authority to the Forest department. The Secretary also oversees other partner departments within the ministry, namely Wildlife, Fisheries, Forest Development Corporation (FDC), Watershed Management and Environmental Protection Agency.

The Secretary serves as a link between the Forest department and the government for policy guidance. The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) is the technical head of the department. Under him there are Conservators of Forests (CF) for each Forest Circle<sup>66</sup> responsible for guiding forest planning, controlling, and monitoring the implementation of forest management in the Forest Divisions. These are the basic units for forest management and are headed by Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs). A DFO has to make field level operational planning for the Forest Ranges that are under the administration of Range Forest Officers (RFO) who are responsible for field implementation. The RFOs guide Foresters who control Forest Blocks. Forest Guard is the lowest tier of the forest administration and primarily acts in forest protection (policing) function for the forest unit assigned to him (called Beat). People in all positions by default are men.

### 4.3 The changed organisational structure in NWFP

In 2002 the organisation of NWFP Forest department went through restructuring as one of the steps towards Pakistan's inscribing to the donors' pressure for introduce participatory and good governance. The main spirit within the department to revamp the old structure of the organisation emerged from the admission that the system through which the department has been working so far, did not work in controlling deforestation, hence a need to change the way forests were being managed had emerged (GoPakistan 1992a; GoPakistan 1992b; GoNWFP 2000; GoPakistan 2008). For NWFP, this was the second time after 1950<sup>67</sup> (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2), when a major change was materialised within the department. The latest restructuring mainly aimed at adding thematic directorates and staff to the existing territorial structure (Fig 2). In addition, the international donors and NGOs insisted on restructuring, aiming at more transparency in the system through getting closer to the forests users in the field (Gronow, Ali et al. 2000). This concern added another technology to governing forests: finding counterparts of the State in governmentalised localities termed by Agrawal as "regulatory communities" (2001): The Village Development Committees (VDCs) must be established in all the villages situated in and around Reserved, Protected and Guzara forests. With this, a concept of three-tier planning was introduced. Working plans were replaced with Strategic (district level, led by Forest department), Operational (sub district level but more by forest boundaries and led by Forest department) and Village levels (led by VDC, facilitated by non-forestry cadre of the Forest department).

The restructuring was accomplished with an addition of five thematic units at provincial level: "Directorate of Forestry Planning and Monitoring", "Directorate of Community Development, Extension, Gender and Development (CDE-GAD)", "Directorate of

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<sup>66</sup> Forest department specific unit, comprising of a number of contiguous districts.

<sup>67</sup> 1950: When forest management was officially handed over to the department from the office of the Deputy Commissioner.

Institutional & Human Resource Development (IHRD)”, “Directorate of Research and Development (R&D)” and “Directorate of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)”. These five units were named as “specialised units”. The territorial set up, as explained above, from pre-colonial system remained as such but with one addition. A non-forestry cadre was introduced at the district level under “Directorate of Community Development, Extension, Gender & Development (CDE-GAD)”. These additional staff members were appointed at circle and district and sub district levels. They included Community Development Officers (men at division and women at circle level) and field extension workers. This, in case of men in the restructured organisation is to be ensured by the Forest Guards, which is a huge shift from what Forest Guards used to do. In order to reach out to women, women extension workers were inducted to the service. Their job is to interact first hand with the women population. The field extension workers are considered to be at the same level as Foresters and Forest Guards, and report to the DFO as well as their parent Directorate. This new organisation is laid on what is called a ‘matrix’ structure, with specialised (thematic) units at provincial level and a hierarchical set up for geographical territories (Buttoud, Fischer et al. 2000; GoNWFP 2000).

The matrix system of management was introduced with an intention to combine expertise and strengths of the partner departments (e.g. wildlife, fisheries) and integrate their planning and field implementation. However none of them opted to join the force and retained their individual territories. This resulted in continued isolation of the Forest department as an organisation. Land-use planning concept remained limited to forests, under the roof of the Forest department.

The so called hierarchical structure remained intact with an additional cadre, the five new directors of specialised units also reporting to the CCF. Each director is of the rank of Conservator. These directors are not selected from outside based on their thematic specialisation. Any Conservator serving anywhere in the territorial part of the organisation can be transferred to anyone of these units. To illustrate, the Conservator of South NWFP looking after forestry affairs of Southern districts of the province, may one day find himself serving as Director of Human Resource Development Directorate; or vice versa. He manages this new portfolio not because he specialises in the subject, but as a result of his transfer orders.

All field officers report to the DFO. An entire set of procedures has been laid out to fulfil new obligations. Hence it was not just the restructuring, but also a number of approaches, rules and manuals which were added to the departmental working practices on various themes. The pre-independence legal document Forest Act 1927 was repealed and it was replaced by new Forest Ordinance 2002.

The restructuring process was largely financed and technically supported by international donor funded projects in forestry<sup>68</sup>. Whether or not, the re-organised structure has been able to achieve its basic objective of assisting the territorial staff in, e.g. curtailing deforestation, is seriously being debated by many actors. To date, the thematic directorates are unable to perform their assignments and have more or less been treated as transit stations for posting/adjustment of the territorial/managerial staff of the Forest department. The result



“If they (the territorial staff) wish, then there are many ways to earn additional income in the field. That is more tempting than making friends with forest users.”  
Iqbal Swati, (Rtd.) Chief Conservator Forests, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010, Islamabad.

My respondent seems to emphasise that the new organisation offered fewer opportunities for making an additional income. The same is supported by the study conducted by Steimann (2004). Here the discussion is that the newly structured organisation created a new terminology in the field, to identify the ‘set’ of employees working within the department (see Fig 4.2). The term ‘Territorial staff’, refers to the old cadres (Fig 4.1), and their main job was to serve in certain geographical territory under the line and command provided by the organisation (Conservator, DFO, RFOs, Foresters and Forest Guards). The other category of staff was identified as staff of the newly established ‘specialised units’ in the field (field staff originally coming from one of the five directorates), such as Community Development Officers.

Departmental personnel are the main actors implementing new regulations. Hence their perceptions and roles within the department are critical.

Field personnel are of the most significance in this regard since they are the ones who present the face of the department at local level, as Vasan (2002) suggests from the Indian context, “These front-line staff are part of the State bureaucracy charged with implementing policies and programmes. They are non-bureaucrats who represent the State bureaucracy in rural society” (2002:4125). She explains the position of the Forest Guard (the lowest cadre in Forest Department) who represents the Forest department in rural society and interprets and explains forest policies to local people. The main architects of the restructured department (some of the senior foresters) express their concern that the new forest regulation is still not truly implemented at the field level and one of many reasons is the knowledge gap between various tiers.

“I was a DFO when this reorganisation process started (early 1990s). By the time the new policies and rules were finally drafted, it was 2001. Now I have retired. But those who are now taking charge of the affairs have jumped too quickly from very junior cadres from that time. They have no idea of what has changed and why. They still do whatever they have heard in the field or the way they have been brought up in their very early years.” Hanif Khan, retired Conservator, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

Senior and retired foresters (such as those quoted in preceding paragraphs) intrinsically claim that they were fully on the side of the change in the organisation, not only the way it was restructured, but also the way it was expected to function. A general view may be quite dismissive since usually, people at senior ladders, who have spent their lives in an environment that defined the working of the department, would simply resist any change. In my case, this does not seem to be true for everybody at that level. Particularly those who shaped the restructuring process seem to believe that the change was necessary and must be followed. However, their statements reflect that these champions were not successful in making this happen, during their careers at least. On the other hand, one has to be careful

of the context behind Hanif's statement, "But those who are now taking charge of the affairs were on very junior cadres at that time". What I have not quoted here but has been explained in the earlier part of his interview is that there has been no fresh induction of staff<sup>69</sup> during the last twenty years. So while in any case all juniors could not have been involved in the reorganisation process for practical reasons, a gap in human resource planning, as per Hanif's statement, has further exaggerated the issue that now the staff taking over senior positions is twenty years behind their seniors in time. This brings up several questions, but more particularly two:

- Most discussions on participatory forest management in Pakistan started in late 1980s. Therefore a late induction of fresh staff should not harm adhering to the new policies of the department, which are participatory as per restructured organisation and its claim.
- It is an opportunity rather than a risk; fresh induction or promotion of juniors to very senior cadres comes with less likelihood of resistance to change – since change should already be in motion.

It is therefore much more than merely the issue of knowledge gap. If the restructured organisation with its expected change of behaviour and technologies does not function, there must be other reasons. There is another point of view from a different angle. It is the attitude which prevented the implantation of new ideas and policies:

"I don't think it is because they do not know that the department has to surrender its policing attitude. They know this quite well. Understanding (new) rules (in their spirit), is important but its importance is only secondary. The problem is that they don't want to understand the attitude and way of working required by the new organisation." Iqbal Swati, retired Chief Conservator Forests, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010, Islamabad.

Why is it that they don't want to understand? Why is there a lack of willingness among forestry staff at various levels to identify with the new policy? The policy was not conjured up in air; it was carried out by countless consultations with the same people (or their seniors). What is the new style of working that is required by the restructured organisation? Many answers will be found in the process of "unpacking the State" – here I have taken a State representation in the form of Forest Department. The department should not be seen in its collective form as a unit behaving as a singular actor (McGee 2004). What I argue is that the department comprises several individuals and/or groups of individuals. Each one is an actor which has agency. Hence it is not just a discussion on new and changing technologies of government but also technologies of the self – to exercise power and find a way out of or through a power regime. Their participation is embedded in performative practices. The script is not a static one. It is changed, contextualized, adapted and denied according to situations. This leads to several stories which I have collected in the field. These stories

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<sup>69</sup> Since 1987, the department has not inducted fresh, qualified staff on permanent contracts due to an internal political concern raised by the staff union. Most of the new positions due to reorganisations were filled through renewable shorter term contracts. The matter was resolved in 1999.

suggest that there are internal struggles within the department and the State at the broader level. There are struggles with the players outside the department (including rural communities, common citizens, central government, politicians, etc.). Also, what we called a hierarchical and paternalistic set up in section 4.2 does not seem to be working in that manner. Various internal actors are using their human agency in asserting power.

Power is often understood as a top-down or hierarchical phenomenon. It is perceived that as soon as someone has power due to a position in hierarchy, it will be asserted to suppress others. This is not always true. The three sections coming from this point forward present quite diverse examples. One analysing the difficulty of internalisation of the restructured organisation documented in section 4.3; the second is about power struggle between central and provincial levels of State actors on a policy intervention and how this was circumvented to meet provincial interests (section 4.7); the third is rather a recent phenomenon in which survival and legitimacy of the State actors is in question (4.8). All these levels are taken to illustrate struggles within the State as a larger organ – and how these vibes transform into “forest fights”.

#### **4.5 Tensions around restructuring – what went at stake?**

Personnel in the field have certain de jure roles, assigned to them by the organisation. Various discourses, personal interviews and direct observations in the field indicate that it is not de jure that works in the field – it is the de facto roles that are important. Let’s take an example of a Range Forest Officer (RFO) who is appointed in one of the sub units of a district. He has a small house called Range Quarter provided by the department, often constructed during the British era in which to live and run his office. It is usually in a dilapidated condition, poorly maintained and often without electricity, natural gas or telephone. He is responsible for a lot of reporting to the DFO from remotely located facilities. An RFO shares that in most of the cases,

“These costs are paid out of our pockets. We burn wood confiscated from ‘offenders’ for heating and cooking, use our personal cell phones, fuel our official car for patrolling and also pay electricity bills personally if there is any (electricity)”. RFO Manzur, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

Since most of the RFOs do not serve in the areas of their origin, they are bound to live in these facilities and spend their own resources to meet official expenses. They are also expected to serve meals and refreshments – often of a lavish nature – to higher officials when on a visit to their range. The RFO’s position is very important in the department’s district hierarchy as in charge of a range. All the check posts, villages and personnel deputed to this range come under his jurisdiction. The RFO uses his power to exploit all available options to increase his monthly income through other means. These include: deducting salaries of his subordinates on account of expenses made on the range quarters (bills, food, guests), diverting funds allocated to the range for nurseries, plantations, and other operations, dealing with the felling contractors by marking more trees than prescribed (an act in which not only he but also the contractor wins extra money), charging informal fees to the people coming for permit requests, charging fees from offenders as a security for not committing a

'crime' again, such as wood smuggling etc. Nevertheless I encountered several Foresters, who totally denied such 'allegations'.

"We never smuggle, these people lie about the department. They don't like us because we ask them to abstain from stealing. It is the commercial firewood collectors who burn scrubs." Saeed Forester, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Khanpur range, Haripur.

An RFO says,

"Yes, people can steal only when forest staff helps. If a forest official is honest and does not help, no one can cut even a branch." Malik Sarfaraz, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Haripur

He also shared a personal story,

"One day a person called to inform me that a tree had been felled in my area. I rushed and caught the fellow red-handed. I made him load the logs into my car using his labour. I didn't fine him. For him it was enough that he lost the logs, the cost of labour he had engaged and the car he had hired for this job – all was lost. This wood was officially auctioned in a clean manner for Rs.130,000. The offender offered me Rs.10,000 on the spot. But I refused him plainly". Malik Sarfaraz, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Haripur.

These views support an honest and dedicated image of the departmental staff. But on the other hand, there is a clear expression of their mindset regarding the "other side". Local people are criminal – they steal – they bribe and they lie. These are not just the expressions; these are the manifestations of tensions between the State enterprise of forest and people who live in the forests. The Foresters and Forest Guards earn a very meagre salary (Rs.8000<sup>70</sup> or more depending on seniority) and have no facilities whatsoever. They are often locals (but not necessarily from the same area in which they are located), not highly educated, and are inducted in their job after completion of a short course at a forestry school. They are usually proficient in their own native language<sup>71</sup>. Most of the Forest Guards have very limited career prospects owing to their little education, and will at the most retire as Foresters. Their position is often comparable to personal servants of an RFO and higher officers. They have no transport facilities and no money to use public transport for patrolling and no official place to stay when they spend nights in the villages. Check posts, even for the forests located at higher altitudes, operate all the year long. Heating (during winters) at check posts is arranged by the staff (on duty) on their own. Special Patrol Squads are allowed to use a car and carry weapons, but they neither have fuel for the car, nor is the weapon usable, since it is rusted and too old (no matter how harassing it might look). Showing his gaping rubber soled shoes, a Forester said,

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<sup>70</sup> Around 70 euros in 2012.

<sup>71</sup> There are seventy-two languages spoken in different regions of Pakistan.  
[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=pk](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=pk) 8th November 2011

“My DFO thinks that I should have a good rapport with the villagers, and at the same time there should be no thefts. I run around at my cost in these worn out shoes. I even buy my uniform out of my own pocket. I have no place to stay. I stay with villagers and for this they expect me to do them favours. We are also humans. Can you manage within the salary that I earn?” Mumtaz<sup>72</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2009, Khanpur.

Mumtaz is very knowledgeable in his field. He was open in his responses and candidly even differed from his senior, the RFO next to him participating in the same interview. His views illustrate the dilemma why capable people like him cannot deliver what is expected of them in the field. In addition to the expectations pointed out by Mumtaz, they are also responsible for entertaining higher officials on visits to the field. At times local politicians also visit the area with their friends and family, stay in official guest houses and consume a lot of food and fuel. The guest house personnel are not allowed to oblige them to pay - as per DFO's instructions - and hence the brunt comes to those who look after the guest house. They have a roof over their heads, but if guests are frequent, it can be a costly one.

The Forest Guards and Foresters are often the main persons engaging with the villagers, and since it is well known that the RFO is left with little time and resources to personally visit all these villages, they are a significant authority in the eyes of the villagers. It is up to them whether and how to report an ‘offence’ to the RFO. Hence most of the issues are resolved on the spot by making unofficial deals with the offenders rather than presenting them to the RFO. They are also engaged in informal deals on the timber permits since the villagers are aware of a long cumbersome process before they can have wood for repairing their house.

It is in the departmental staffs’ interest to keep this strong hold on the villages, and hence considering villagers as partners (as is suggested by the new policy) is definitely not in their favour. Villagers are well aware of their authority. A woman who regularly uses Reserved forests for her daily needs said,

“Whenever the sipahi<sup>73</sup> is on patrol, all women immediately know. Children or men tell us. Then we are careful and do not go for collecting firewood (from the Reserved forest). We know he will fine us for everything”. Fareeda, caste Awan, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2008, Paar wala mohalla.

A Forest Guard confirmed this tact of the womenfolk and added,

“We need helping hands within villages. They have to stop bad practices like taking loads and loads of firewood for commercial selling. Now when we go to the villages, they don’t consider us friends, they see us as enemies and hide from us.” Siddique Forest Guard, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

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**72** Name has been changed.

**73** A commonly used expression in Hindko language for Forest Guard. The literal meaning of Sipahi in English is a soldier. This may have stemmed from their uniform. They wear black militia Shalwar Qamiz and a soldier cap with the department badge on it.

This was an expression that fitted very well to the discussion on co-management which dwelled on the premise that it is a pragmatic way to institutionalise collaboration between the State and resource users, in order to eliminate unproductive tensions in regulating natural resources (Baland and Platteau 1996; Sundar 2000; Campbell and Vainio-Mattila 2003; Carlsson and Berkes 2005; Sikor 2006; Baland, Bardhan et al. 2007; Armitage, Plummer et al. 2009). Siddique's awareness about community participation was limited to using local people as "regulatory communities" to curtail bad practices. I became curious to know if he had any idea of reforms within the department and whether anything had changed for him. He added,

"I don't see any benefit of reforms. I saw a lot of staff reduction. My patrolling area increased substantially without any increase in salary. I had heard that things had been changed because communities are going to participate and more responsibilities will shift to them. That did not happen. Now we being few people within the department cannot protect forests alone and communities don't protect them [either]. So my work has increased. And I have no benefit (incentive) from the new policy." Siddique Forest Guard, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

The Foresters and Forest Guards also feel totally down trodden being at the lowest ranks. I take Forester Mumta's example. The Forest Guard was with him on that day along with their RFO. My supervisor and I were interviewing them in their office, the RFO pre-informed us that the DFO from Hariipur town might come at any time hence they were all present at the office, waiting. During the interview, the news broke that the DFO had arrived. Within a second all the respondents melted away and rushed to receive the DFO. The Forester while fixing his official cap over his head smiled... "Do you see this? This is our life..." The DFO came and sat with us. Except for the RFO, none of our respondents took a seat.

Another Forester, who resigned from the department after two years of service, shared how he felt compelled to indulge into making informal income because of the pressure from upper tiers in the organisation and the personal conditions in which he was supposed to work,

"These obligations come from the top. The highest position obliges his subordinates and then the demands travel. Nobody wants to lose any opportunity. I felt that even if I did not want to, I still had to find an extra income to run my system of things." Subedar Jandad Khan, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Corruption for personal gain is just one aspect of the issue (Ali and Nyborg 2010). "Alternative systems" are deployed by forest agents, faced with severe shortages of resources, to perform official tasks.

The normal functioning of the department with regard to forest operations still remains the job of territorial staff. Hence CDOs are kept out of the loop of any possibility to raise extra income. Yet, it is also true that the ease with which the territorial staff used to earn this extra income (particularly the Foresters and the Forest Guards) is somehow disturbed due to the

presence of non-forestry cadre in the department (Steimann 2004). This income can only be earned through maintaining authority over the villagers, forest users and the new non forestry staff. Hence the possibility that the territorial staff would use tactics to prevent the presence of CDE-GAD staff in the field is always there. One example could link with this,

“I am also undertaking postgraduate studies these days. The DFO asked me not to come to office. He said that I can stay at home and only come for my salary so that I can focus on my studies”. Salam, CDO, district in the North<sup>74</sup>.

Salam is the only person in the district responsible for first hand contact with the villagers, this favour is highly appreciable for building the CDO's capacity, but at the expense of his role in the early years of a reformed department.

#### **4.6 Interface between foresters and non-foresters**

Another rather crucial subject in this analysis is the interface between non-foresters and foresters in the department. As said earlier, this is the first time in history that the department has formally opened itself to employ non foresters in its structure. The field staff appointed from the specialised units has been deputed under the DFO. Hence even though they receive their thematic guidance from their parent directorates, administratively they report to the DFO and depend on his recommendations for leaves, travelling allowances, appointments in the villages, etc. It is important to analyse the territorial staff's interests at stake as a result of new policies which introduced additional specialised staff, and formal interaction with the villagers as partners of Village Land Use Planning (VLUP)<sup>75</sup>.

The non-forestry cadre from CDE-GAD directorate (Community Development Officers) is to guide and assist territorial staff on all issues related to community participation and extension. Their job is to motivate rural communities for participatory natural resource management and eventually involve them in village land use planning. They establish local village-level organisations called Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Women Organisations (WOs) and support villagers in decision making processes. They stay in regular contact with the villagers and attend their meetings.

They also assist territorial staff in training villagers on various subjects (e.g. nursery raising, fire fighting etc.). They are to ensure a mechanism of collaboration, exchange and negotiation between members of VDCs (owners, non-owners) WOs and Forest department. The people in these jobs come with a background in social sciences hence they are not considered as 'technically educated' by the department's standards. Their roles also imply that they serve as a bridge between territorial staff and the villagers on all matters related to forestry. Also they are the ones who have to face the villagers first when an agreed commitment is not

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<sup>74</sup> Purposely not mentioned.

<sup>75</sup> Village Land Use Planning (VLUP) methodology was introduced in a Dutch funded project in Malakand. This methodology was adopted as a policy for third tier planning in Forest department called Village Plans. The first two tiers are Strategic Plans (district level) and Operational Plans (sub-district level).

fulfilled by the department. The CDOs and Female Forest Extensionists (FFEs) therefore are highly dependent on cooperation from the territorial staff. In one way or the other, the CDOs feel obliged to the RFO – since RFO has territorial responsibilities, being in charge of his range – hence even when hierarchically the CDO and RFO stand at the same level in the department, the CDO is mainly dependent on the RFO's agreement before committing anything in the village. The CDOs do not have their own staff. They have no control over other staff (Foresters and Forest Guards) in the range. They are supposed to be accompanied by respective Forester or Forest Guard to the village to ensure that the villagers' relationship with the department improves, and no confusing messages are sent out from the department. However according to the CDOs, this is a problematic area. Most of the time, body language and style of communication extended by the territorial staff give off an authoritarian image rather than facilitating villagers' decision making.

“They cannot build a friendly relationship with the villagers as long as they sit with the villagers as officers. The elite accept this happily but those with some hope for a change, soon leave the meeting, considering it useless”, CDO Nadeem Ahmad, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2011, Haripur.

The CDO's response concerns the way departmental staff presents itself in the meeting. CDOs are new in the district team. Hence their relationship with the territorial staff is often subject to discussion as new incumbents. They talk a different language from the old hands within the territorial staff. Hence some CDOs succumb to this pressure and are hesitant to indulge in any sort of confrontation with the DFO or RFO. Their performance reports are written by the DFO (together with the RFOs, which is not provided in the policy). How do RFOs take their new job? An RFO explained his position,

“We need facilitators in the villages, not police. I agree. I can try to do that. But see what happens to me... in the middle of the night I am asked to rush and stop offenders. Getting there, confronting the offenders, ensuring that I am not hurt also that the damage is saved; the whole hoopla is my headache. With this day to day emergency all the time, where do I start from?” Manzur, Sub Divisional Forest Officer (SDFO) Khanpur, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

Territorial personnel are persistently positioning themselves in relation to their current roles. Until they continue to do what they are doing in their daily lives, they would not see themselves in new roles, they argue. Many field staff report that their volume of work has increased with the reorganisation. The tasks they previously used to perform remain the same and in addition they are expected to engage with hundreds of villages and their committees. Often these roles are contradictory. They find it hard to fulfil their normal territorial functions – and if facilitating the VDCs is added to their tasks, there is no source from which they can fund it. Besides, there is almost no investment made in updating the FD staff with the concepts of reorganisation / reforms.

The above description of de facto and de jure roles of the territorial staff implies that the staff often lives in two worlds. When asked how they function in the field, they are simply confused about what to reply. With the exception of the RFOs and their seniors (that too

varies from person to person), others do not know if their roles have changed or they are expected to behave differently. Even when they are informed about the new rules in place, their interpretation widely differ from each other (Southwold-Llewellyn 2002; Steimann 2004). Hence often their responses are a mix of what they are expected to do and what they in fact practice in the field. For example, upon being asked “How do you act when there is forest fire in a village?” They will portray a picture that I could never confirm in a village. Some would say that they are on fire posts in fire seasons and rush when they find an incidence. Others say that they are informed by villagers. There are reports that they put out a fire together with the villagers, while in fact they had never reached the place. Some also confuse the amount of fine for a particular crime – which clearly indicates that they do not levy fine by the book, but by the situation. Various examples lead to the impression that the rules are not implemented as written, but are shaped by the field staff themselves in a circumstantial manner.

There was a huge lack of ownership for the reform process at the field level, not only because the field staff were not invited to the dialogues, but also because the reforms did not change anything for them in their daily practice. They had little hope that their personal conditions would change; seniors will still behave in the same manner, poultry will still have to be cooked for the visitors, and tabs would be picked by them for official costs.

Many foresters still feel superior in their service, for instance one of the RFOs saying,

“I feel so proud to be a forester. You know, a forestry job is a Super Royal Service! Whoever works in the Forest Department, is close to nature, close to God, and nature gives you so much to observe which isn't possible in any other job.. It all depends on your wisdom and how much you want to take from mother-nature”.  
Malik Sarfaraz, RFO.

Our discussion went on for two hours. There were no ‘people’ in his particular picture of mother-nature. The social layer of how nature and people interface was missing. He further added,

“I am all the time busy with the DFO office and with my main job. There is so much political pressure on us at all times. I don't have time to go to the villages and meet community”. RFO Malik Sarfaraz, Haripur.

The way RFOs behave, articulate their roles and discipline themselves, must be seen in connection with their field realities. What they do may not be their preference, but the actors' network around their organisation makes them indulge into these pressures. I met a recently promoted RFO (now DFO) who knew nothing about what had changed in the department for his district. Perhaps this lack of knowledge was a matter of preference that he did not want to know. Yet another explanation can be that he did not require all this as his daily life did not really change by these organisational changes. He also added,

“This is all to please the international donors. We have to manage our forest and that we know how to do”. Inayat Mehsud, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Haripur

He is indicating that these ideas are imported and he seems to have made up his mind that this is not going to work. The DFO puts the entire responsibility on the CDO to ensure community ownership for conserving natural resources. This implied, that the CDO functions were seen by him as add on and the routine functioning of the department was not to be changed. Some minor logistical issues have also resulted in compromising the aim of restructuring. CDOs dependence on departmental resources at times hindered them from playing their role. There were other CDOs who were slightly better off and had better facilities due to a donor funded project. Whether or not the CDOs have access to facilities, have a free hand to work in the field and whether they are heard in the meetings, all depends on their direct collaborators and superiors, especially the DFO. These circumstances also hamper the motivation of CDOs.

The CDOs decision-making powers and ability to develop close collaboration with the villagers are reduced to a minimum. Some (often the best) decide to leave the department and acquire other professions, whilst others try to find compromises in the social process. Limited capacity of the CDOs also leads to a compromised social organisation process. Often these individuals come fresh from universities and are not professionally trained in their job. These factors often encourage big landowners to hijack the village institution and marginalise others, as Steimann (2004) writes:

“Equity within local committees is guaranteed by a democratic election procedure, which is supervised by the Forest department. However, local elites can capture the process and dominate a committee. Often an influential and rich man is elected as president of a committee... CDOs have only limited influence on such processes, and since rich people are often good communicators, they can also control the contact between the committee and the FD.” (Steimann 2004:25)

Such challenges cannot be avoided in any situation since participation in itself cannot be inclusive. It includes few and excludes others (Turnhout, Van Bommel et al. 2010). There are communities which are disappointed (due to their impression that everything had already been decided and nobody is really interested in their views) and there are others who claim to represent interests of a larger community (e.g. elite in this case). Hence the community participation process for which the department is responsible to facilitate would also be subject to such imperfections and issues that are problematic. Yet, the point of concern here is the need for change of roles. Having lived a long history of an authoritarian face, this must be a tough task for the departmental personnel.

A further factor compromising the whole process is that the CDOs are required to write the village plans in English – a language in which very few villagers (and even field staff of the department) are familiar. Strictly speaking, they are meant to be translated into Urdu once approved, but to be truly participatory, it would make far more sense to prepare them in the local language (not necessarily Urdu) and translate them afterwards – with the Urdu (rather than the English) being the reference document. CDOs are responsible for facilitating Village Land Use Planning (VLUP) process. This results in village plans written down by CDOs. Often these plans are copied for new villages from already available plans in the existing villages.

#### 4.6.1 Women staff

The experience of female CDOs and Female Forest Extensionists (FFEs) is another story. Often their work is independent of their male counterparts. The territorial team of the Forest department comprises men only; hence the position of female extension staff for engaging women in the villages is rather crucial. However, the quality of information that these ladies bring is a cause for concern. Often the female staff missed out the fact that the most vocal woman in the group was the relative of the VDC president, and that in this way the elite ensure that they hold both the ends tight to keep a control on resource dynamics in the village. In several instances I observed that the female staff simply filled in the form, and avoided going deeper into the issues that local women confront in using forests. In some cases, female staff positions are lying vacant since, (according to the senior staff of the department) women with the required qualification are not locally available in the districts in question. Those around, are often redundant and not invited to join for visiting the villages.

In summary, hardly a decade old (but new) system is not yet fully owned by the department staff due to the numerous contradicting individual and collective interests at stake. Besides, the new system never got a chance for implementation in true letter and spirit. There are face-saving arguments that the capacity of staff is not adequate as the concepts, such as third tier planning using VLUP process, are new for them. Despite all this, the VLUP process has been initiated since 1990s in a few districts of NWFP and VDCs are being established. How well the villagers engage in this process when the facilitators are still unclear and half convinced about the change, is the question.

As of today (2012) the VLUP process after a massive revision is a concise and clear process of Village Planning (VP) entailing mapping, social analyses, negotiations and writing of documents. There are two fears attached to the implementation of VP; VP offers either a yet another set of 'technical and administrative solutions' villagers would not be able to comprehend, or, the elite dominating the process as they are better equipped owing to their position, ability to lead discussion, education and exposure (Nizami 1998; Geiser 2006; Shahbaz 2007; Shahbaz and Ali 2009)<sup>76</sup>.

#### 4.7 Logging ban in the forests – another level of struggle

Little before the NWFP department's restructuring process had begun, in 1993, the central government issued a policy order that all kinds of logging operations in the forests must be stopped with immediate effect. It also entailed a ban on logging for one year.

This intervention of the central government was highly exceptional since constitutionally forestry in Pakistan is a provincial subject. However, based on the premise that environment is a subject dealt with by the central government, and that a highly vocal and confrontational discourse on tree harvesting procedures on ground could no longer be ignored, the central

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<sup>76</sup> There is a rich set of material available on this aspect hence it will not be comprehended in this thesis.

government legitimised this vital step. This opened new fields of resistance and a door to new technologies for accelerated deforestation. The reason I have taken this long detour before directly coming to my case, is to describe the environment within which policy decision on timber harvesting ban was taken.

#### 4.7.1 Harvesting procedures since 1950

It is necessary to quickly look at harvesting procedures – since that provides the basis to understand this case. With the introduction of systematic forest management for planned extraction of timber in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, all harvesting operations till 1950 were executed by the Forest department. Harvesting was done through petty labour contracts for felling and transportation. In the 1960s, due to funding shortages and some political patronage, the department turned to selling marked standing trees to the highest bidder in open auctions. Successful contractors were then responsible for harvesting as well as transportation and marketing. The contractors exploited their position and often felled more trees than prescribed. The system hence led to serious malpractices and overexploitation of the forests and was abolished in 1974. A Timber Extraction Division was then created within the department to takeover these tasks. However, the exploitative approach to forests was not halted. After the failures of both the systems, it was decided to separate the responsibilities of forest protection and forest management from forest harvesting and marketing. A new body was established called “Forest Development Corporation (FDC)” in 1976 which directly reported to the same Secretary to whom the Forest department was reporting. The FDC’s job was to take care of the harvesting and marketing part of forest management, leaving forest planning, protection, regeneration, and general administration to the Forest department. However, the FDC - which was basically established to replace corrupt contractors – simply became an agency to award logging contracts to the very same contractors it was meant to replace. The FDC also failed to invest in forest regeneration according to its legal obligations. Also, the owners of the Guzara forests were not satisfied with the economic efficiency of the FDC, which created a burden on their income from the timber sale proceeds.

A new system came in with a novel idea to give the right to Guzara owners to let them organise into Co-operative Societies and manage their forests on their own. The Forest department was given the obligation to prepare the management plans and monitor the implementation process through periodic compliance controls. The experiment was intended to first start in only six Guzara forest areas. Soon however, these Cooperatives were patronised by politicians (most being large influential Guzara owners) who insisted on multiplying these Co-operatives. By 1993, instead of six, thirty-three Co-operative Societies were actively operating in Hazara. The Working Plans were prepared for these forests by the Forest department. Prescriptions were manipulated in connivance with large Guzara owners and/or other external pressures. Such Working Plans not only prescribed harvesting volumes far in excess to any sustainable yield, but also identified standing stock on tree-less areas. The volumes prescribed for harvesting in these areas were actually harvested in adjoining forests, including Reserved forests. Also, in several forests, the prescriptions meant for sequential harvesting over the whole planning period were actually cut in the first two years.

This defective management planning, coupled with felling in excess of prescribed volumes, accelerated deforestation.

Apart from this, there were massive irregularities in the use of funds earmarked for operation and development. These were often misappropriated and hardly any investment in sustainable forestry was made from the sales proceeds. There were also many cases of fraud and embezzlement of funds belonging to the smaller Guzara owners that were captured by the larger owners. A common phenomenon in all these mechanisms was that decisions were top down, and one authority issued these decisions with one single directive. The experiments of Co-operative Societies mainly failed because some influential owners with large forest holdings manipulated the system to their own advantage. Some individuals in the department also cooperated with these influential owners. While deciding in favour of experimenting with the Co-operative Societies, the State authorities did not sufficiently look into the reasons for failure of the earlier systems. If they had, they would have found out that neither the petty contractors, nor the contractors engaged by the FDC corrupted the resources without internal support from the department or from the Guzara owners. Hence whatever the new system, with whatever good intentions, it was fraught from the beginning as the underlying problems were not addressed (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009).

#### **4.7.2 1980s onwards – environmental consciousness**

Since the 1980s a growing awareness about the importance of forests for the well-being of the nation developed (GoPakistan 1992a; GoPakistan 1992b; GoPakistan 2008). This awareness grew out of failure of Co-operative Societies when large scandals on misappropriation of resources and illegal harvestings became public during those years. Several environmental NGOs came on the scene, largely funded by international NGOs and donors. The central government initiated two large scale national studies on forestry<sup>77</sup> and wood energy supply problems<sup>78</sup> in Pakistan in the early 1990s. Assisted by several international donor agencies led by the ADB, a group of international consultants prepared a Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP) published in June 1992 and subsequently adopted by the federal government as a policy document. The study contained strategic perspectives on forest management and called for a comprehensive transformation of the traditional approaches (GoPakistan 1992b). It also recommended that forest management practices should integrate agricultural, livestock and community development for areas and communities living outside the forest boundaries.

The second important study for reference was conducted on energy problems, namely the Household Energy Strategic Study (HESS, 1993). The HESS was based on a statistical random sample of households throughout Pakistan. The results were strongly supported by case studies showing that there was a huge supply and demand gap in the country for the supply of energy, including forests (Archer 1993). It particularly highlighted that forest dwelling communities, as well as the forests would suffer in the long run if consumption pattern remained the same. Yet another study was later conducted which analysed the forest

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**77** Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP), published in 1992.

**78** Household Energy Strategy Study (HESS), published 1993.

decline at a sub-regional level within NWFP. This was the Siran Forest Development Project Preparation Study published in 1990. On the basis of a comparison of satellite imagery data of 1979 and 1989 coupled with an intensive ground survey of the forest conditions, the study identified the rapid decline of forests in some critical areas of Hazara. The NWFP Forest department disputed the validity of the satellite data analysis. The main question all these studies tried to tackle was: what are the drivers of deforestation, what are the consequences if this continues, and what needs to be done to stop or even reverse these processes?

#### 4.7.3 Floods and logging ban 1993

These studies brought forward forestry as an important subject in public discourse and increased the heat of the ongoing discussion. While the debate was still hot, and the studies were very much fresh in citizens' and forest stakeholders' memories, Pakistan, particularly NWFP, was hit by a massive flood in September 1992. The entire responsibility for the severity of the flood damages was placed on the mismanagement of the forests. The central government headed by care-taker Prime Minister Moin Qureshi, announced abolishment of Co-operative Societies (GoPakistan 1993). Together with this, a ban on commercial timber harvesting was imposed on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1993 (ibid). With the major forests located in two divisions of NWFP, the centre of focus of the directive was on this province, particularly the Guzara forests which are owned by the people which were the centre of heated discourse due to Co-operative Societies. The directive came with categorical instructions on auditing, and corruption enquiries. With this, a new arena of struggle between forest stakeholders opened up. While many fingers pointed towards the involvement of Foresters from the department in the business of Co-operative Societies, some share their position with regard to the ban:

“The department was in favour of the abolishment of Co-operative Societies. It was a relief. The department was totally hostage to politicians. They decided which foresters are to be posted in their districts and what they are supposed to do. When a staff did not support them, he was transferred as a result of political pressure.” Khurshed Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Islamabad.

The foresters themselves did not feel safe in their posts, one recalls hostility involved in encountering with timber mafia,

“They were equipped with arms and over harvested through the use of force. No one could stop them.” Mohammad Hanif, senior forester, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, Peshawar.

This explains why the directive had a few additional elements, e.g.

“Administrative and protective capabilities of Provincial Forest department including Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas should be strengthened by providing arms, wireless sets and operational vehicles to Forest Rangers. Provincial government is to ensure necessary budgetary provision in this regard.” In addition it said, “Conservation of Forests is a specialised subject

which requires continuity of planning, execution and follow up over a long period of time. The Prime Minister has therefore directed that the postings and transfers of Forest Officers and Staff should be guided by the following considerations:

- A. Tenure of 3 to 5 years is laid down in case of DFOs and RFOs.
- B. Posting of Forest Officers should be left to the discretion of Chief Conservator of Forests.
- C. No political interference should be allowed in consideration of any posting.”

Khursheed Anwar also added,

“...I knew from the beginning, the ban will acquire a political shape. It will never be lifted again. The caretaker government wanted to punish corrupt politicians who had milked out the forests for personal gains. The government did not spend enough time to find evidences if such an unprecedented flood can only be caused by deforestation in Hazara region.” Khursheed Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Islamabad.

In Khursheed's opinion those who imposed the ban, knew the complexity of redefining who would be responsible for harvesting once the ban was lifted. The Forest department is responsible for the management of an area of 841,000 hectares legally defined as forest. Being most affected by the ban, many initiatives were taken by the department to convince central government to lift the ban. They made several arguments questioning the jurisdiction of the central government on the provincial forests and thus the validity of the ban. They also used scientific arguments: Harvesting always plays a major role in the scientific forest management cycle, if that element is taken out of the cycle, the whole management system is undermined and sustainable forest management becomes impossible. A political argument emphasised that the writ of the department is challenged; hence forest dwellers and owners conduct uncontrolled felling. Except for a one-year relaxation of the ban in 2001, it continues to be in force to the present day. The directive introduced conditions that were deemed necessary for lifting a ban. It talked about revision of the Forest Act 1927, the need for social forestry, meeting the needs of smaller Guzara owners, etc. During the ban tenure, a lot of changes were adopted in forest policy, laws and administration to demonstrate that the department was taking extraordinary measures to be more effective to address the issues related to dwindling forest resources as was contested by various studies mentioned in the earlier pages. All the changes in one way or the other were linked with participatory forest management strategies.

#### **4.7.4 Multiple discourses during the logging ban**

The donor agencies expected that the ban would support and accelerate the introduction of new participatory management systems. All forestry donors established a forum in 1993 called the 'Forestry Donors Coordination Group (FDCG)'. The FDCG was strongly

positioned to pressurise the government (and the department) to reorganise itself to become more participatory, based on the premise that it is the participation of forest stakeholders that can save the forests, and not the policy or an authoritarian style of management. Compliance with the pre-conditions for lifting the logging ban was also in line with this position.

FDCG and some leading senior foresters within the department finally accomplished the reorganisation agenda. The FDCG and the department however, always struggled with each other. The department gave a tough time to the donors in not accepting every advice that came from the FDCG. On the other hand, the donors got so fed up with the departmental attitude of resistance and half-hearted implementation of the reform process, that one by one they left the forestry sector. By the time final reorganisation materialised (Fig 4.2), not much international support remained with the department for forestry programmes (the last being the Swiss, which concluded in 2011). Minutes of various meetings illustrate this fight, which continued for ten years. The meeting of June 2000 minutes (FDCG 11th June 2000):

“Suggestions were invited on the question, whether FDCG should play a role of a mediator between the department and civil society<sup>79</sup>. The forum shared: there is a difference in the perception of Chief Conservator Forests and the Secretary Environment which can affect the process. Donors are perceived as NGO friendly, how can we bring a balance? Can we not rename Mediator as Facilitator? The objectives of the mediation process should go beyond the objective of making the stakeholders sit together. The discussion was concluded by the chairperson with a comment that it is not a matter of different perception, rather of different interests. We as a Donors' Group would like to see the culture of consensus, mutual respect, where issues are being discussed in an open way, where one tries to foster consensus. By allowing mediation and certain monitoring mechanism we could come to a step further, now the question is whether the forum could play a role?” (FDCG 11th June 2000:2).

In this meeting, sixteen participants came from nine organisations / donors. In May 2003, twelve participants came from five organisations / donors (including three from the government). The discussion was limited to information sharing (FDCG 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2003). The last meeting was never held and the forum died a natural death.

Parallel to this discourse, the NWFP Forest department commissioned a Provincial Forest Resource Inventory (PFRI), conducted by an international team of scientists, to elaborate a detailed assessment on the real conditions of the forests in NWFP in 1996. The PFRI was accomplished by combining satellite data of 1995/96 for a forest area analysis with an extensive ground survey on forest stock and forest conditions. Despite the fact that the study was commissioned by the department itself, the staff members were shocked by the results. The department had wanted to use this study to improve its image and build the case for

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79 The issue was raised since one NGO which was invited to serve as an observer in the FDCG engaged in vocal opposition of the department for not taking reform process seriously. The NGO blamed department for not having any interest in engaging non departmental stakeholders.

lifting the ban. However, instead the study indicated that deforestation had significantly increased and broken all past records.

The study projected that the forests will disappear in 25 years if the situation continued. Through the FDCG, the donors gave a high importance to the study and pressurised the department to take it seriously. The department however, rejected the study:

“The Department has expressed its concerns on the findings that forests were going to disappear within a time-span of approximately 25 years. The findings indirectly challenge the Department’s role as it has not been sufficiently able to check uncontrolled exploitation of the forests. The report, therefore, is still a guarded confidential, although a number of donor representatives have received a working copy. It is yet to be analysed if the quality of assumptions in this report is strong enough to justify projections. A weakness identified on technical grounds, justifies yet another study required to verify results. Other factors, however, are strong enough to justify the conclusions such as a double population in 20 years and a slow process of regeneration in the forests. The PFRI report suggests that the only viable alternative to the projected degradation would be the development and execution of an alternate fuel policy that may become available to change the situation drastically. The report also poses a question for donors on how to go about making adjustments in their programmes failing to contribute to the controlled use of natural resources.” Forestry Donors’ Coordination Group meeting minutes 18<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

After PFRI, the latest study has been conducted by Fischer, et al (2009) which was funded by Swiss Government on the request of the provincial Forest department and Federal Ministry of Environment. The study describes that the ban never functioned in practice the way it was envisaged. A number of indicators in the study showed that the ban increased the deforestation trend. During the period of the ban, no breakdown in the timber and firewood markets was observed. The markets functioned as in the pre-ban period, although prices increased. Timber and firewood reach the market through three channels:

- The official wholesale markets of the FDC at Goharabad (for Hazara) and Chakdara (for Malakand),
- A number of authorized local timber traders throughout the province, and,
- A huge number of local illegal small-scale timber markets and sawmills which are never checked.

Authorised local traders receive their stocks from the government wholesale markets, and adulterate their stock with illegal supplies. They are supposed to keep records but these are scanty and no real attempt has been made to analyse the trade practices of such dealers. The average prices of timber increased by 175%, during the ban period, which can be explained by inflation and scarcity of wood in the market, particularly for high value species from high altitude forests.

For example, the average price increase for *Cedrus deodara* (Deodar) and *Pinus wallichiana* (Kail) was much higher than the overall inflation. On the other hand for *Abies pindrow* (Fir) and *Pinus roxburghii* (Chir), the prices increased at a lower rate than the overall inflation rate, indicating no scarcity for these timber species in terms of market supplies. Yet when one looks at FDC (official) market, Chir is almost completely missing in their records even though it is the most common species in the mid hill forests. Looking at illegal markets, it is mostly Chir which is being traded. This explains the situation of forest management in lower Hazara (largely Chir dominated). On the one hand, price inflation is a major incentive for indulging in illegal supply of wood, but on the other hand for illegal traders, it is highly risky and challenging to indulge in harvesting higher altitude forests where the most valuable species thrive. Most Guzaras are situated on lower reaches where Chir grows. Guzara owners, completely antagonised by the ban, have resorted to illegally harvesting Chir, and utilise the channel of illegal market to earn an income. The market supplies continued in line with the growing demand, but shifted from legal to illegal trade to a higher extent than prevalent in the pre-ban period.

Fischer, et al (2009) also reported that FDC maintained two data systems of the FDC/FD, one on harvesting and the other one on marketing. Both in the case of the pre-ban (1985-93) and ban (1994-2006) periods, the harvesting volume recorded was 40-48% higher than the volume marketed. This raised eyebrows over the missing wood in the marketing records – since this is the wood which is still lying in FDC stores to be marketed at some other stage. The authors used revenue records of the Forest department as another indicator of the malfunctioning of the ban. Forest department revenue records also present the real implementation of the ban. At current prices the annual revenue earned by the Forest department during the pre-ban period ranged from Rs.130 million (1985/86) to about Rs.403 million (1992/93). The revenue compliance of the department during the ban jumped from Rs.350 million to Rs.539 million in 2007/08. This increase, despite taking into account the price inflation, based on a decreased volume of timber harvested, is hard to explain. The explanation that even reduced harvesting can serve the revenue targets set by the NWFP Finance department is in contradiction to the objectives of the Provincial Forest Policy of 1999, which states that the forests will no more serve as source of revenue for the provincial government. Many senior foresters had hoped that the ban would be an entry point to reconstitute the department's authority and public respect.

A large effort to restructure the department was indeed a step in this direction, genuinely led by many committed foresters from within the department (Fig 4.2). However the larger State apparatus driven by revenue targets was not ready to wait. The department was obliged to comply with revenue realisation despite the ban on harvesting imposed by central government and despite the department being busy in reorganising itself on participatory principles. This interference had an adverse impact on letting the reorganised department function, and on the operational performance of the department. It also further deflated the department's public credibility on which much pride of being a forester was based in the past. The whole period of the ban has been characterised by an inherent contradiction between the objectives (of the ban) and the obligations for revenue generation from forests. None of the local people I met in the villages in Khanpur knew about any ban. They all shared that felling was taking place. Though successful in abolishing the Cooperatives, the ban failed to curtail harvesting. The study showed that the department should look into the

forces which contribute to deforestation, and accept there is no longer a simple 'scientific' option for future forest protection.

The study team refused to categorically state in the conclusion that the ban must be lifted. The then Chief Conservator of Forests termed the study as a 'charge sheet<sup>80</sup> against the department'. He asked senior members of the department to furnish comments on the study; here are a few examples from the official reaction of the committee members on the study:

1. Since the Government fixes the revenue targets for the Forest department each year, we have no choice but to meet the target. No suggestion is given in the study that commercial and political use of the forest resources are to be stopped forthwith.
2. The ban could not be kept intact because the exploitation of trees took place in one way or the other either under the disguise of the dry wind fall or other policies.
3. Whether if the ban shall be lifted or continued? However, the study is totally silent on this very important objective which is the crux of the issues.
4. Who approved the ToRs, who selected the consultants? Also the methodology is not very clear.
5. No solid content except the story of the ban imposed during 1992 is repeated.
6. How it can be ensured that lifting of ban will protect the depleted forest?
7. The finding of the report may not be out of place. In fact this has been the Forest department's stance all along during the ban that it is not giving the desired results, because of the escalating demand for timber due to rising population.

These comments help in identifying three categories of departmental staff:

- Those who admit that harvesting continued due to State pressure and the various loop-holes in some of the policies.
- Others follow an indirect course. Rather than saying that the study did not bring the results they had expected (recommendations to lift the ban), they challenge the very basis of the study and try to delay it for administrative reasons.
- The third category of people comprises those who believe that the study takes forward the lively debate over the ban – however they point to other issues in forest management than the lacuna within the department.

This complex process of meetings, comments, and incorporation of comments continued for one year. What is important is that the department continued to deny all the

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**80** The term Charge sheet is often used in official language for a formal document of accusation prepared by a law-enforcement agency in Pakistan (also India). It is distinct from the First Information Report (FIR), the core document that describes a crime that has been committed, and charges an individual or organization for the crimes. Once the charge sheet has been submitted to a court of law, prosecution proceedings against the accused begin in the judicial system. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chargesheet> 8th November 2011.

corroboratory evidence that was drawn from the field. I personally witnessed that the opinions of the two levels in the provincial government were split on the study.

While the department refuted the study, the provincial Secretary allowed it to be published agreeing with the department not to put its name on it. The central government on the other hand debated the study at length, and also allowed its publishing (Khan 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2009).

This account concludes that the department has followed a certain course for itself and it would continue to follow it. Reorganisation created some hopes and still carries hopes provided that the issue of human resource gap is handled in a tactful manner and new organisation is made to function. At the moment the definition of a forest, as a resource for producing precious timber, dominates. Nearly all the examples that I presented here, either from my own analyses of certain discourses, or quoted by the individuals, lead to the fact that most of the de facto actions are of individual nature. A few personal accounts also insist that it is hard to survive without being part of those de facto practices (such as informal ways of earning extra money for self or for the department). Of course behaviours differ within the organisation depending on position (hierarchy), location (field or town office), geographical territory (resource endowment), etc. Yet, somehow there is a silent understanding within the individuals of the department on certain practices as normative behaviour within the organisation.

This element ties these practices in a form of collective action, within the heterogenic body of the department together with their alliances (e.g. the village elite, an owner of the forest, politician). People do not fit in those norms. Yet I don't want to lose my fundamental argument that the department is not a homogeneous entity. The fundamental question is – who (what) is the department? What principle overrides its operation in the field? Is it a revenue generation machine for the State (and powerful individuals) – this justifies the drive for conserving (or protecting) the resources through watch and ward. Or is it (expected to be) an organisation which looks at forests as part of village development and hence supports village committees as a vehicle to improve local and rural livelihoods. There is yet another debate that goes on. Forests have also acquired an important place in the global discourse on climate change and the incentive mechanisms introduced for forest conservation. Where do these three discourses meet? If none can work well, then the decay of the entity is rather obvious.

#### **4.8 Federal versus provincial - Another minefield in the forest**

The struggles between centre and provinces in Pakistan are nothing new, not only in forestry but in many other disciplines. So far, until the last happening on timber harvesting ban, the forestry wing of the Ministry of Environment in the central government has been playing the role of a watchdog on forestry matters in the provinces.

This case explains some new dynamics flooring in Pakistan changing the functions and the power balance. It is about the devolution of powers from the central government to the provinces. The cornerstone of this devolution is that a number of functions which were performed by ministries in the central government will be surrendered in favour of provinces

to define for themselves. As a result, the powers vested in the central Ministry of Environment too were transferred to the provinces. A complete implementation of this decision is still evolving. The struggles that are going on within the ministry to retain its functions and existence provide insight into the possible future direction of forest management in the country.

#### 4.8.1 The background of the constitutional amendment

The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) formed the central government in the country since 2008, together with its ally political parties. The PPP has a strong footing in Sind province while others have stronger roots in other provinces (such as NWFP).

One of the manifestos of the PPP during the elections (2008) was to devolve a greater degree of authority to the provinces. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the government announced autonomy to the provinces through a constitutional adjustment called 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment. According to this, autonomy was planned through dissolving a number of ministries in the centre and devolving their functions to the provinces. The ministry which had imposed ban on timber harvesting (discussed in section 4.7) was on the list. This section talks about the consequences of the decision and the political tensions it adds between provinces and the centre regarding the management of forests. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment is a classic example of struggles between various players who are associated with our arena "forests". Most of the struggle is taking place in the administrative sphere and has little to do with contents. I will briefly describe the administrative struggle since this will lead to understanding possible dilemmas of this additional threat to the forest and forest enterprise.

The implementation of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment was mandated to a group of parliamentary members who invited proposals from the Federal Ministry of Environment on how to proceed. The ministry is not a homogenous body. There are two particular wings which are of interest: The office of the Inspector General of Forests (IGF), and a special unit that represents Pakistan in global negotiations on climate change. The national forest training institute, the Pakistan Forest Institute (PFI) located in the provincial capital of NWFP, also came under the IGF office.

It was an internal struggle – no one wanted to volunteer for being devolved, rather everyone tried to justify a presence in the centre as crucial for the environment of the country. No wing within the ministry could arrive at a proposal<sup>81</sup>. Besides, several senior staff of the ministry objected that no staff from the ministry or the provinces was invited to join the parliamentary committee for providing inputs.

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**81** Personal communication with Syed Mahmood Nasir, Inspector General of Forests, Federal Ministry of Environment, Islamabad and with Syed Nadeem Hussain Bukhari, Project Coordinator INRM, Intercooperation Pakistan. March 2010.

#### 4.8.2 The consequence of the amendment

With the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, forestry function was purely devolved to the provinces. PFI was handed over to the NWFP government. Other provinces will be free to establish their own PFIs or negotiate with NWFP to continue services of PFI at national level (at least forestry education component). The PFI will also be interested in keeping its national entity and look up to the provinces to send students in order to sustain its presence and financial viability. The federal ministry will have no monitoring role on provincial forest management actions.

As per provinces' understanding, policy support will no longer be granted from the centre. Federal staff allocated in the provinces for federal bodies (e.g. PFI) will be withdrawn. Provinces will be free to either retain them or conduct fresh recruitments and fill those positions from within the province.

What is left for the federal ministry is the climate change wing for global negotiations and coordination, converted into the Ministry of Climate Change under the control of central government. However, the implementation of an action under the climate change will still have to be taken in the provinces while there are no provisions for monitoring of such actions by the centre. The reporting to the global entities nevertheless remains with the federal wing that will also represent Pakistan in global negotiations. This is more of an administrative issue. From local perspective (e.g. district), more important is to translate global provisions for local benefits. There are questions on capacities of both the central and provincial governments for addressing this issue. There are contested provisions for the central government for giving advice or objection on provinces' independent actions in the field of climate change without being associated with global mechanism which central government negotiates. The likelihood of tension between global and local discourses is not farfetched and so far it seems that this tension can only increase due to the way adjustments have been made as a result of the amendment.

#### 4.8.3 Tensions around the amendment

When fully implemented, the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment will result in changing NGOs and government departments' modus operandi in a significant manner. It is argued that this was a political decision and has created several technical lacunas such as compromising on coherent national focus on environmental issues with unresolved issues between provinces and central State. This is a very interesting constellation of actors. In earlier section on Co-operative Societies, we have seen that an influential mass of NGOs and international players (including donors) had been consistent in putting the blame on the State for not performing and taking action. Now when the action is in place, there is no discussion on lending a hand in converting this, though political, decision into an opportunity. Most of the classical international players engaged in environment are reorganising themselves to meet parliamentarians to highlight forest degradation issues in the province (suggesting that these issues are not appropriately handled by the provinces alone). This campaign is however, indirectly targeted at retaining power related to environmental subjects in the centre, and to gain legitimacy for certain actors to sustain their presence in the capital city Islamabad.

It contradicts their previous stance on decentralisation during President Musharraf's<sup>82</sup> time when nearly all international players lauded the steps. Multiple actors share their views on a number of tension fields. The following is an account of how these actors think:

1. Staff within the provincial departments feels that a complete removal of watchdog functions from the central State will further give free hand to exploitative elements. We have already analysed the set of practices in the department towards management of natural resources. There are frustrations within the staff about political interference, lack of leadership and lack of understanding on their 'new' roles. Many believe that exploitative elements (mostly grounded in NWFP's political scene) will have a field day when there is no upward accountability while under the circumstances, downward accountability is missing anyway.
2. Devolving PFI to the province, on the surface is a good opportunity to get rid of the old curricula adapted from the colonial systems of training in which staff is only prepared to assert authority. The entire curriculum was biased towards man-made irrigated forests in Punjab or conifers in high hills. One example comes from Sind which comprises mostly low lying river or marine ecosystems. Why should foresters for Sind Province study conifers for years when they do not have these forests in Sind? Yet, many have raised questions on some of the practical aspects:
  - a. Revising the curricula will remain the job of foresters who are trained from the same institution. How will changes come about?
  - b. Each province will have to change curriculum for their needs. Is the requisite capacity available in the provinces to perform this function? Not at the moment, and till it is developed, are there any interim solutions?
  - c. PFI not only performs a training function – it is also a research institution. What about duplication of this role with provincial departments such as NWFP where Research & Development Directorate also exists (Fig 2)? This will invite another struggle of existence and survival. The fittest Grade<sup>83</sup> is likely to survive.
  - d. Do the provinces have a need to produce so many forest graduates? Who will absorb them?
3. In a State with almost a prostrate civil society (Scott 1998), a central government no longer responsible for natural resources, and the entire natural resource endowment managed by already criticized Forest department, who will determine that the course of provincial actions are on a right track? Where is the dialogue?

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**82** General Musharraf became the President of Pakistan through an Army coup in 1999 against the democratic government of Nawaz Sharif. He remained president until 2008. His government introduced a devolution plan and district government system (2001) in which political and functional authorities were devolved from provinces to the districts. The system functioned until 2010, when it was slowly dissolved by the PPP government.

**83** Grade system determines a kind of seniority (implying level of authority, position in hierarchy and perks) within the government system. DG PFI is a Grade21 officer with some of the highest privileges. The Chief Conservator Forests is also Grade21 officer.

The root of all these administrative tensions and struggles is the national constitution itself. The constitution gives two lists which determine the organisation of civil services in the country. One is the concurrent list (in which Federal Ministry of Environment is included) and the other is the legislative list (in which PFI has been included). According to the concurrence list, forestry has always been a provincial subject. However this does not solve the problem. The lists just give the sectors and do not explain the functions within the sectors. The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment is simply retaining this standard and the details within the sector are not being analysed according to their appropriate places and jurisdictions. The administrative ordering of the functions is so deeply rooted in the country that reshuffling without detailed explanation can only result in more damage than benefits. The only means by which the State can legitimise its action is that the promise for political devolution (which is more of a de-concentration) has been fulfilled. Whether or not this will improve good governance demanded by citizens (e.g. participation, efficiency, accountability, security, etc.), has not been questioned.

One area of resistance was apparent in this process. Provinces were against the idea of absorbing staff from the centre. The provinces asked for more autonomy, clear lines and a higher budget to fund the extra personnel. This results in an associated struggle for funding for natural resource projects. The democratic provincial governments approve annual allocations for development schemes. Their priority is to fund schemes in large urban centres and their own political constituencies which have quick benefits, visible impact and ensure quicker financial returns. Natural resources, (e.g. investment in forestry) do not have such potential. Since funds are no longer coming from the centre, the entire sector depends on provincial allocations, which are shrinking. The Amendment has some special dimensions for the NWFP. With the largest proportion of country's forests in this province, a lot is expected from the provincial government with inadequate capacity. Given the case study on the timber harvesting ban, one can expect that the ban may immediately be lifted by the provincial government since NWFP has been fighting the case for the last twelve or more years to lift the ban so that revenues can be generated from the forests under certain 'scientific' prescriptions. However, now that the province does not face a persistent central government, it is reluctant to do so. An explanation came from a Forester, who did not wish to be named,

“There are two views about it. The ban is being used as an excuse to keep the political pressure away from the department for indiscriminate felling to please the politicians. The fact that now the department can no longer use the shield of the central government, the only way is to keep the ban explaining that scientific prescriptions are underway. This is just to delay the pressures... the second view is that people have now learned to live with this ban. If money can be earned despite the ban on harvesting, why spend energy in preparing scientific management plans to prescribe felling, when these plans will be known to everyone and it will be harder to manipulate those on ground.” Anonymous, Peshawar, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011.

The NWFP has articulated the most exciting and welcoming response. The staff members of the province are even challenging the minimum role to be retained at the centre. This response is in sheer contradiction to an earlier event in 2001, when former army president General Musharraf introduced a devolution plan and district government system (2001).

The Forest department in NWFP completely refused to devolve itself under the elected chief executives of the districts, with the view that the department would become a revenue generation machine for his/her constituency and political motives would override management objectives of the forests.

In this new wave of devolution, the department is risking itself to larger political giants which it cannot resist – yet the NWFP Forest department is reluctant to maintain a shield for itself which can save its management objectives from being swallowed by the corrupt politicians. One explanation is, again, the history of NWFP. Apart from a hierarchical divide of centre versus province, there have been tensions on appointments in the past (from which province the ministerial forestry wing is being staffed). NWFP Forest department has not enjoyed a good relationship with the forestry wing of the ministry due to the timber harvesting ban imposed by the ministry. The art of not being governed (Scott 2009) lies in continuous resistance to dominance either driven by the interests of personal gain of the powerful actors, or a history of ethnic dominance, or a complete mistrust between actors. Whatever the case, it does not help the forests.

#### **4.9 Conclusions from an unpacked State**

What we have seen here is multiple scales of articulations, alliances and struggles within and around the State. We also see that these positions are changeable from time to time and several internal and external factors influence these transformations. The State comes out as a multi-faceted organ and not as an individual actor. This gives way to daily, in-between forms of resistance. Trust seems to be a major issue in all these struggles, and relationships are shaped accordingly.

One subject is around how government exercises power and cruises its way in shaping environmental subjects (Agrawal 2005). The government tries various technologies and reconstitutes itself to be better equipped. Yet, it is disappointed to see that not much improvement is registered on ground since actors created one or the other way to manipulate or circumvent policy measures. Analysing carefully we see that the new policy discourses were basically implanted on the old ones from pre-independence. The foundation was never changed. In this case, the foundation was a firm belief that the department must continue to use authority and act in an authoritative way. Even structural adjustments in the department were tailored to retain power within the department. Forest users have not been empowered – rather community based systems of management have been encouraged to empower the elite, who create a new State, but basically continue the same centralized system. Community based institutions are created within the power structure of the village and therefore trust deficit between the department and forest users continues to grow.

One dismal conclusion derived by the personnel of the Forest department at the start of the chapter is challenged by the some preceding examples. The department has made genuine effort to come up to the new demands. The failure as an organisation is quite apparent but there are champions from within who try different things within their limits despite their internal constraints. This effort has its own push effect. As a second wave of refor, devolution to the provinces is a welcome move that potentially comes with certain hopes. Provinces

cannot shift the blame to the central Government for loss of forest. The provinces can break the inertia and set their own multi-actor discourses locally, in Islamabad around State actors and globally regarding forest conservation through carbon trading. The experiment will however fail if a similar move was not made from the provinces in favour of the districts and lower. This may sound revolutionary – but this is what Pakistan needs at the moment.

# 5

## **Forest Fires A burning counter- discourse**

Chapter 4 analysed the forestry organisation as a whole, particularly for NWFP. I now zoom into my study area Haripur and analyse actors' perspectives and positions regarding multiple changes that have historically taken place as explained earlier.

At the beginning of this research, forest fire was not one of the main topics of the thesis. However, several discussions with the foresters (see section 4.6) and the possible stories behind each fire incidence made me curious to know more since fire appeared to me a counter-discourse and manifestation of actors' changing positions. I set out to find what sort of dynamics and practices were behind this intervention. Several interactions with local people add to my understanding that forest fires are increasing with time, and that nearly all the incidences are intentional.

On June 8<sup>th</sup> 2009, I was on my way with my research assistant to visit one of my respondents Tika Khan in village Bakka, to learn how he looked after Raja Saqlain's<sup>84</sup> agricultural and forest estates in the villages (Chapter 6). Raja sahib had recommended us to meet Tika Khan. A bumpy road, with a deep forest on both sides, first led us to Birlay and then to our destination. Tika Khan was not home. We used the opportunity to meet the Raja's tenants and discussed many things related to access to forests. The return journey began later in the afternoon. Looking from the terrace on top of the hill where I stood, I had a feeling that it was much hazier towards Birlay than in the morning. I asked Saeed, (the forester whom we had picked up from his duty station on our way, to introduce us to Tika Khan), whether this was smoke. "This is fog" – he insisted – "we are not too far from the stream and usually at this time we experience fog – it is hot today, it is normal". I did not find this quite convincing



**Picture 5.1:** A forest fire in Birlay village which turned furious within no time forcing us to leave the scene

since fog seemed to be oozing from one part of the landscape. After 20 minutes of walk down the hill, we were driving back through the villages to the main road. Within half an hour we crossed the ridge and started the descent towards Birlay. There was a surprise awaiting us. We had to cross a stream of fire! We were in the relatively open valley of Birlay,

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<sup>84</sup> The name has been changed.

in the middle of Chir (*Pinus roxburghii*) forest. The fire had already moved in a circular shape. It had found its way to both sides of the road, which indicated its severity, since this barrier failed to stop it spreading further. Far from the road, on the other side of the fire circle I vaguely saw a few women and children through the smoke. They had brooms in their hands which they may have organized collecting branches in the forest and they were trying to control the fire.



**Picture 5.2:** An advanced view of forest fire

While lots of things were going on in my mind, our companion Saeed was shouting to the driver not to stop, but just continue. But we were already out of our jeep taking photos and trying to communicate with the women at the other side of the fire stream. Meanwhile a person crossed us on the road, who conversed with Saeed about fire... saying that it seemed someone has set it wilfully. Saeed appeared to agree with him and asked him where he was heading. He was going to Bakka with some grocery in his hands. The person just left without any offer from his side regarding fire. I was keen to see what a forester's next step should be regarding fire, "would you not do anything about the fire...?", I asked. "No...we had better run from here...you have no idea how this fire will spread... don't worry, people here will gather soon and control the fire". People? I wondered silently. I had heard from the foresters that they use the nearest mosque's loudspeakers to make an announcement so that everyone in the village rushes to the scene. I did not see any such move from Saeed's side. A moment ago he had let the passerby go without requesting him to gather people. Meanwhile, Saeed's cell phone was continuously ringing. I did not know who he was talking to, but it was about the fire. Somebody was asking about his location and he was reporting that he was fine and will be soon out of there and reach the person he was talking to. I continued asking, "What

will you do now? He seemed a bit irritated, "This is not my area – this should come under Makhanyal Range – another forester is responsible for this area". We slowly drove down the hill. I noticed that the fire was spreading fast towards the ridge. It had reached at least five meters over the tree trunks while lots of smaller trees were on fire to the top. The heat and smoke were intense. We crossed the two women who were madly devoted to beating out the fire together with young boys. I did not see any other human face in the forest during these moments until a person stopped our jeep. Javed, age roughly 50, nervously asked for our help. "Are you a



**Picture 5.3:** Two young women and a boy rushing to fire scene with bush to use as brooms to beat fire

sipahi<sup>85</sup>? Please help. My house is on fire”. The forester was already angry about the situation and was only interested in getting out as soon as possible. “Why...??? Did I spark this fire...?? You people have instigated the fire so go and ask your own fellows in the village to control it...why should I help you?” The person looked miserably helpless. There was a little heated exchange of words between the two. We drove on. I continued with my query, “When do you think Makhanyal crew will be here?” to which he replied, “They are on their way – I have to rush to my office because I have to attend a fire that broke in my area – that is why they are calling me again and again.”

It took us nearly half an hour of careful driving to get out of there. Behind us was an enormously thick black and white plume of smoke. Of all forest fires, this was the worst that I had ever seen. Saeed agreed with me that it was more severe than a usual forest fire.

The main target of this fire was Chir Pine forest. On that day alone, I saw smoke from five different places in Khanpur only from Birlay to Tarnawa. One of the places was spotted by Saeed where he was supposed to go. I was later informed that the Birlay fire continued to burn for three days until God’s help arrived in the shape of rain. Local people tried to control it close to their houses to avoid their property being damaged. The staff from Makhanyal range never made it to the forest the first day since some of them were engaged in a meeting with the Divisional Forest Officer in Haripur. The staff on duty in the Range Office remained busy with other fire incidents, as they later told me. I can only guess that Saeed rushed to the site in the area of his jurisdiction keeping in view his anxiety to leave since someone was calling. I still however, wonder why he could not identify smoke in the first place and whether for a forester it was not advisable to at least leave some immediate advice with the women and other people from Birlay till the staff responsible for the area arrives.

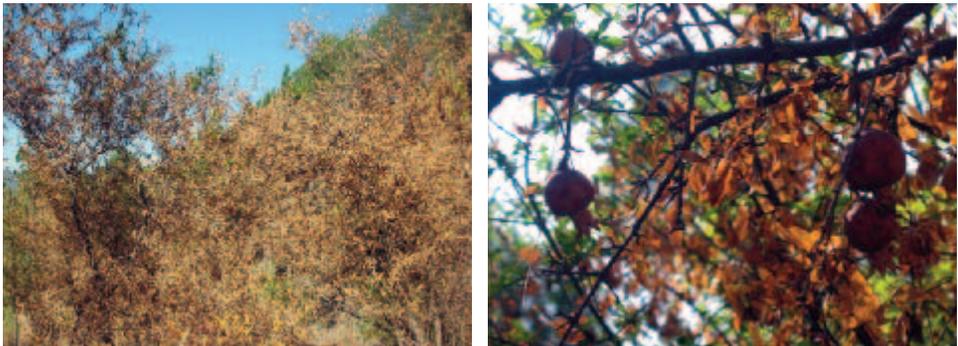
Of all the fire reports of the year 2009 I could retrieve from the office of the Divisional Forest Officer, I was never able to find one regarding this incident. I was told that the case was never reported at the departmental level. When I asked the concerned Range Forest Officer, he scratched his head to remember and said, “...on that day alone I had four fire incidents, and I can’t recall which one you are talking about”. Few months after the incident towards the end of September 2009, the burned site of thick Chir forest in Birlay revealed a different face. Under this forest wild pomegranate trees grew which had mostly desiccated. The grass under the shade was still burnt to their tufts but the ones in the open areas were green, the soil was black and fresh herbs were sprouting. More trees than I could count had been blackened by fire at least up to 5 meters above ground. I doubt that the fire was triggered for grasses since it was a dense forest, and besides, ample grasses grew on peripheries with rather open forests where graziers would be more interested in the quick growth of grass after fire. The area belonged to a number of owners who bought these Guzara forests from Raja families. Shabir was one of them. It was worth noticing that a number of Chir sleepers were lying close to some houses not far from Shabir’s house during September, when I visited the village again. He denied they belonged to him. Later, on my third visit in December, I clearly felt that more trees had been felled from the burned site since September, and many wooden sleepers were stacked in two or three places in the forest like an open secret.

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<sup>85</sup> See footnote 69.



**Picture 5.4:** A trajectory of forest fires in Birlay: Repeated fires since 2009 and large scale random felling



**Picture 5.5:** Birlay post fire situation. Dessciated pomegranate trees with charred fruits



**Picture 5.6:** Cont.... Birlay post fire situation. Chir trees felled down and turned into sleepers

At the same time there were several desiccated wild pomegranate trees with charred fruits on them. Pomegranate being a hardy species may recover, but few trees seem to be beyond any recovery. In this visit I learned from the villagers that the same area caught fire once again on 20<sup>th</sup> of June. Birlay was then hit by fire for the third time in October 2010 during the extended drought. I firmly believed that there was a lot to explore in these repeated fires in the same village.

### 5.1 Fire ecology and Forest fires in Pakistan

I tried to compile statistical evidence that the frequent occurrence of forest fires is becoming an issue in Pakistan. I tried to derive this from various secondary data combined with direct evidence from primary sources. My primary source was the people I met in the field including villagers and field staff of the Forest department. However first I briefly describe fire ecology for a wider understanding.

In scrub<sup>86</sup> zones, a fire can break out at any time of the year when the condition is dry and combustible material / litter is available in sufficient quantity. Chir pine<sup>87</sup> is known as a fire climax species, which thrives on regular low intensity fires. These fires clear the thick bed of dry pine needles which allows natural regeneration of pine since the pine cones open in the heat and release seeds. If too frequent and intense, the natural regeneration will be damaged. Silvicultural manuals used for training foresters in Dehra Dun Forest Research Institute India and Pakistan Forest Institute (Champion and Trevor 1938; Champion, Seth et al. 1965) describe fire ecology. Champion and Trevor state,

“...Forest fire is often a good preparation for regeneration but at the same time inimical to existing regeneration. In Chir Pine forests a fire does no harm to the larger trees unless resin blazes catch fire or slash is present on ground” (Champion and Trevor 1938:151).

They further describe that Chir thrives in pyretic environment. Chir prefers wide spacing and light, and its regeneration comes under the shelter of old trees which stand far away from each other. Hence fire can also be a natural phenomenon and Chir pine is adapted to it. Fire creates ‘space’ for this species, breaking seeds’ dormancy and supports regeneration. However, when intense fire arrives in a stage when regeneration is still juvenile, it is totally lost (ibid: 203). In short, even for a fire climax species like Chir, intense fire is considered to be harmful. Forest fires in Pakistan are mostly ground fires in which ground vegetation is burnt; then if the fire gets severe, small shrubs, trees and large tree trunks start burning. These fires also take a heavy toll on young regeneration coming under the trees but also medium sized trees are badly damaged. Crown fire never takes place in Pakistan since forest density in fire prone areas is not so high.

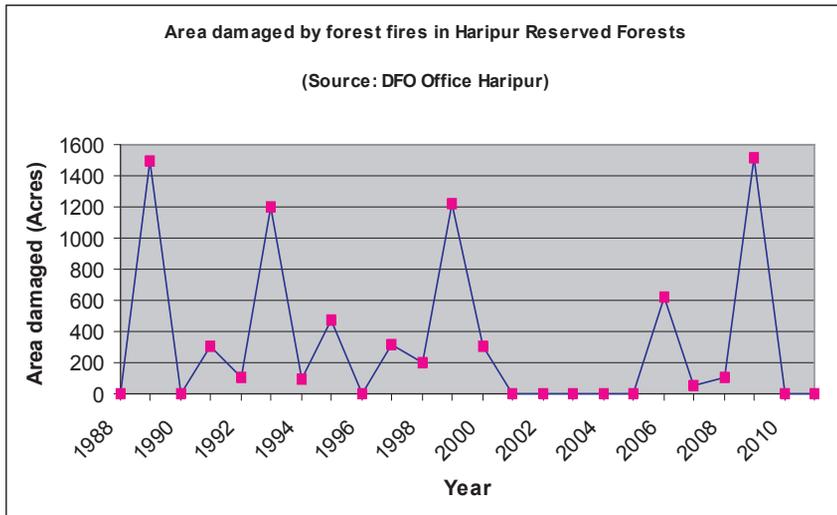
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**86** Scrub forest comprises of small trees, shrubs and grasses. Most common species of Scrubs are Acacias, wild pomegranate, wild olive, oaks, and several shrubs such as *Dodonaea viscosa* and *Adhatoda vesica*.

**87** Sub tropical Chir Pine zone is situated in the Himalayan range from 1000 to 2000 meters above sea level in hilly terrain. The main species is *Pinus roxburghii* with needle like leaves. Some of the scrub species form its undergrowth.

During the last twenty years, forest fires have increased in many countries including Pakistan (GoPunjab 2008). A preliminary survey on the occurrence and extent of forest fires in different forest areas in Pakistan conducted during 2001 (Ayaz 2003) revealed that an area of 49,986 hectares is annually burnt by different intensities of forest fires causing damage to forest trees, regeneration, undergrowth, biodiversity and habitat. The scrub forests (e.g. those of Khanpur) are most prone to forest fires due to their location, topography and climate wherein approximately 2.10% of scrub area is burnt annually in sub-tropical broad leaved forests, most often during summer months of May and June.

In NWFP, fire incidences are most frequent in districts Buner, Haripur and Mansehra. No formal assessment for fire affected areas in Guzara forests has been made. Most of the fire reports are submitted by Forest Guards, and most often only for Reserved forests. I only had access to these data hence what I produce in the following graph comes from a single source - the Forest department. The graph is based on figures provided in a letter from DFO Office in Haripur to Conservator Abbottabad Circle (DFO 2007). Figures for later years come from the Forest department project document for introducing measures for controlling forest fires (GoNWFP 2008). The same figures were reconfirmed by Retd. Conservator of Abbottabad Circle (2011) for which I am sincerely thankful. The graph shows fire trend in the province for years 1988-2011, only for Reserved forest.



**Figure 5.1:** Area damaged by forest fires in Reserved forests of Haripur  
(source: Khurshid Anwar, retd. Forest Conservator)

In total a recorded area of 8024 acres (3247 hectares<sup>88</sup>) was affected by fire during these twenty-three years. The graph shows higher and lower intensities of damages occurring from forest fires from year to year. However, there are two important factors to be kept in mind.

**88** The total area of NWFP forest under the management of the Forest department is 841,517 hectares Fischer, K. M., M. H. Khan, et al. (2009). Study on Timber Harvesting Ban in NWFP - Pakistan, Intercooperation Pakistan.

One, these figures come from a single source and they are only reported by the Forest department and it seems likely that some of the fires were never registered in these figures (this was the case for some of the examples studied under this research). Another issue is that incidents in Guzara forests were seldom recorded. The data provided by the same sources mentioned that in twenty-three years, only 160 acres was affected by fires. The trend presented by the graph also does not establish that forest fires are increasing in Hairpur. Rather, it is surprising that according to the department there was no occurrence of fire in most of the recent years. This fairly contradicts the villagers' views that forest fires are increasing every year.

## 5.2 Popular discourse regarding forest fire

There seems to be one major view strongly supported by all historical notes in legal documents, visit reports from early foresters in colonial and post-independence era and the system that prevails today in the field. Forest fires in Pakistan are always associated with nomadic graziers.

Analysing views regarding African Environmental Degradation, Leach and Mearns (1996) use the concept of 'received wisdom'. They state,

“...The way in which problem and solution are framed in case of the wood fuel crisis offers a classic example of how 'received wisdom' about environmental change obscures a plurality of other possible views, and often leads to misguided or even fundamentally flawed development policy...” (Leach and Mearns 1996:3).

Talking of received wisdom regarding forest fires, the most classical view is to blame graziers as they are always interested in obtaining fresh grasses for their animals and to rid of the old ones. The British Inspector General of Forests of Indian Forestry Services during late 19<sup>th</sup> century, B. Ribbentrop (1900) in his monograph writes about early history of nomads in Indian forests when the first Muslim conquerors came to the subcontinent (14<sup>th</sup> century):

“The nomadic invaders had been accustomed to roam from pasture to pasture; their herds increased; and hills and plains were fired and cleared of forests to create new pastures wherever the nomadic tribes spread”. He continues in the same chapter, “... the invaders of India did not exterminate an old civilization, previously found in the North of the Empire, by the destruction of villages and towns and the killing of people, but by the wholesale and continuous firing of the forest vegetation of the country for pastures; and it must be remembered that this was not the work of a day, for at the time when the British Empire, after the battle of Plassey, gradually extended its way over the whole of the peninsula, invasion by nomadic tribes had gone on for hundreds of years previous to the Mohomedan conquest” (Ribbentrop 1900:37-38).

This stance is maintained throughout the monograph. The reference to nomads is made as invaders. He refers to a transitory state towards modern civilization in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. He observes that flocks and herds were multiplied too fast as a result of higher

prices for cattle and animal products. He attributed forest losses to nomadic behaviour and wasteful farming practices,

“...whilst on the one hand, civilization thus made daily increasing demands for forest produce, a great part of India’s population was and is weaned only with the greatest difficulty from their pastoral, semi-nomadic habits, and wasteful methods of cultivation, as practiced by savage and early settlers. The concomitants of both the nomad and the backwoods cultivator are forest fires, and our Indian forests were thus exposed at the same time to the legitimate demands of a rapidly spreading modern civilization, and the waste that accompanies a more primitive state of society” (ibid.: 61).

Fire is caused by negligence, accidents or it is intentional as he reports,

“fire-protection is the most difficult problem the Indian forest administration has to deal with. The nature of climate favours the spread of fire, and during the hot rainless season the forests are filled with dried leaves, herbs and grass, and become as inflammable as tinder. A spark, and the country-side is ablaze. This is bad enough, but we foresters here in India have not merely to deal with fires which just owe their origin to accidents, carelessness or crime, but have to fight against an immemorial custom of the whole people – that of firing grasslands and forests all alike, in order to clear away rank vegetation and to make place for new grass crops; and once lit, the fire is allowed to spread wherever it finds nourishment and wherever the wind may carry it” (ibid: 48).

Ribbentrop’s monograph further highlights,

“...for the people, whose property is damaged by such conflagrations, will sooner or later seek the protection of the court – a protection which at some future time will probably be impossible to withhold even from right-holders in government forests” (Ribbentrop 1900:149-150).

In another place he expresses an ecological argument about fire. Amongst numerous species he says, there are many which have a thick bark and a marvellous power to withstand fire. After the fire has swept in the forest area, these species thrive even better and a chance for crown fire comes to a minimum level. Yet, he insists that for each ecological event in support of a species (essentially referring to Chir), there must be a man-made spark to begin with, which in itself is a biased remark since we know from fire ecology that lightning can also start a fire, for example. This account leads us to two important revelations. One, the history of intentional forest fires is pretty old – this is not a new phenomenon. And two, forest fire is seen as a tool used by local people for creating new arable lands or pastures. In this entire account, forest fire is seen as an unwanted phenomenon, an offence and harmful for natural forestry resources. As of today – these views hold true for many people.

“Fire is always set by bakarwals<sup>89</sup>”. Manzur, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer of Khanpur, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Khanpur.

Examples from the history of shifting cultivation in India suggest that the colonial rulers themselves encouraged slash and burn technique for export of high value crops (Tucker 1982; 1984). However little has been written to challenge traditional views reflecting on other dimensions of fire.

The legal documents which dictate the working procedures for the Forest department also consider setting a forest fire an offence. The current NWFP Forest Ordinance in force (which replaced Indian Forestry Act 1927) enlists abetting or setting forest fires, either wilfully or by gross negligence, among the prohibited acts in all types of forests. The offence must be reported to the police and the offender is to face court to receive a damages bill. The classical assumptions regarding motives behind man-made forest fires still prevail in the working of the department. The project document, called PC1, prepared by the NWFP Forest department for fire prevention and control (GoNWFP 2008) states, that the main objective of the PC1 was to protect Chir regeneration. It is highly prone to fire damages due to exploding human and livestock population in and around these forests. In this case, population growth is taken in automatic equation with increased forest fires. Moreover, Chir is presented as the major victim of the forest fires. It is not necessarily logic that if there were less people, fire incidents would have been less frequent or vice versa. There are also evidences (Ayaz 2003; GoPunjab 2008) which show that scrub forests are equally, if not more, vulnerable to fire during dry season. Since most of the scrub forests fall in Guzara category of forests, it seem to be highly under-reported in terms of fire damages, the whole basis of the PC-1 becomes questionable. This indicates the influence of a conventional discourse regarding forest fire on the core actions of the government schemes largely inclined towards Reserved forests where most of the high value species grow. This also confirms that species of commercial significance are more important and should be given priority protection from fire incidents. In comparison, a little attention is paid to Guzara forests; hence one can imagine that Guzara owners must get very angry on the increasing trend of forest fire and the government not recording those events let alone not taking any action to curtail them. The PC1 reinforces the idea of creating fire-lines. Bare strips of land are created around vulnerable and inflammable parts of forests through burning debris collected from those strips. This is the method which was introduced by Major Pearson as reported by Ribbentrop (1900) and termed as “highly effective” in controlling forest fires from spreading over large areas. Champion et al. (1938; 1965) also suggest controlled burning of inflammable material on ground with extreme caution so that a bare strip is created around a fire prone area putting damages to a minimum in case of fire. According to them, this method cannot eliminate the chances of fire outbreak but can reduce chances of rapid spread in a larger area. This brings me back to my personal experience of Birlay on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 where a reasonably wide road could not stop fire from crossing the barrier and spreading to the other side. The example suggests that the department’s confidence on fire-lines in cases of extreme fire cases seems exaggerated.

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<sup>89</sup> Bakarwals, also called Ajars locally, are nomad herdsmen who keep goats and sheep, and are interested in green grasses for their livestock each summer.

I had discussions with many field foresters regarding technical reasons for fire incidences.

“Currently, we don’t have any effective forest management practice or system in place, hence fires are increasing. But in fact these are helpful. Fire acts as a cleansing agent to wipe out disease from the forest. Fire is a bad environmental practice causing nearly 30% of Carbon emissions. But this is balanced out with other factors. Our fires are never crown fires, so they are not bad. Low intensity fire in Chir zone is necessary otherwise this forest will not thrive. Another reason for fire is unprecedented climate change – we have more droughts now than before.” Aurangzeb, DFO Timber Extraction Division Rawalpindi, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009. Rawalpindi.

Most of the villagers interviewed also initially held ‘Gujars<sup>90</sup>’ responsible for fires. Many Gujars are sedentary graziers and earn their income from livestock. Some of the old villagers said that (in the early twentieth century), when setting or abetting forest fires was proclaimed as a crime in the rules, and the offence became liable to punishment, use of fire for clearing land for shifting cultivation also diminished. The reason was that the peasant would have had to face punishment as the only possible ‘suspect’ who may have cleared the land for opening space for farming. Creating new pastures and encouraging fresh grasses however, still remained one of the major incentives from forest fires. A possible offender could never be caught since there were many users of the same pasture.

“Fire is often set by local people for fresh palatable grasses. Fires are increasing because more people now live in the villages and everyone has livestock.” Sobedar Jandad Khan, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Najafpur.

Sobedar is seldom in the village and does not own any forest property. Hence his assumptions about fire are not his own, but come through others’ knowledge. Several stories related to forest fires unfolded when specific examples were followed with the question in my mind, why would people set the natural resource ablaze when they depend on it? Are the people (graziers for instance, generally held responsible for forest fires) the only ones responsible? Leach and Mearns (1996) suggest that popular opinions are the “truths” of a state discourse (following Foucauldian definition of discourse) which are established over centuries and are persistent. A popular opinion held by the State representatives nearly always holds local land-use practices responsible for environmental degradation. Forest fires are intentional, and always initiated by local people. Wilful setting of forest fires is almost always for creating new pastures and arable lands. In addition it appears that the fire control measures introduced by government are always effective and successful and if they fail, yet again that may be a fault of an undesirable human mischief at local level.

These views are highly resistant and are often justified on the basis of their scientific credibility. This makes it rather hard to challenge them since an alternate / counter-discourse has to have strong knowledge basis and justification.

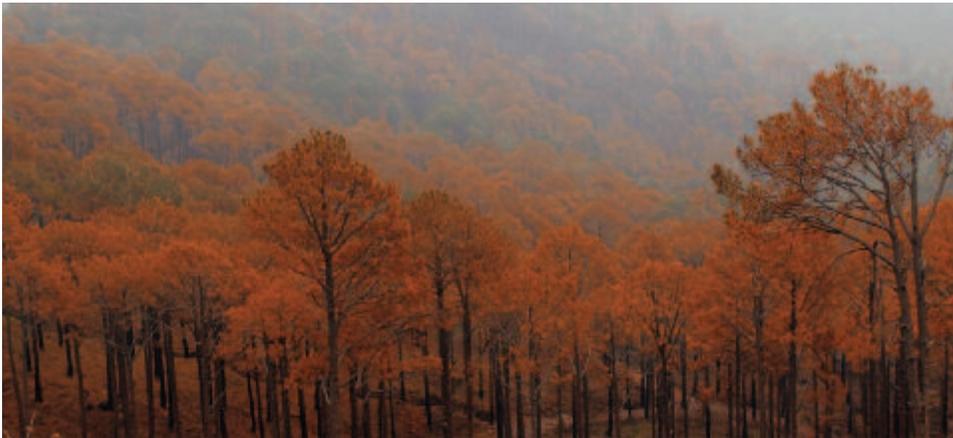
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**90** In many other parts of the country Gujars are also nomadic in their behaviour. This however, is not the case in Khanpur as Gujars are permanently settled in many villages.

### 5.3 Popular discourses influencing policy environment

Forest fire control measures were enacted in the Forest Act 1927 by the British government. This Act was adapted as such by newly created Pakistan in 1947. The Forest Act 1927 also stipulates a clause on villagers' duty to provide assistance to forest officers during fire incidence (Go-India 1927). I bring this up since villagers frequently refer to these binding laws in their statements, which will also be presented in the later section. The Act states:

“Persons bound to assist Forest-officers and Police- officers: (I) Every person who exercises any right in a Reserved or Protected forest, or who is permitted to take any forest-produce from, or to cut and remove timber or to pasture cattle in, such forest, and every person who is employed by any such person in such forest, and every person in any village contiguous to such forest who is employed by the



**Picture 5.7:** A view of pole crop of Chir Pine forest near Murree which was swept by fire in 2012



**Picture 5.8:** A goat farming family of Bakka village – mud house with crops, livestock and proximity of forest

[Government, or a local authority, or who receives emoluments from the Government or a local authority] for services to be performed to the community, shall be bound to furnish without unnecessary delay to the nearest Forest-officer or Police-officer any information he may possess respecting the commission of, or intention to commit, any forest-offence, and shall forthwith take steps, whether so required by any forest-officer or Police officer or not, (a) to extinguish any forest fire in such forest of which he has knowledge or information; (b) to prevent by any lawful means in his power any fire in the vicinity of such forest of which he has knowledge or information from spreading to such forest, and shall assist any Forest-officer or Police-officer demanding his aid (c) in preventing the commission in such forest of any forest-offence; and (d) when there is reason to believe that any such offence has been committed in such forest, in discovering and arresting the offender. Any person who, being bound so to do, without lawful excuse (the burden of proving which shall lie upon such person) fails- (a) to furnish without unnecessary delay to the nearest Forest-officer or Police-officer any information required by sub-section (1); (b) to take steps as required by sub-section (1) to extinguish any forest fire in a Reserved or Protected forest; (c) to prevent, as required by sub-section (1), any fire in the vicinity of such forest from spreading to such forest; or (d) to assist any Forest-officer or Police-officer demanding his aid in preventing the commission in such forest of any forest-offence, or when there is reason to believe that any such offence has been committed in such forest, in discovering and arresting the offender; shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to [three months] or with fine which may extend to 200 Rupees [two hundred] or both". Clause 79, CHAPTER XIII MISCELLANEOUS – p51 (ibid: 51).

This Forest Act was repealed in NWFP and was replaced by NWFP Forest Ordinance in year 2002. The new Ordinance however maintains the clause from the Indian Forest Act 1927 with minor changes. Hence in conclusion, it is clear that the new law in-force after more than half a century lapse is no different from Forest Act 1927 in binding villagers to help the department in controlling fire. There is no explicit mention of people's self-initiative to curb fire or create a system for controlling fire which may be recognised by the department. The DFO is given a lot of power in this regard to suspend the suspect's right to access and use of forest until the case is decided. The police role is important in pursuing the cases to ensure that the suspect is brought to justice.

#### **5.4 Challenging popular discourses**

So far we have seen that there is a popular discourse regarding forest fire and the policy environment is influenced by that. Are there any examples when there was an attempt to break persistence of a popular discourse, in case an alternate existed? One example comes from Punjab province of Pakistan documented by Dove (2003). The Government-led social forestry projects have always projected farmers' resistance to planting trees on farm due to the shade they cast on crops, as a major obstacle in farm forestry schemes. He states, "Until a generation ago, and influenced by a much older nature-culture dichotomy in Western thought, studies of environment and society were generally kept strictly apart. The rise of

human ecological approaches in the 1960s and 1970s represented a radical critique of and break from this dichotomy by explicitly encompassing human beings in ecological studies.” He suggests that the farmers’ knowledge of character of shade and its impact upon their crops, which they believe varies by tree species and also by season and land type, attests to the commitment of farmers to on-farm tree cultivation.

“Hence the most mundane, quotidian resource practices may have profound political implications that environmental knowledge is often (if not always) partisan knowledge, and that cultural meaning is not divorced from political-economic dynamics” (Dove 2003: 229).

Dove’s example of farm forestry was brought here to illustrate the persistence of certain discourses which often totally disregard local knowledge, creativity and room for manoeuvring. This perception holds true for many people, despite cultivating trees on farmlands being centuries old practice by the farmers. Siddiqui observed that most of the firewood in today’s Pakistan comes from private farms than from the government owned forests (Siddique 2000:25), also confirmed by Sial (2002) and Ali (2009).

The subject of forest fires is a highly political subject in Pakistan, particularly since the tree harvesting ban, it also engages generation-old beliefs from multiple actors, especially the State. Forest fire is often interpreted for its results rather too quickly. Apart from Ajars and Gujars, nearly all the families living in the villages, regardless of their class, professional and ethnic background, keep two to three goats and/or one or two buffaloes for family needs. Hence the Khanpur forests have a lot of local grazing pressure and the pressure from the herds visiting during winters from high altitudes. This forms the prelude to the most established simplified assumption regarding the motive behind setting forest fires: Forest fires are set by local people living in and around forests in Khanpur in order to allow growth of fresh grasses for livestock or to open space for agriculture. And besides, number of people is increasing so are the fire incidents. This needs to be unpacked and analysed.

I found four grounds to do so:

1. The assumption that fire is set by local people is rather generalised, though very strongly rooted in the history. This brings us to unpacking the concept of community (or local people as a synonym), tensions within and between local people and the State actors.
2. It is always the Gujars and Ajars who are blamed for forest fire – it is like assuming that there is always one suspected criminal, until someone proves that they did not commit the crime: ‘guilty until proven innocent’.
3. Conflicts between local interests and natural resource management systems introduced by the State (forest management and control regimes, harvesting ban 1993) can trigger resistance through manipulating ecological systems in favour of a specific actor.

4. Some of the practices which may be considered harmful for the forest by the State may actually work to the advantage of local people. These factors can be explained through people's own ecological knowledge.

I proceed to take one by one to build my arguments:

1. Generalised construction of assumption is to do with what do we mean by 'local people' or 'community'? These terms are often documented in fire reports filed by the foresters. There is no identifiable and unified community in a location (Cleaver 1999). In Khanpur's case, several social groups are living in a location with different histories and interests that are often competing in nature. Graziers may be interested in grasses. Many others have sole dependence on non-timber forest produce growing on the forest floor. Big owners are interested in commercially lucrative pine trees, and supposedly wish to ensure that their regeneration is protected.

Hanna and Jentoft (1996) put it as follows,

“Community members are often divided, with inherent conflicts of interest regarding the distribution of the resource. Thus one should be careful not to exaggerate the traits of unity, homogeneity, coherence and stability within communities” (Hanna and Jentoft 1996:46).

Hence I challenge the discourse on occurrence of forest fire through challenging the way it is established. There is a host of material which argues against neo-Malthusian concept of increasing number of people, particularly the subsistence farmers, being responsible for forest degradation (Ives and Messerli 1989; Hanna, Folke et al. 1996; Berkes and Folke 1998; Schmidt 2004; Ali, Benjaminsen et al. 2005; Ali 2009). These analyses also apply on this specific example of fire. Managers of forest ecological systems believe that fire is instigated by local people living in and around forests and hence they are responsible in degrading forest resources. Even if we accept one aspect of this generalisation - that fire may be one important degrading element, there is no clear evidence that people living in and around forests are always responsible for these incidences. Moreover, due to the fact that fire is legally an offence (committed by someone from amongst local people) and an undesirable practice as proclaimed by the State – local people do not dare to present their knowledge and reasons to the Forest department for taking an action, even though they may believe that it was legitimate.

2. Nomadic or sedentary graziers are often those who do not have direct property rights in *wajib-ul-arz*. They enjoy access to forest for grazing by virtue of their very existence in the village and enjoy their communal right to use pastures and collect firewood. Sedentary graziers also pay certain use fee to the owners for using their pastures. Their main source of income is livestock. In a critique on Homer-Dixon's model of over population and large reliance on natural resources in rural areas leading to environmental scarcity and conflict (1999), Hartmann (2001) states,

“...historical research can do much more to challenge the prevailing belief that fault mainly rests with the local inhabitants due to their poverty and population growth. A case study of Ukambani, Kenya, reveals how local people have been blamed over the course of a century for the degradation of their environment; however, the origin of the problem was largely external...” (Hartmann 2001:49-50).

I tend to derive from this debate that examples from other regions also show this dilemma of putting the blame on those who live closer to natural resources and depend on them due to their limited livelihood strategy. Present-day discourses are often legitimised through century old views, yet a just historical account in many situations may point to other factors being responsible for decline of natural resources.

3. The third aspect of analysing fire issue is that of conflict between local interests and ecological or (State-introduced) management systems. Ideally, delineation between social and ecological is artificial and arbitrary because both should live in co-existence in human-nature interface (Berkes and Folke 1998; Biersack and Greenberg 2006). Our world is defined by the management of natural resources by human systems, which represents a radical change from the historical notion of humans as defined by their environments (Holling and Sanderson 1996). Hence ecological systems have largely been manipulated by human agency using different sorts of management systems to subdue ecosystem such as organised exploitation, conservation, defining biological and cultural practices which favour a few economically important species. These systems cannot be introduced avoiding conflicts, which are often inbuilt due to a diverse set of interests prevailing among the people living in and around forests. Hartmann (2001) states,

“Conflicts are generated less by resource poverty than resource wealth”  
(Hartmann 2001:50).

Putting it conversely, conflict can be avoided if people learn to live within the available resources. But here comes the creativity for manipulating those systems by the people who are somehow denied of certain benefits due to the system. I quote one example from Ali (2009) from Northern Areas of Pakistan where he was searching the dynamics behind 200 recently burnt and scattered juniper trees in 2003 in Sultanabad, which did not appear to be the result of a single accidental or intentional fire incident. He finds,

“...Young boys and girls are sent out to collect firewood and graze animal herds. They make such fires for many reasons, such as heating, and killing trees for collection of wood.... dead and dry wood is no longer available in the forest, since most of it was taken away during the period of commercial harvesting (by the government through contractors). Chopping standing trees for firewood is a laborious job for young boys and girls. Many of them go to the forest without food and water, which makes the job even harder. An easier way is to set a juniper tree on fire to fell it for the next day’s wood collection assignment. The next day, the remnants of the tree are conveniently chopped and taken home” (Ali 2009:87).

An important backdrop of this example was the resource entitlement.

“A common perception among villagers is that the resource would anyway be lost soon to large scale commercial harvesting by the government. Prior to this, these trees were regarded and protected by local people as their own property. By engaging in commercial harvesting through the Forest Department in 1958, the government symbolically established its control over the forest, while local communities lost their sense of affection and ownership for the forests” (Ali 2009:89).

Another set of manipulation may come from those who own the resources, but they have a quest to achieve more. One must keep in mind the ban on timber harvesting (section 4.7 of this thesis) imposed in 1993 by central Government of Pakistan, proclaimed through the Ministry of Environment Pakistan (GoPakistan 1993). In 2003, an update on the ban policy was issued based on an earlier decision of the Federal Cabinet that,

“Timber of dead, dry and wind fallen trees should be immediately salvaged” (GoPakistan 2003).

Even prior to the ban, harvesting of dead and dry / wind fallen trees was allowed but this management practice was frozen in 1993 with the imposition of the ban. The provincial Government of NWFP, in compliance of the decision from the central government and to pacify the forest owners, went ahead to implement the updated policy for the disposal of dry standing and wind fallen trees. That policy is still in place. Further sections will reflect on the consequences of this policy. There are examples from my research leading to understand that there are several motives behind fire incidents, and those are not just the grasses.

4. The last aspect is about the fire itself, why is forest fire bad? The classical answers are, it damages fresh regeneration, it interrupts biological activity of various organisms on forest floor, it damages vegetation including commercially important trees, and the latest argument, that it causes huge Carbon emissions that cannot be quickly compensated. Costanza and Folke (1996) oppose these ideas and state,

“...some natural disturbances, such as fire, wind, and herbivores, are an inherent part of the internal dynamics of ecosystems and in many cases set the timing of successional cycles. Natural perturbations are part of ecosystem development and evolution, and seem to be crucial for ecosystem resilience and integrity. If they are not allowed to enter the ecosystem, it will become even more brittle and thereby even larger perturbations will be invited with the risk of massive and widespread destruction...small fires in a forest ecosystem release nutrients stored in the trees and support a spurt of new growth without destroying all the old growth” (Costanza and Folke 1996:15).

This is certainly an ecological response to the common perception regarding fire, however, it has a sociological aspect in the sense that the spurt of new growth which they have



**Picture 5.9:** Fresh grasses emerging from fire ground weeks after fire incident. Burnt tufts can be seen in the first picture.

mentioned is most likely the fresh forage for which graziers are interested in fire and are often blamed for damage. If we agree with Contanza and Folke, we would have to accept that graziers are doing a favour to the forest through small fires rather than causing damage. An example came from Leach and Fairhead (2000) from the West African humid forest zone where savannah people were blamed for setting fires and forest-destructive agricultural techniques resulting in conversion of forestlands to savannahs. The idea that such practices were giving way to degradation process, were supported by maps and various studies undertaken by renowned environmental organisations whose findings were based on idealised ecological equilibrium of a closed canopy forest. A conversion to savannahs was seen as degradation (or deviation from idealised equilibrium), but not necessarily by local people and many ecologists. The example from Khanpur on this particular aspect whether the forest fire is always bad for an eco-system, shows similar, though context specific evidence.

### 5.5 Examples refuting the State Discourses

A few cases of counter evidence on the causes or motives behind forest fires are of course not enough to entirely change views and refute orthodox beliefs. However, the fact that such cases exist, tells us that there is no “one truth” as held by the State.

While the classical perceptions point to the local people particularly the graziers, for being responsible for forest fires, the villagers in the field blamed the Forest department for two things. One, the departmental staff fails to reach the spot on time, even when they are called for help. The elderly villagers recall that some 20-30 years ago, the staff rushed to the site as soon as possible, and sought villagers’ support to control fire. This enthusiasm does not seem to be in place anymore. The second is even more serious – many believe that fires are deliberately set by the owners with direct or indirect blessings of the individuals from the department in Chir Guzara forests (for tree felling). Some went even further saying that individuals from the department set fires after felling and most of these fires occur in Reserved forests which quickly invade parts of Guzara lands when not controlled.

“I remember from my childhood – when fire broke out that the departmental staff came to our village as soon as possible. They used to have a list of men. All were called for help. Even teenage boys were not spared. Those who would not present themselves were fined by the DFO. Now this does not happen anymore. The staff sits in their units. As soon as they see the smoke, they write a report against unknown criminals from the village. Only sometimes they come over later on and visit the affected area. People also don’t bother anymore then... only those who fear that the fire may encroach upon their homes or agricultural fields would try to push it off.” Master Sagheer, 50, School teacher, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Kurwali.

Atia (35) shared her observation that several places in the forest caught fire around the year (2009). She did not find this a usual phenomenon.

“I have never seen so many fires in one year, and most fires came from government forests (Reserved). They lit up the entire forest this year.” Atia, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Baghbodheri.

Atia comes from a Raja family which no longer owns any forest lands. Her male family members are engaged in salaried jobs in Haripur town. Tika Khan (85) is the land manager employed with one of the most influential Rajas in the village. He remembers that in 1970s the departmental staff used to punctually visit the forest on horses and never spared a single individual who would not show up to lend a hand in controlling fire,

“...Now in spite of good communication network, they do not come to the village. They have cars and the roads are better. If the sipahi sometimes catches a criminal, he is easily spared for a little sum”. Tika Khan, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Birlay.

Hanif, a senior retired forester explained a little sarcastically,

“...when the Forest Guard learns in the morning that there is a fire, he runs like a bunny, panics and makes noise...pretends there is a huge emergency...and reaches the site comfortably by the evening...Capital Development Authority<sup>91</sup> on the other hand, manages to reach the site in a few minutes. They know they are in Islamabad and are being monitored. They have all sorts of equipment, even helicopters and wireless sets.” Hanif Khan, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Islamabad.

These firm beliefs from the people open a rather sensitive chapter on why the department takes such a lax attitude to fire incidences in contrast to the past, when it showed a powerful presence to control fires, as Ribbentrop (1900) insisted in his monograph. Local people even hint at departmental individuals as accomplices. A very important point to derive from these accounts is that the local people somehow still expect that it is the department's responsibility to play a stronger and centralised role in curbing fire.

Non-graziers did not blindly blame the graziers for being solely responsible for fires. A Guzara user suggested,

“We can distinguish between a fire set by livestock keepers or someone else. Usually they go for open spaces and gentle slopes where livestock can graze. This fire usually does not spread too much. They do this during the dry period in May and June for fresh grasses after the monsoon rain”. Maqsood, age 72, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

How do graziers decide which area is to be blazed? Tika Khan's daughter Lubna (a student, age 20) said:

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<sup>91</sup> Hanif refers to Capital Development Authority (CDA) which manages the civil affairs of Islamabad, federal capital of Pakistan. CDA is also responsible for fire fighting in Margalla hills around the city of Islamabad.

“People choose a part of forest which is rather open and where quick growth of grasses is possible, because after fire for two months there are no grasses. After the grasses are tall enough, those are to be cut and stored for winter. Usually this task is performed by us (women)” Lubna, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2009, Birlay.

This account reveals that the fire set by graziers is quite specific in nature. Besides, what Lubna said also highlights that it is often a result of a social bond since many in the village benefit from this kind of fire after rains, not just the graziers. She added,

“Fires usually break in government forests and travel to all directions, sometimes to the other side of the hill where we live or laterally. It depends on wind. These are often set by people for fresh grasses. Only sometimes there is a tension between two persons and one of them decides to torch the area of his opponent. And almost always we know who did it, at least in case of animosity”. Lubna, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Birlay.

The Sub Divisional Forest Officer Sarfaraz denied the above,

“Fire first breaks in Guzara areas since they are close to inhabitation. People set fires for grasses. In hot dry weather grasses work like petroleum and slowly the fire spreads. A little wind can let it go up like a galloping horse. And then it gets out of everyone’s control due to inflammable pine needles lying on the ground”. Sarfaraz, Haripur, December 20, 2009.

Sarfaraz sticks to the popular discourse and gives a scientific justification that fire travels from Guzara to Reserved forests in its natural course.

In 2009 I could access several fire reports, or at least verbal sharing of fire incidences. This helped in analysing trends, going to some of the sites and talking to people. Interestingly in 2010 this was not possible anymore. I was told by departmental staff that nothing was there to share – there were no fires that year! Mansab<sup>92</sup> RFO said,

“By the grace of Allah, this year in my area not one fire incidence was recorded. We have worked very hard to clear forests and establish fire lines. Watch and ward is strong. And we have additional resources from the PC-1. You can ask the villagers, no fire incidence this year”. Mansab, SDFO, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010, Village Chajjian

The same stance on the subject was witnessed at the DFO office. The villagers though continued to insist that several fires took place in 2010 as well, though slightly lesser than in 2009 due to heavy rains. There must be an explanation regarding the department’s latest position, is it to reflect that the fire control project was a success? Or is it that the staff understands the political dimension of fire and tries to hide the incidences due to many

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<sup>92</sup> Name has been changed.

questions attached to it? I can only conclude that the ‘no more fires’ stance came regarding the Reserved forests, and besides, the fact that not one report was written on fire incidence in 2010 anywhere – does not essentially mean that forest fires have suddenly stopped occurring.

### 5.5.1 Guzara owners and forest fires

March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009, on my return from village Desra, I noticed a fire from a distance. I chased the smoke and found it to be the hills of Bakka-Ranjha villages. This fire was too early for the season since most fires are set during May-June prior to the monsoon in July-August. March was unusually dry in 2009 and all the hills looked pale and golden from a distance due to over-mature grasses. The fire was set by a local herdsman and it appeared like an open secret. The fire did not spread too quickly due to relatively higher humidity and was controlled soon. Seven persons in the village meeting on the following day, pointed to him and for all of them it was just fine. “This is normal...in drought grasses are dry like wood. We take some risk and burn them. The fire never spreads because we know the extent it will



**Picture 5.10:** Post fire situation in Birlay village - Most undergrowth burnt, trees burnt upto 3-4 meters height, stumps burnt



**Picture 5.11:** Cont.... Stumps from freshly cut trees burnt in forest fire

go to. If it goes too far and damages trees, the owner will never spare us” (Villagers from the neighbouring village Ranjha). The Forest department staff checked a few days later, and the local people never shared the name of the ‘offender’. The report mentioned that ‘it was an accidental fire which occurred due to negligence’. This area belonged to Raja Saqlain who lived in Tarnawa.

“In March there was a fire on our lands, and the Forest Guard reported negligence. But I think that the goat keeping people had set fire. What else do they do? They are poor and also need to secure their livelihoods...” Raja Saqlain (55), 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Tarnawa.

His statement and relaxed attitude towards forest fire as an owner was a little surprising. He was not concerned about following up with the department to find a “culprit”. In June 2009, Bakka Guzara once again caught a fire, but this time, a fierce one. People from neighbouring villages informed the Forest department since they feared damage to their private properties. When the field staff reached the site, the tenants seemed totally unrelated to the fire and offered no cooperation despite the staff’s request. One of the staff members made a phone call to Raja Saqlain, requesting him to instruct his tenants (all inhabitants of Bakka) to extend their support.

“Raja saheb said to me, “if my tenants are not interested and the fire doesn’t harm them, why do you bother? Just leave”. Hence we had to leave since alone we would not be able to do anything”. Mumtaz Forester, 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010, Haripur.

They prepared a fire report and mapped the affected area. The report was apparently lost in a heap of paper since I never heard of this incident from any member of the Forest department again.

The second fire came in Desra on June 3, 2009, when a huge fire engulfed 28 hectares of Guzara forest with several Chir trees and also a young plantation conducted with project funds. This fire was promptly reported by the Block Officer and the damages were recorded as following (Appendix 2, following is the translation from Urdu):

“Dear Sir. Around 5pm in the evening, the fire suddenly broke out from the Guzara forest adjoining compartment number 4 of Norota forest. As soon as the fire appeared, local fire watcher immediately reached the spot and informed the head-quarters on his mobile phone. An announcement was made in the village mosque. We also reached immediately and tried to control the fire. Due to strong wind, since the fire started from the lower altitude, it soon went out of our control and spread to a larger area. Meanwhile the fire broke from the other side of compartment 4. Village Kohas was also informed through the mosque. Local people reached to help us. After a lot of struggle, we could control fire by midnight and we continued guarding the area for any last spark. We saved a vast land. Second day, the fire broke again in the same area from the lower side of the hill. Together with the fire watcher, we reached the spot again. But wind was so strong that by the time we reached, a huge area was already on fire. We struggled a lot

but fire went out of our control. Norota compartment number 4 where in 2007 an area of 6 hectares was planted and 20 hectares was sown, was totally burnt. No large Chir trees were affected only the grasses and shrubs. We are still searching for the criminal. As soon as we are informed, we will launch first investigation report in police station” (Wali-ur-Rehman 2009).

Observation from the site suggests that several large and medium sized Chir trees were affected up to a height of 3-4 meters. Hence the report seems to have missed a crucial nature of fire. Yet the owner of the Guzara forests did not raise a voice to identify the ‘culprits’. Several months after the fire, the case has not moved any further from this piece of paper. Another incident was in Birlay which I shared in the beginning of the chapter. The fire on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009 was one of the worst fires of the season. The area belonged to the local people from Turk dissent who had bought these forests from two Guzara owners called Raja Zahid and Raja Habib. The field staff never reported this fire to their department. The owners were all silent about the fire when I tried to probe. One of the owners, Shabir said that the fire was set by unknown people. People in the village said that fire was set by his brother-in-law. Shabir however, did not appear extremely concerned about it. Several trees were hence cut between June and December.

Apart from a relaxed attitude of the owners, there was one more thing common in these fires. In all the cases the fire broke out more than once (Bakka and Desra twice and Birlay thrice), with the interval of about twenty-four hours to few months, points to the fact that this was not only for grasses. Curious, I posed these questions in other interviews, why would an owner be so relaxed about fire and not pressurise the department to register a police report and find him the culprit? Is there any particular reason that fire breaks out more than once in the same area?

“The owner is relaxed because he himself instigates fire! He knows this can cause drying of trees hence he has a direct interest. Earlier our job was easier. Local people and especially owners supported in fire control, now if people themselves are happy to see fire in their forests, what can the Forest Department do? Owners also indirectly benefit from grasses – the poor people who work for them are never paid, they are only paid in this manner. If the fire was for grasses and other little goodies – he lets it go because these are the same people who keep tight-lipped when more serious fires occur for timber.” Khursheed Ahmad (Conservator Hazara), January 5<sup>th</sup> 2010, Islamabad.

He continues and comments on Desra like incidences,

“...our political system goes by recommendation of politicians and not by law. 90% of my time is spent in dealing with people using their influence asking me to let go an illegal act. In cases where the villages are a Raja’s political constituency, he publicly pretends as forgiving but through another channel constantly pressing us to find the culprit. But now even that would not happen because a dying tree is what they want”. Khursheed Anwar (Conservator Hazara), 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Islamabad.

A few meters before entering Najafpur, there was an olive plantation of the Forest Department in 2003 supported by Oil Seed Development Board Project. In 2007 when I came to select the research site for this study, I could visit only desiccated remnants of olive plants standing there. This particular fire occurred at the end of 2005. Raja Basir from Siradhna shared his observation,

“This olive plantation was conducted in 2003. The project was to graft the trees with edible olive buds. The area was burnt down since the staff responsible for it had pocketed resources, falsified reports and did not complete the work”. Raja Basir, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, Siradhna.

This allegation was made against the staff of the Oil Seed project. Many times villagers blamed the department for forest fires. These voices came from several people I met during the course of my visits to the area. Each time I crossed this plantation, I thought of the harshness of villagers making allegation against the department. Do they have proof? Or is this word of mouth? The department generalises its blame on local people and the people retaliate with full force. It is not about believing one or the other point of view – but truly there are several conspiracy theories going on depicting tensions and fights between different local actors. The loss of twenty-six hectares of plantation conducted in Desra may also lead to similar contradictory claims and perceptions. What the Conservator did not indicate, was the element of corruption, connivance among local staff of the department and collusion between the staff and the influential owner. These elements were brought up by several villagers, for example,

“There was a lot of control on cutting some twenty years ago, but now there is none.” Sajid Zaman, Siradhna, October 21, 2009.

Interestingly, it was supposed to be the other way round. A person who did not know of anything like timber harvesting ban, was revealing that within the span of twenty years of his observation, the harvesting has become more intense.

Lubna from Birlay shares,

“Sometimes they also burn tree stumps after felling. It looks much older and it is then hard to tell when the tree was felled. Especially during fire season – this is so simple because when fire gets out of control, it is reported as routine seasonal fire. When there is heavy cutting going on in the forest, we know fire will break in this area soon” Lubna, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Birlay.

A similar indication was made by another villager in Siradhna,

“When there is a permit for five trees, ten are cut instead – and then the stumps are burnt. This cannot be done by one person alone. It is a team work between owner and department persons. Fire spreads and many innocent people bear the loss”. Raja Nisar, (35), 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Siradhna.

Haroon from Najafpur shared,

“I think fire is used for hiding the on-going felling, rather than using fire for killing the trees and then felling. Perpetrators don't want to wait so much. No one monitors what happens before fire season in the forest. Haroon, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Najafpur.

Ghulam Murtaza from Najafpur adds:

“Scrub fires are always lit by local people, and these are often for firewood. But the department always sets fire in Chir zone. Local people do not do that. When they cut more than prescribed, there is a fear for a check. They burn the stumps. When burnt, the stump dries and looks old or soon is buried in the fresh grasses”. Ghulam Murtaza, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2009, Najafpur.

Lubna says this in a very low voice, her father must not be listening, but she believes that Birlay fire was wilfully instigated by the owners for drying the trees and hence quick harvesting,

“So much cutting is going on you cannot imagine... the department knows but does not stop anyone.” Lubna, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Birlay.

In Guzara forests, I increasingly came across villagers who believed that there seems to be some sort of connivance between the departmental staff and the owners for using fire as a tool for manipulating resources (e.g. letting the trees dry) or letting the owner cover the over-harvesting of green trees together with the dead and dying trees. Hence nearly all accounts refuted the popular belief that graziers are single handed responsible for fires and they do it for grasses.

### 5.5.2 Logging ban and forest fires

Section 5.3 elaborated how the popular discourses in history influenced policy formation. Here is an example of policy giving birth to new (counter) discourses. As seen in section 5.5.1, it appears that tree felling still continues in the forest despite timber harvesting ban. It also appears (and the same is apparent from the forest fire reports) that majority of fires break out in Reserved forests. The opinion of the department and that of the local people is completely opposite. The departmental fire reports suggest that these fires are instigated by some ‘unknown criminals’ in the villages while many local people insist that these are to cover illegal (over) felling of green trees and the department personnel are accomplices. Even individuals from within the department provide different accounts. A few departmental staff interviewed during this research offered new dimensions on forest fire. Many believed that the illegal felling and fire incidences have increased after timber harvesting ban was imposed in 1993 by the central Government.

“Dead dry and fallen trees were only granted for subsistence use to owners and right holders. It was good for the forest. But now after ban imposition, dead, dry, wind fallen are the only trees allowed to be cut. As an impact, there is a lot of illicit felling and trees are being sold at nominal prices. Skilled labour is jobless or is hired for illegal felling. In normal harvesting we fell over-mature trees. Felling operation for each tree takes 3-4 days. Illegal felling is usually done in haste – hence instead of over-mature they go for younger trees which are convenient to cut”. Khurshed Ahmad, Conservator Hazara, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Islamabad.

Another member of the Forest department went into a detailed explanation about how fires quickly spread in post ban situation, and what is the owner’s interest in forest fires:

“Most of the forests in Khanpur are scrubs and Chir. Normal harvesting practice allows a little bit of cleaning. Leftovers and brushwood are taken away by the landless. Now there is more combustible material lying on floor. Besides, the owner’s interest also lies in making the trees dry out. If this guy has made some undercover collaboration with the individuals from the department, he will not give any support to curb forest fire and will not be asked to either. Fire is beneficial for him now. One that he gets rid of broad leaved<sup>93</sup> trees in which he is not interested in, and give way to Chir. If Chir is burnt, that is even better for him. He is not benefiting from green trees anyway”. Shabir Hussain, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2010, Peshawar.

This statement seems to suggest that the owner probably, even deliberately, gives way to fire so that Chir trees die off. Then Shabir corrects,

“...Since there is a ban (on felling) and the owner is not receiving his usual benefits, he doesn’t throb anymore to save his trees. If fire breaks out – he is pleased since he will at least have some dry trees. Earlier he used to make a personal effort to control fire and criticise the department all the time for not being able to curb it”. Shabir Hussain, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2010, Peshawar.

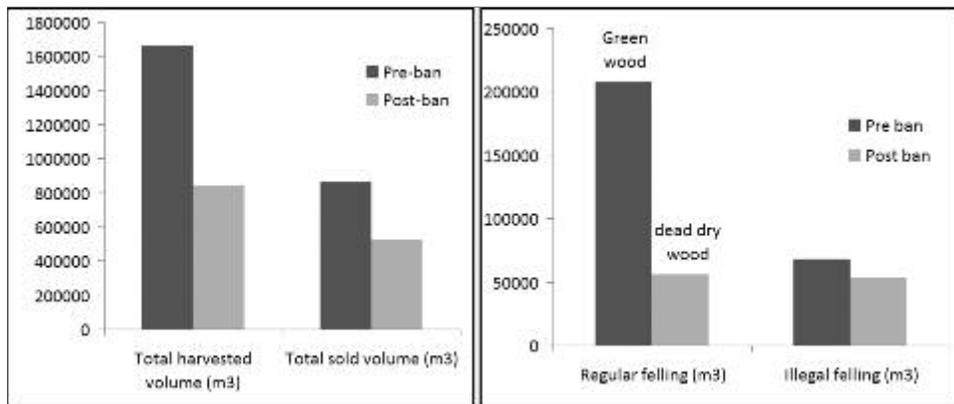
Hence in Shabir Hussain’s view, the owner does not instigate fire, but is at peace with fire when someone else would ablaze the forest. A number of fire incidents and interviews confirmed this. The study conducted by Fischer, Khan et al (2009) also indicates that while harvesting the dead, dry, and wind fallen trees, a lot of green trees are also cut and admixed with the timber obtained from dead, dry, and wind fallen trees. Due to the ban on harvesting of green trees and legal permission for the sale of dead, dry, and wind-fallen trees, the dry trees have become commercially more valuable than the green ones during the ban. The forest owners therefore prefer to have more dry and dead trees in their forest as the only trade-able commodity from their forests. For them, the local right holders may cut green

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**93** Referring to smaller trees such as oak, wild pomegranate, wild olive which are commercially not important from timber point of view, but for local people and the landless these are extremely crucial for their livelihoods.

trees for their domestic requirements (even illicitly without going into the procedures) but should not touch the dead and dry ones. People in Haripur believe that the forest owners are not alone in these practices. The departmental staff supports them in such practices.

Fisher and Khan et al state this as “Forest department taking advantage of it” (1999) and elaborate as follows: “Over the whole period of the ban (1994 to 2008) the total sanctioned harvesting through FD and FDC amounted to 841,455 m<sup>3</sup>. With wide variations over the years the annual average out-take was about 56,097 m<sup>3</sup> whereas the annual average was 207,274 m<sup>3</sup> in the pre-ban period 1985 to 1993. Also the recorded illegal harvesting amounting to an annual average of 68,142 m<sup>3</sup> in the pre-ban period decreased during the ban period to an annual average of 53,678 m<sup>3</sup>. Thus in terms of legal harvest, the harvesting ban was largely complied by FD/FDC resulting in a decrease in the annual average legal timber harvesting volumes to only 27% of its pre-ban volume. However, the recorded illegal timber harvesting only decreased to 79% of its pre-ban annual average volume” (Fischer and Hajer 1999, 46).



**Figure 5.2:** (Left) Comparison of pre and post ban harvesting and sale volumes. (Right) Comparison of pre and post ban harvesting volumes

The authors of the study suggest that the prices of wood have increased by 175% from pre-ban period until now due to high demand in Pakistan and Afghanistan, scarcity of wood in the market and record inflation in the country due to a continued deterioration of the security situation. Therefore a slightly reduced volume of recorded illegal harvesting does not mean reduced revenue. Besides, there are unrecorded illegal take-outs whose volumes are unknown. These figures therefore suggest that the renewal of the dry and wind-fallen tree harvesting policy in 2003 alone cannot only be seen as an emergency measure for maintaining forest health but also as an indirect permission for continued harvesting and revenue generation.

Many respondents believe that the price increase is playing an important role in increased fire incidences in order to extract more wood out of the forest.

“The department punctually used to auction grasses and important herbs from the forest. That system is totally abolished. Now they only concentrate on Chir

wood because it is very expensive.” Ghulam Murtaza, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2009, Najafpur.

One aspect of these fires in Chir zone is the detriment of undergrowth (shrubs and small trees) which is important for local income of the landless and the women. Chapter 7 will cover more details on this particular aspect.

### 5.5.3 Fire in scrub forests

Scrub forests are highly vulnerable to fire during dry season. It is very easy for scrubs to catch fire due to abundance of grasses and sunlight. However, some foresters believe that medium fires are not harmful for scrubs. Mumtaz is a forester who is close to his retirement and serves the Khanpur sub forest division. He says,

“Scrubs grow very fast. If they are not regularly cut and if fire does not break out, they will become a jungle and it will be impossible to even walk through them”. Mumtaz Forester, Khanpur, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Khanpur.

In his opinion, due to very limited human resource with the department, more attention during fire season is focused on Chir forests rather than scrubs since the fire offers less long-term damage. Saqib, the DFO Timber Extraction Division said,

“Scrubs are by nature grazing grounds for animals. But we are forcing people not to graze animals in those lands for soil erosion, trampling, etc. which is against nature. I feel that grazing in scrubs is a good idea and it must be allowed”. Muhammad Saqib, DFO Timber Extraction Division Rawalpindi, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Rawalpindi.

The DFO seems to break the circle of a popular discourse. Yet, he did not agree that setting fire by graziers would also be good for scrubs. Fire incidents in scrub zone seem to have a different dynamic. As mentioned by Ghulam Murtaza, my observation regarding scrubs and discussion with the people brings me to the conclusion that two scenarios emerge in the scrub zone fire:

1. The firewood collectors, who sell firewood, are generally happy since collecting large quantities of succulent shrubs is a tough task.
2. Those who depend on scrub vegetation for non-timber forest products, especially women, are highly disappointed, especially when fire breaks out in the middle of their peak collection season.

Daily firewood collectors are indifferent since a bundle or two in a day is not a big deal for them. Distant collectors choose to bring a little more at a time so that they don't have to travel on a daily basis. Rahim Jan, age 56, is a sole firewood collector for her own and her sister's family. Her daily chore for the last thirty-five years is to go to the hills and bring firewood for her family. She says,



**Picture 5.12:** A sample of fire on scrub forest in Najafpur village, A closer view of post fire situation, crispy shrubs which are ideal for chapping as firewood



**Picture 5.13:** A widespread scrub fire in Baghbodheri village allegedly set by commercial wood cutters

“Fire is set by those who want to sell firewood in large quantity. Not a person like me... I collect what I need. And for me one or two bundles a day is not a big deal. I dump them in the kitchen and use the branches as they dry... If I knew who does this – I would break his legs. Women do such a hard job daily to bring wood and pick fuel-branch by branch ....and these men dare to burn the whole lot”.  
Rahim Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Rahim Jan is very poor but well-known for being a strong, vocal and highly respectable woman in her village. With her loud character, she walks around in the village inquiring about the people who would do anything wrong with the forest, e.g. starting a fire. She even

threatens people to inform police and everyone knows she is so mobile and stubborn that she means what she is saying. People also know that generally the police and the Forest Department do not come to the village. Her response was very spontaneous clearly dividing the role between men and women. She believed that the daily firewood collection, which is mostly a woman's job, does not harm forest. She attributes forest fire to men.

“They are greedy...they don't want to put their blood and sweat in it...burn and take it next day in a Suzuki van”. Rahim Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

One fire I witnessed in Najafpur in May 2009. Zeeshan, age 15, with a few of his friends went smoking in the hills close to his home after sunset. It was a communal Guzara hill. Smoking is nothing unusual in Haripur but for a 15 year old, the only opportunity is to smoke with friends when elders are not watching. The boys decided to make a little fire on the hill and sit around, talk and smoke. Suddenly the fire became wild due to the wind and the boys could not manage to control it. It engulfed the little hillock they were on. When they realised that it was no longer in their control they decided to flee. While they were on their way down to the village, Zeeshan's paternal uncle saw him and caught him. Meanwhile the people from the houses nearest to the hill gathered and controlled fire. Someone from the village whose house received damages, called the police. The next day people from the Forest department came and Zeeshan's parents ended up paying Rs.10000 fine for fire damage to the Range Forest Officer, while the paper they signed mentioned Rs.4000 only.

After nearly four months in September, Zeeshan, still sheepish and a bit embarrassed, showed me the hill again. The fire had traversed the entire hill. Four different species of shrubs received desiccation. The base was green while the branches were dry and brown. Grasses were growing out again. It was easier to walk around. Clearly, if I were a fuel wood collector, I would be very happy since it was Ramadan<sup>94</sup> and the job had become far easier at least for those who lived next to the hill.

Many accounts from other villagers illustrated that fire fighting in scrubs is totally managed by locals. A school teacher (age 26) says,

“If we do not put out fire, who else will? The whole forest will be charred and our houses will not exist anymore.” Zubeda, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Najafpur.

This brought me to question whether privately owned agricultural wastelands, which are also totally scrubs and located closely to the settlements, also catch fire? The answer came,

“Who would set his or her own home on fire? Almost never”. Maqsood, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Malik Dad, 38, is a firewood collector and seller. He lives in Dhunya village and collects firewood from Guzara and Reserved forests of Ranjha. His brother is also a firewood

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94 Fasting month for Muslims.

collector. Sometimes they go for some daily wage labour when there is a demand in one of the villages. He sells wood to some families in Najafpur on a daily basis. His daily out-take is a donkey load of firewood which is enough for four families of Najafpur.

“Fire is bad for us, the forests are shrinking. I am collecting wood since my early youth. We have to now walk longer hence it takes more time to get firewood from the forest. I earn Rs.400 after investing the whole day in the forest”. Malik Dad, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Dhunya.

At times he was intercepted by a Forest Guard for explaining whether the wood came from Reserved or Guzara forests, and nearly always he could escape saying it came from Guzara. Poverty reflects from every corner of their home. In the mud house, his wife Naseelan Bibi was feeding her children some maize bread in a thin soup of pulses. She says,

“We do not know who sets fire in Ranjha forests since we live far from there, but when fire breaks out, it is good for us. My husband returns earlier from the forest. But we have no other labour with us and our children are young. We cannot quickly collect all the firewood. Before we can get to enjoy an easy job, it is taken by someone else for a larger market”. Naseelan, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Dhunya.

Raja Sarwar, age 60, from Baghbodheri shared that there was a large forest fire recently in his village.

“A twelve year old child is involved in this fire. His father has a Suzuki van and he sells firewood in the depot in Khanpur. They asked the child to trigger the fire to pretend that the child just made a mistake. The fire was huge enough to let him extract firewood for the whole season”. Raja Sarwar, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Baghbodheri.

The Baghbodheri site showed a skilful harvesting regime in patches. Cutting was done from the very base with sharp implements. The shrubs will take at least a year or two to reach the same size and can be harvested again. This would certainly mean that until then, the daily collectors like Malik Dad will take some firewood from this patch, depending on how fast the wood-seller manages to fill his Suzuki, and once finished, they would have to go to other hills till the vegetation recovers.

There are several small and large firewood sale depots in central Khanpur. This is the point where one road goes to Islamabad via Taxila and the other to Haripur town. A lot of wood seemed to have come from areas receiving fire. The depot owners said that several stocks of firewood are directly transported to Punjab where these are sold at much higher rates.

#### **5.5.4 Self-initiative by the villagers to control fires**

One remaining issue is that of local people (villagers) not taking a self-initiative or lending a hand with the Forest department despite punitive clauses for villagers who do not come forward to help the department staff in controlling fire. The fire reports from the Forest

Guards punctually mention in each case that an announcement was made by the village mosque to inform villagers. However the discussion with different cadres of departmental staff shows that the people do not offer their cooperation anymore in an organised manner. The conservator of Hazara is of the opinion that the people do not come forward since they know that they would never be fined,

“The system is more politically charged. Even if I don’t help, I have someone on my back to protect me from law. They don’t help because the department cannot offer them anything due to ban on timber harvesting. What can we take from them if they don’t help?” Khursheed Ahmad, Conservator Hazara, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2008, Islamabad.

Raheem Jan is a regular firewood collector. She lives in Najafpur and mostly relies on scrub forests. She gave a blunt answer in her typical proud persona,

“Why should we help? Big fires are set by the rich and the staff. We put out small bush fires ourselves without anyone’s asking. Nobody from the department comes to help us.” Raheem Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

I recalled that the only people I saw fighting fire in Birlay were women. Why would women do this? Another woman replied,

“We are in the village most of the time. Men are often out for work. At least one should make an effort. If fire engulfs our crops and house, then who will take responsibility?” Zubeda, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Najafpur.

Zubeda’s answer suggested that the women step in with their little efforts when they fear private losses. I met a few women in Ranjha during wild pomegranate processing. One of them (age 55) shared her experience of fire fighting at least three times in recent years with five of her family women (who live together in one house),

“In these (forest) fires Chir is not as damaged as is wild pomegranate and adhatoda. If these plants are burnt, who will feed us? Fire comes when fruit are ready for harvest. My heart burns with them.” Naseelan, 12th July, 2010, Ranjha.

Several people indicated that they had not seen a Forest Guard in their hills for at least fifteen years. Many of them recalled that the guard used to patrol the forests regularly and in case of fire incidence people had to cooperate with him since people felt pressured due to his regular presence in the very forest on which people depended. Raja Sajid recalls,

“During president Ayub Khan’s<sup>95</sup> era the government proclaimed that if any forest was affected by fire, and the villagers did not take steps to control it, the entire

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<sup>95</sup> Field Marshal Ayub Khan’s presidential regime was from 1958-1969. He became the President after a military coup in the country.

village will have to pay for the damage. At that time, the Deputy Commissioner and his staff used to be alert. These days – it is all political. Every politician backs the influential for their support, those who depend on them and serve them also have sifarish<sup>96</sup> – nobody has to obey the government. There is always a way out. Departmental control has finished”. Raja Sajid, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010, Siradhna.

Aurangzeb (DFO Timber Extraction Division, Rawalpindi) gives reasons for this,

“People are fed up of us in fact. We have nothing to offer so we have no more writ. Common perception of people about the department is so negative. Everyone thinks we are corrupt and no one bothers anymore about us. There is a total law and order chaos in this country – forest fire is a little phenomenon. Now the forest guards are not strong either. Each has to cover an area of over 400 hectares which is not practical. Those who are doing an excellent job are not rewarded, so why work hard. And besides, with urbanization, people’s livelihood options have diversified. They are reducing livestock since there are limited people to look after them. With highly increased prices of wheat, they are trying to make sure that their agricultural land is also attended. Trends are changing. People are



**Picture 5.14:** Forest fire in Margalla hills, Capital city Islamabad.  
A hi-tech operation with equipment and human resources

**96** Political recommendation – a sort of influence which politicians impose due to their position in the government. Often this recommendation is made for undue favours which otherwise would not be entertained.

shifting from firewood to gas and are more worried about short term benefits”.  
Aurangzeb, 5<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Rawalpindi.

In one example which I studied, the staff of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Islamabad was controlling fire in Margalla Hills of Islamabad with several large water tankers. Over a dozen staff members were busy in the task. Television and newspapers were reporting about the fire in a prominent manner. The second day a fire broke out in Kurwali Bakka hills, the other side of Margalla. The CDA staff, despite being highly equipped, busy in their operation on Margalla and physically closer, did not try to solve the issue, saying that the area was not under their responsibility. They would only intervene when they know that Haripur fire will engulf the CDA area (rarely). This comes from the same dynamics which the DFO pointed out, an extra job does not bring any reward.

Sub Divisional Forest Officer Galis, Sarfaraz says that without people’s help the department can never control fire. He narrates an incidence of a severe fire in his area of responsibility,

“I pressurised people. I pulled the *Imam*<sup>97</sup> from the Mosque and the school teacher. I asked them to call every single man from every house. I even asked the women to come forward and help. I told them they were like my daughters. If the forest is totally charred – it is they who will suffer the most. And I told the people if they would not help, I will ban their use of the forest for grazing and fuel. It took us eight hours to control fire”. Sarfaraz, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Haripur.

Sarfaraz seems to try his motivation skills and a threat (to ban the forest for its users) at the same time. I wondered which one may have worked better as I could only listen to him and note. Yet, his narration reflects that the self-initiative for attending a forest ablaze is dwindling among villagers.

Khalil from Najafpur says the opposite

“If Forest department does not want to, then not a single fire incidence would happen. Government is like a king – it has resources and all the powers, why does it pretend to be helpless? If law is equal for all, nothing can go wrong”. Khalil, (age 102), 18<sup>th</sup> August 2008, Najafpur.

All the accounts from the local people lead me to understand that they are not looking for an authoritarian department. More intrinsic to these discussions was a search for a mediator, who ensures rule of law for all who depend on the forest, as Khalil expressed it, “If law is equal for all, nothing can go wrong”.

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97 A religious cleric who leads the prayers and is in charge of a mosque, where Muslims offer prayers.

## 5.6 Other fire ecologies – a small detour

In Australia, the phenomenon of forest fire is quite common. Aboriginals regularly and systematically used fire to control distribution, diversity and abundance of plant and animal resources (Yibarbuk, Whitehead et al. 2001; Preece 2002; Preece 2007). Indeed, it has been argued that the vegetation of Australia prior to European colonisation was largely of an open savannah-type due to regular controlled burning. It was the European settlers who put an end to this, encouraging the growth of extensive forests, particularly Eucalyptus (Rolls 1982). The vision of extensive forests at the time of colonisation by Europeans may thus be based on “received wisdom” that extensive forests are better and must serve commercial interests. Regardless of their impact on local economy, these high value forests are commercially more rewarding than savannahs.

Gill (2005) calls the phenomenon of forest fire as the 'flammability' of Australian forests. Flammability scientifically is defined through three component variables that describe how well the fuel ignites (ignitibility), how well it burns (combustibility) and for how long it burns (sustainability). Like Chir, Eucalyptus is also adapted to fire. It has shoots below the bark that are not destroyed by a passing fire of low intensity, so it can re-shoot afterwards. Furthermore its leaves contain volatile oils, like in case of Chir, which ignite in fire, thus propagating it. If fire does not pass through a Eucalyptus forest, other species grow up underneath – whereas if there is a fire, the ground is cleared for Eucalyptus regeneration – which again is the case with Chir. Hence in terms of the sustainability, grass and bush fires are rather fast and quickly consume the dry grasses and litter. Chir and Eucalyptus have a high ignitibility, high combustibility and if the fire is intense, and not regular, it can even sustain for long and cause damages.

Aboriginals are seeking greater equity in management of lands reserved for nature conservation, and recognition of their cultural practices, such as 'fire-stick farming.' Experiences in some of the Australian Aboriginals shows there have been conflicts over the control of management and information and in identifying common interests in maintaining species and forest communities. Hill (1999) studies one of those Aboriginals (Kuku-Yalanji in Queensland) suggesting a fire protocol to mediate the different goals of different groups, and supported the view that implementation of ecosystem management requires a social decision process. Kanowski (2005) analyses different approaches for fire control and reviews that several writings emphasise on fuel reduction from the forest, community education, the role of volunteer fire-fighters and local knowledge, but he strongly emphasises that this is 'not necessarily about burning substantially more land, but rather, burning smarter' and that is where indigenous people's knowledge is crucial. In North America, Native Americans use fire (often surface fires) as a technology to favour certain useful plants and animal species, e.g. red Oak (Brose, Schuler et al. 2001; Lanham, Keyser et al. 2002). In the Andes, Northern Patagonia is one example where Monkey-puzzle forest receives regular fires (Aagesen 2004). However, he insists, that the proof will only come after a long-term interdisciplinary research whether the fire was used for ecological reasons or simply as a tool by settlers (after indigenous people were conquered) for making pastures and arable lands. Interestingly, Brun (2002) already mentioned that fire is causing spatial occurrence of *Nothofagus antarctica*, a

broadleaved colonist, and the native species *Araucaria arancana* has learned to co-exist with it due to its shade tolerant character.

Back in the region, in South Asia, similar examples may be found of using fires as an ecological tool but also to show social resistance and protest by the lower casts (Guha 1989; Agrawal 2005). Guha (1989) writes an elaborate account of Chipko Movement in India and says, “social protest was aimed at the restrictions on customary patterns of use entailed by scientific forestry. The takeover of the hill forests and their subsequent management on commercial lines were at once a denial of the state’s traditional obligations and a threat to the subsistence dilemma of the peasantry” (Guha 1989). Authors in India have also referred to van Panchayats in the early twentieth century. The van Panchayat Act defines community forests as a hybrid of state ownership and community responsibility. Hence forest committee control over community forest use is tempered by Revenue and Forest departments (Britt 1994). The committees have been praised for managing forest fires actively due to their close collaboration with the department (Gupte 2004). Nepal also has a history of forest fires. In post community forestry regime and with the establishment of Forest Users Groups it is believed that the incidence of fires has reduced. Fire control is fully in people’s hands now. They conduct regular controlled burning and also clear fire lines as per advice of the Forest department (Pokharel, Stadtmuller et al. 2006). Pine forests in Nepal still receive fire for an early flush of grasses and there are accidental fires too but many foresters believe that the extent of damage is usually not high.

## 5.7 Conclusion from forest fires in Khanpur

Forests were abundant in early colonial times. Clearing land for agriculture, even through slash and burn, was needed at the time which also entitled them to cultivate land they possessed at that time. Farmers manually cleared as much land as they could manage. Hence fire had a significant role in defining farmers’ territories. Land related practices changed over time. Livelihood options diversified and land did not remain the only means of production, however, grazing large flocks of livestock still remains an important feature in the forests. Graziers often used fire as a tool in the pastures for better growth of grasses. This led to a persistent discourse based on appropriating every fire incident to the graziers’ practices. This false understanding led to erroneous responses institutionalised in policies by colonial rulers. Graziers set fires in selected areas. Many respondents of the study consider such fires beneficial to the forest and never reveal to the department the details of such “culprits”. For the commercial firewood collectors and timber owners fire is helpful in manipulating the resource. They adopted this indigenous practice of graziers’ setting pastures on fire, for obtaining dry firewood but even though fires may occur due to the will of the forest owner, the policy is blind and holds graziers responsible for their wasteful and damaging practices. Controlled burning of forest debris, one of the measures prescribed in the policy, is a highly trusted method to reduce chances of fire, while there is zero tolerance for graziers setting fires. These actions are influenced by the value of resources in a given environment, giving way to a form of resistance and manipulation. Chir is not only valuable for the State, it is also important for Guzara owners. Hence, there is a conflict between State-led resource management regimes for fire control based on ‘sound scientific grounds’, and using the trees for financial returns even if this requires wilful instigation of fire.

The collectors of NTFP, mostly women, are not happy to see their pomegranate trees dying especially those living close to the forests, whose private properties become endangered when fire breaks. Prescribed policy measures expect villagers to put their lives in danger to fight fires and save Chir pine. The study shows that this happens, but not for saving Chir. Women come forward and try to save their NTFP resource, and guard fire before it encroaches their houses. There are several confronting discourses attached with forest fires. An inclining graph of forest fires, decreasing self-initiative among people to control fires, and the Forest department's management bias towards Chir pine trees in fire control operations; these concerns echo in the field. Forest department's response in case of fire incident is much slower than expected by the people. Hence the extent of damage is larger than likely to happen from usual fires. There is also an element of connivance among individual departmental functionaries and the powerful owners. They join hands and together manipulate nature. Numerous recent fire reports (2007-2009) clearly state ground vegetation being damaged while Chir pine trees remained safe. But then, in older fire plots, Chir pine trees can be clearly seen dried up or cut within few years of a fire incident. Hence, one actor comes with certain knowledge to support another who has the influence. This becomes a network between the department staff and the local owners for mutual benefits. These networks have increased distance between the department and other actors. The mistrust is growing and self-initiative of people is diminishing. There is a high tension on use of fire by large owners for harvesting Chir and by commercial firewood collectors for firewood. These actions shrink the forest for subsistence since people have to walk longer for the same resource. A form of connivance exists between the owner and the occupants of lands that of allowing them smaller fires for meeting their objective (e.g. grasses) and exploiting this for much larger fires later in the season. This is another form of agreement to secure dependency of both the actors within the village.

People are interested in seeing the State as an agent to ensure equity. Frustration among people grows when the department powerfully deals with 'smaller thieves' on a donkey load of fuel or fined a young boy trapped in fire due to sheer miscalculation, but remains quiet when large mysterious fires engulf rich forests. As a result they resort to passive resistance - notably taking as much as they can, or diverting dependence on the forests to alternative livelihood options. A complete loss of trust in governance is leading to a short term mentality: seeking to benefit from these resources today, because tomorrow is not secure.

# 6

## **Redefining territories in contested forest tenure**

Chapter 5 explained the dynamics behind forest fires which can even lead to opting fire as a management discourse by the owners to harvest benefits from the forests. The preceding chapters also dwelled on the land settlement in 1872 that led to the creation of legal forest categories namely Reserved and Guzara. This territorialisation within forests went hand in hand with the formulation of a policy discourse defining how to use these spatial territories. I have shown in Chapter 5 that forest fire is an important tool to refute these legal categories and manipulate resource in one or the other way to make claims on resources for economic gains. This chapter continues the discussion on the complex institutional ordering of social arena by territorialising forests. Several discourses regarding rights and claims defined by rules and regulations constructed by the State, and manoeuvred by the people in and around the forest highlight that the meaning of these territories is changing and the rules set forth regarding their use seem to face a vital resistance.

The territorialisation was enforced and made to work on the assumption that the users of these forests will understand and use these categories in the same way as the policy states. Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 388) argue, “*territorialisation is about excluding or including people within particular geographic boundaries, and about controlling what people do and their access to natural resources within those boundaries*”. Hence for them, territorialisation is the State’s strategy to control people and their relationships to land based resources (especially forests). Some users were excluded from certain uses of the forests, and their space within the forest was limited through territorialisation policy. In their opinion, this control can be acquired through several means including use of violence, introducing several institutional means with authority and power, and employing administration to organise surveillance to control over people’s everyday activities. Visser and Adhuri (2010: 85) refer to the literature defining territorialisation as an attempt to affect, influence or control people, phenomena, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical territory. Referring to Scott 1998, they describe that until 1990s, territorial claim making was considered the prerogative of the State, however today, it is the result of actions and policies of a wider range of institutions and organisations. Later sections will explain that this is also true for Khanpur where today control from the central or provincial actors is dwindling and new boundaries are defined by individual actors or their networks. This chapter will closely look at tenurial reordering of forests in district Haripur of Pakistan and the new discourses that emerged from a legal discourse of territorial forestry.

I touched upon jural tenure and historically deep rooted de facto access to resources in Chapter 4. The following sections in this chapter will explain that the two are not in conformity with each other. Resource users have tried to create new spaces for themselves within the social arena where they continue to make claims on land and forest in a variety of ways. While in the field I learned that these legal categories had multiple meanings for the people as they struggled for access to resources and interpreted the legal categories in their interest. In practice, many users interchangeably referred to the two categories of forests justifying their access. Also within the Guzara forests, where there is a whole plethora of multiple legal rights supervised by the state through Guzara regulation, people have enacted their own interpretation of the reordering making reference to their historical claim on the forests. As I moved on, it appeared that the issue of Guzara and Reserved territories was not

just about how these were understood and accessed, but at the same time commoditisation of forest lands was also in process.

The Forest department in Haripur gave part of Reserved forestland on lease to private companies (e.g. mining, tourism). People in Khanpur are also increasingly engaged in buying and selling Guzara lands and/or associated rights. Rare incidents of outsiders buying private Guzara lands in Khanpur have also been reported. This triggered a question in one's mind: What does leasing, selling and buying of forestland mean for Khanpur? Will people engaging in making new territories change the scene of patron-client relations and result into a new clientele for forest policy makers? McCarthy (2006: 10) suggests, "*Property is not a thing, but a network of social relations that governs the conduct of people with respect to the use and disposition of things (...) A particular property regime will gain its character from the way in which those controlling it, decide to allocate rights and duties (...) The way authority works and the way those with discretionary power grant access rights, whether wielding authority within the state or within the village, are critical to resource outcomes.*" McCarthy endorses the idea that a property regime is a structure of rights and duties characterising the relationship of one individual to another with respect to a resource (referring to Bromley 1989: 870). Buying and selling lands in smaller pieces may give birth to new relationships as McCarthy suggests (interplay of new actors), and new forms of forest use (resource outcomes). Until the 1990s, as Scott (1998) says, it was considered that territorial claim making is the State's prerogative. In Khanpur however, it is the people who are engaged in giving new shape to the territorial definition of the forests given by the State.

## 6.1 Struggle between legal and de facto tenures

Before the State territorialised the forests of Khanpur, local people could freely access them based on their customary claims (see Chapter 3). These claims are rooted in the history of Khanpur, which may explain why local people contested the forest boundaries when these were reordered administratively on legal grounds. Abramson (2000: 13) described this as "*A property only really comes into being with the effective exclusion of other persons*". Reactions emerging from exclusions demonstrated the relationship between land and its users in the backdrop of history and emotive relation with the (mythical) boundaries (Abramson 2000: 11). Consequently, even where mythically imagined lands are legally delineated on paper, their physical boundaries and borders tend to be weak (ibid). Escobar explained it as follows "*when a border is eliminated, it reappears somewhere else*" (Escobar 2001: 139). "*Yet the fact remains that place continues to be important in the lives of many people, perhaps most, if we understand by place the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed*" (ibid: 140). The place remains important even though the borders are fluid and keep changing. And sometimes borders are not just necessary since the value of land is more mythical than physical. I recall an example – that of village mapping in Najafpur (section 2.3.3). The people had lived in the village all their lives, but deeply struggled to draw boundaries. At the end of the exercise I felt that they had never lived in these boundaries since for them Najafpur extended till the Khanpur lake, the high pastures in Kurwali and the River Dor. At another occasion, I came across a few graves in Khanpur in which no one was buried yet. It was a

matter of reserving a place for oneself even when one is no more. For them it was essential to return to this soil, no matter where they died. This was a reflection of relationship, identity and belonging.

Jural land is defined by virtue of its possession by the owner. This relationship is hierarchical between the owner and the object. Propertied land is alienated, performs functions for the new owner. Each change of owner is a new event for this land. Legal boundaries come into being as a new event, but since lands are culturally embedded in mythical realms, they remain practically ineffective in functioning and unsuccessful in gaining the same recognition. Guha emphasised this cultural embeddedness giving historical evidence of Uttarakhand in India,

“Prior to the reservation of forests, hill society could be described as a conglomeration of village communities, with control over the means of production and over the resources needed to reproduce itself.” Guha (1989: 185)

A villager expresses the same in his words:

“All these forests were ours. Even though we knew that everything belonged to Rajas, even the houses we lived in were not our own. But we took what we needed from the jungle. We could not have taken more than what we could use. No one stopped us. There was no discussion about Rajas or the tenants about the jungle. This started after taqseem<sup>98</sup>. When the sarkari<sup>99</sup> jungle was closed, a distinction between owner and non-owner regarding the use of the jungle was also written down on our hearts.” Khaleel (Age 102), 12th April 2008, Najafpur.

Khalil's expression suggests that Guzara and Reserved boundaries were marked on the ground with concrete and posts, which was an attempt to dominate into organic land-bound identities. Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 415) explain that local property rights and claims continue to comprise complex bundles of overlapping, hierarchical rights and claims. This reality contradicts the clear boundaries assumed by State titling programmes. These contradictions manifest either in vocal conflicts, or creative ways of using forests for daily use. In their study, Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann (1999: 33) give an example of herdsman fearing that land fragmentation will eliminate their right of grazing.

Using this example they propose that such boundaries bring a new power tactic, a redefinition of property and a market, a subjective disembedding of human beings from the land and the land's transformation into a commoditised object. Owner-property relationships are often only one aspect of a many-stranded social relationship, combined with kinship or patron-client relations, neighbourhood, economic dependence and membership in a particular group. People have an emotive attachment with the place where they live and the lands they occupy or use, and get buried in. This attachment was apparently shaken in 1872. Forestlands were divided and people's limits regarding where they can go

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**98** Referring to division between Reserved and Guzara forests.

**99** Sarkari is a local term referring to government-owned property (here referred to Reserved Forest).

and what they can and cannot get from the forest were fixed. In addition, the powerful became even more powerful. *Wajib ul arz* favoured Rajas for their loyalty to the British Crown, and they became the sole owners of the 84 villages. Expropriation of common properties, partly to the State and partly to selected owners, founded the tradition of the right to own property and preventing others from using it. More ownership resulted in more boundaries and more exclusion.

Territorialisation was based on the premise of introducing scientific management. Scientific style of managing forests was justified through the State's claim that local use was causing deterioration to the forests. Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann say, "...the imposition of western ideas about private ownership rights in colonised countries went beyond justifying direct appropriation of property rights by individuals. In conjunction with European notions of sovereignty, these ideas also served to legitimise the large-scale appropriation of so-called wastelands by colonial governments, or in extreme cases such as in Australia, even the appropriation of a whole continent as *terra nullius*" (1999: 3). This can be matched with the situation of the sub-continent. Indian forest history as documented by Tiwary (2003) points out that from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in India (including today's Pakistan till 1947), indigenous rights and access to forests were contested by the State agencies claiming to act in the national interest. The Inspector General of Forests in British India, Ribbentrop (1900) in his first manual on British forestry in several places stigmatised forest-dependent communities as forest-destroyers. He claimed that the dawn of scientific forestry under imperial era marked the end of a war on the forests. In contrast, local populations in many regions strongly resisted the expropriation of lands (Guha 1989; Knudsen 1996; Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999; Chhatre 2003; Tiwary 2003; 2004). Tiwary (2004) refers to Guha (1989) who held that three schools of thoughts emerged as a result of territorialisation of forests in India:

"The first, that of annexationist, held out for nothing less than total State control over the forest areas. The second, that of the pragmatics, argued in favour of State management of ecologically sensitive and strategically valuable forests, allowing other areas to remain under communal systems of management. The third position, the populists completely rejected State intervention, holding that tribals and peasants must exercise sovereign rights over woodland. (However), of the three, the annexationists triumphed (Guha 1989)" (Tiwary 2004: 7).

In colonial policies all properties were assumed as State properties, leaving ownership of local people to some forests, and allowing a bundle of rights (Fortmann 1985; Schlager and Ostrom 1992; Fortmann 1995; Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999) for others, but still keeping an indirect control on private ownerships either through loyalty of the owners or keeping a legal control on management aspects or both. The power of Rajas, who were a socio-political force of the region, was augmented by them becoming the landowners but indirectly also as the owners of the people. Rajas were perceived as the most powerful and rich. They took liberty in all decision making arenas, including the access to natural resources.

An ordinary person's daily experience led him to understand that abundance of landholding comes with a great amount of political power. Land brings fortune and it multiplies! So their struggle to challenge legal ordering of forests seems logical and justified. However, on the other hand, the powerful actors in Khanpur also try to protect and maximise their territory. Regardless of all the historical moves for property expropriations, people's resentments and State-led measures regarding territorialisation and scientific forestry, forest dwellers still need to subsist and use forests for their daily needs. As a result of the land settlement, the rights and limitations of the people living in the villages were documented in *Wajib ul arz*. Hence they used forest for their needs by their legal rights. There are others who use forests due to the fact that they live in the village and can rightfully use *Guzara shamilat*, but they did not manage to be in *Wajib-ul-arz* and do not have individual rights noted in the document. Users also approached forests other than *Guzara shamilat*. This act was confirmed by a few *Guzara* owners who said,

“We allow poor villagers to use our *Guzara*, they just need this for their daily need.” Maqsood, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Najafpur.

There are many similar statements from owners. The users and non-right holders have other positions, for instance as in *Ghaat*, access is only allowed through shared harvest of firewood from the forest. Therefore, access to forest is not just a matter of bundle of rights (Fortmann 1985; Schlager and Ostrom 1992; Fortmann 1995; Meijl and von Benda-Beckmann 1999) permitted by *wajib ul arz* – there is something more to it. From what I have seen, users are deploying their ability to claim rights, and ensure their access to forests. Access to land is not only the matter of jural territories defined under law or on a map. There are other qualifications that lead to accessing resources and defining new territories where people meet their needs.

Ribot and Peluso (2003) introduced the concept of bundle of powers. For me redefining territory is about actors' ability through their agency to access despite the territory belonging to others, hence cruising ways and finding ability to use resources. Ribot and Peluso refer to Marx who said that the ability to access resources comes when labour is combined with capital (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 160). In Marx's frame therefore, the labour determined the power. The opportunity will depend on having certain kind of knowledge or physical strength.

In Khanpur several landless non-right holders access *Guzara* forests in this manner. Land tenure relationships therefore are enacted by owner-tenant symbiotic affiliation, even though it is not specified in the law. In this kind of system both owner and tenant have secured an access to the resource for fulfilling their daily needs. Another form of access is sanctioned by law, custom or convention (*de jure* access). Even then, some of the rightful actors cannot claim resources owing to other constraints such as social conflict or a sudden change in policy. Therefore all the strands of power in a bundle do not rest with one actor. An actor's ability to access and claim resources comes with actor's agency. Ability to benefit from resources is mediated by constraints established by the specific political-economic and cultural frames within which access to resources is sought (Ribot and Peluso 2003: 164-172). Certain things can influence access (Blaikie 1985: 23), such as technology (e.g. fence, road

to forest); capital, (buying and selling access); markets, commercially benefiting from a resource if owner has a market or access to market (e.g. tourism, purchase of wood), access to labour and labour opportunities e.g. NTFP, firewood collection on share basis in a patron-client relationship; access to knowledge (e.g. global conservation by powerful international NGOs); authority (the State's control); social identity (being a member in a community), and many more of such. This analysis views power as an instrument and a transformative process (Luttrell 2009).

## 6.2 Forest tenure in Pakistan

Forest tenure is the combination of legally or customarily defined forest ownership rights and arrangements for the management and use of forest resources. Forest tenure determines who can use what resource, for how long and under what conditions. The history of Pakistan's post-independence land reforms is limited to agricultural lands (and lands classified as waste and grazing land). Forestlands have not been subjected to any land reform after independence. All previous forest enactments, especially the Forest Act of 1927, have been consolidated under the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) Forest Ordinance of 2002, which provides for the management of all forest types in the province. There is no single compendium of laws regarding forest landownership rights and tenure arrangements in Pakistan. Existing laws on this subject are diverse, complex and scattered in various subjects (including agriculture, forests and revenue). Ownership and tenure arrangements for all lands, except forestlands transferred to the Forest department, are regulated by the Land Revenue Act of 1967. Land revenue is not collected from the forests, but the State charges taxes from owners and right holders on the income generated from the sale of trees. Pakistan inherited a land tenure system that was essentially feudalistic.

There were no limits on landholdings; and 53% of the land was owned by 7% of the population under the Jagirdari system introduced by Mughal kings and generally maintained by the British (Haider and Kuhnen 1974). In this system, the king granted large areas to influential lords, who were given governance autonomy in exchange for the payment of a fixed annual amount to the king's exchequer. Cases of default in payments were dealt with by armed invasion, but defaults were made only when the Delhi throne was weak. In Pakistan, tenure in non-forest lands follows the Landowner, the Peasant and the Riyatwari systems (Haider and Kuhnen 1974):

1. In the Landowner system, individuals own large estates mostly granted by the State for political reasons or for services to the government. Land revenue is usually not levied on these estates.
2. In the Peasant system, land is owned and cultivated by individual families.
3. In the Riyatwari system, land is acquired on a tenancy basis directly from the State.
4. Another forest tenure system unique to Swat and Dir-Kohistan, called Wesh, was practiced by the rulers of Swat since the occupation by Yusufzai Pukhtuns in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Sultani-i-Rome 2005; Sultani-i-Rome 2008). Under this system there were

no permanent ownership or tenure rights to land; cultivable land was allotted to the local Pukhtuns for periods of eight to ten years on a rotation basis; similar rules affected forest lands. Non-Pukhtun tribes had rights to graze and collect firewood, but the felling of trees was permitted only to Pukhtun leaseholders.

Tiwarly (2003) reports that historically, forestland was available for everybody especially for firewood, grazing, tillage and water collection, although history does show signs of tax collection and restrictions regarding forest use. In ancient India, the history of forests goes back to 1000 BC when Aryans cleared forests for agriculture and settlements. In 320 BC (Mauryan era) the first tax was announced for clearance of forests, until 232 BC (Ashoka era) guards were appointed to enforce forest rules. Before 520 AD (Gupta era), the tribals were moved to remote peripheral areas and were taxed for forest use while the rulers occupied central parts of the villages (Tiwarly 2003). The Mughal kings (1400 AD until fall of dynasty in 1857 AD) saw forests as pleasure areas and maintained some land as royal hunting grounds. The first commercial exploitation of natural forests in the hilly areas of NWFP was conducted in the first quarter of the nineteenth century under Mughal rule but coordinated by East India Company (Sivaramakrishnan 2009). The British rulers recognised the need for forest conservation in the later part of the nineteenth century, when they took steps to enact forest laws, demarcate forests and make forest land settlements.

The charter of forestry presented by Dalhousie in 1855 founded the case for the first land settlement of 1872, the subsequent regulations of 1874, 1879, 1893 and 1911 modified the

**Table 6.1:** Summarising history of Forest regimes from 1000 BC to 1872 in India

1000 BC – Aryans	Clearing forests for agriculture and settlements.
320 BC (Mauryans)	First tax announced for clearance of forests.
232 BC (Ashoka)	Guards were appointed to enforce forest rules.
Before 520 AD (Gupta)	The tribals were moved to remote peripheral areas and were taxed for forest use. People with royal and noble background remained in the central settlements.
1400 AD (The Mughals)	The kings used forests as pleasure areas and maintained some land as royal hunting grounds, first ever concept of the State owned reserves.
1625: India colonized (Mughal / British)	1800-1825 AD - The first commercial exploitation of natural forests in the hilly areas of NWFP under Mughal rule but coordinated by East India Company.
Second half of nineteenth century (British)	Enactment of forest laws and forest land settlements. First charter on forestry by Lord Dalhousie (1855).
1857, mutiny. 1872 (British)	First land settlement. The most prime forests were kept under the State control and the forests under use of the people and in a rather (already) degraded form were kept under private ownerships as Guzara.

original regulations (section 3.2 of this thesis). Sivaramakrishnan (2009) documented that the rural Indian landscape in 17<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by secondary growth, old growth mature trees and savannah. At the time of land settlement of forests, nearly one quarter of India was occupied by agriculture, one quarter by forests and about 20% with grasslands. Historically the indigenous tribes' interest has lied in hunting, grazing, firewood and making huts for living. It is worth noticing that the settlement process mainly took care of forests with rich marketable tree species, and what did not fit anywhere became wasteland. Independent states of India and Pakistan maintained three legal categories of Reserved, Protected, and Guzara defined by colonial government.

The Prime forests were kept under the State control as Reserved and the forests under use of the people and in a rather (already) degraded form were kept under private ownerships as Guzara (Khattak 1976a; Khattak 1976b). These tenure systems were developed to control forest management and to benefit the commercial interests of the State and not for the sustainable management of the forests resources (Knudsen 1995; Scott 1998). Protected forests in NWFP were inherited from the princely states of Chitral, Dir and Swat at the time of accession to Pakistan in 1969. These forests are still in a transitional stage of land settlement but are under the management of the government. These forests are heavily encumbered with legally accepted rights of the local population. Legally, all acts are permitted in these forests unless otherwise prohibited by gazetted notification.

In the Protected forests of Malakand Division, the right holders are also entitled for payments of 60-80% of the sale proceeds as royalty, from commercial exploitation of forest produce (FAO 2006).

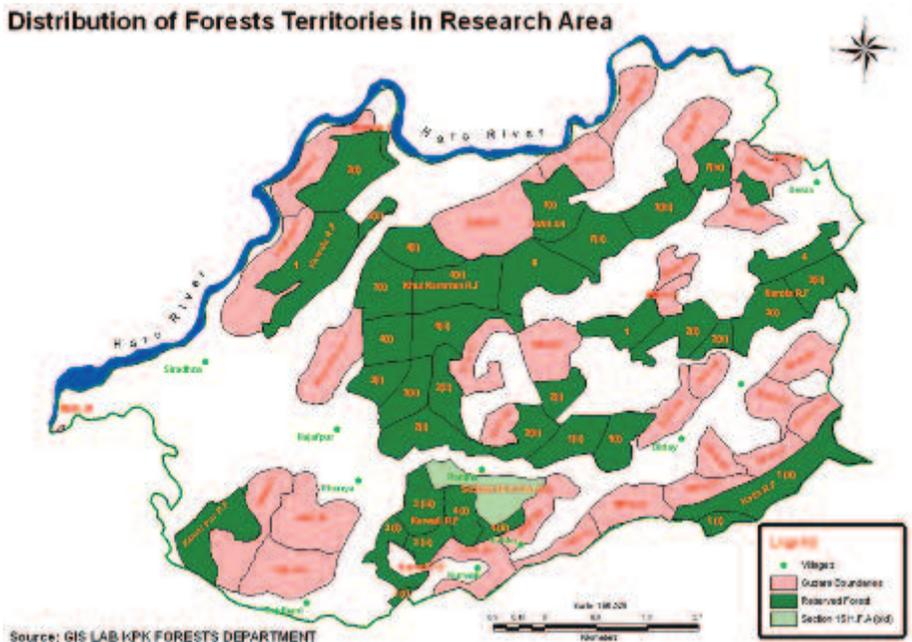
Reserved forests are legally the least encumbered with people's rights. Local population settled in surrounding areas has no or very few rights for satisfying limited needs. These rights were admitted at the time of the declaration of Reserved forests by the British. Such rights include grazing of domestic cattle, collection of firewood from fallen trees or brushwood, water rights and of trespass of way. All of these forests were demarcated and set aside under permanent land settlements in 1872 and 1905. Reserved forests are conserved through a punitive law enforcement system. Since first land settlement, there is no example of forests being handed over to the communities along with management rights. There are however contested examples of collaborative forest management under certain projects particularly in Protected and Guzara forests.

The Guzara forests are mostly located in Hazara region of NWFP, and parts of Punjab province. These forests, also termed the regulated commons (Azhar 1993), are meant for daily subsistence of local population. Commercial sale of trees is also permissible when in excess to the local timber requirements. Guzara owners are entitled for 80% share from the commercial sale proceeds from these forests. Guzara can be owned privately by an individual (Guzara milkiat) or collectively by a group of owners, also called right holders (Guzara shamilat). Guzara milkiat are also called private Guzara (with private owners) while shamilat are also called communal Guzara (with right holders). A general perception is that the forests which were situated closer to the villages were declared as Guzara in the land settlement. There are, however exceptions in which high altitude pastures are classified as Guzara since

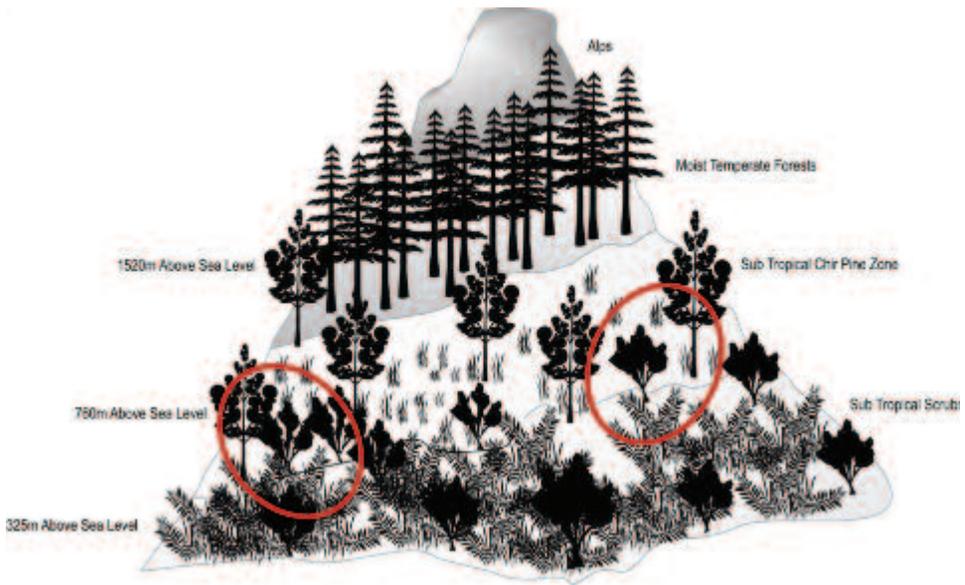
these are used by herders in summer for their livestock. In case of Khanpur, two legal categories of forests exist: Reserved and Guzara.

The following map (6.1) presents the distribution of these two forests in study villages. The map is self-explanatory of the fact that the two categories of forests are situated in contiguity with each other in a very complex manner leaving all likelihood for so called boundary violations and giving new meaning to legal territories. Another is a Figure (6.1) of a hypothetical forest with scrub, Chir and higher zones. This shows that among biological zones there are no clear boundaries. Therefore it is likely that people may find species of their interest in Reserved forest. Chapter 7 will give more reflection on this.

There have been many experiments in NWFP for better forest governance and reducing the role of the Forest department to a minimum through devolution, e.g. Guzara Forest Cooperatives (see 4.6 of this thesis). These cooperatives failed to achieve the objective and were reverted by the government in 1993 (GoPakistan 1993). The NWFP Forest Ordinance of 2002 was drafted as a result of restructuring of the department (section 4.3 of this thesis) after years of consultations. The ordinance largely maintained the legacy of the old laws but reflects a few progressive changes (FAO 2006).



**Map 6.1:** Distribution of forests in Khanpur (legal categories)



**Figure 6.1:** Ecological distribution of subtropical scrub, subtropical Chir and higher altitude forests. All the zones overlap with each other and therefore species of people's interest may appear in Reserved forests where high value forests thrive

### 6.3 Guzara management, legal rights and obligations

According to the NWFP Forest Ordinance of 2002, Guzara is the protected village wasteland that was set aside at the time of settlement to meet the needs of landowners and right holders in areas comprising the districts of Haripur, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kohistan and Batagram. According to a forester, "*Guzara are those forests which were traded off by the government to ensure protection of Reserved forests*" (Hanif Khan, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad). In NWFP these forests are managed under the North-West Frontier Province Guzara Forest Rules, 2004. Guzara is not an open access resource. Even the grazing of animals is restricted in some villages. Tenure arrangements for Guzara forests in NWFP are somewhat different from those in the Punjab. The main differences are that there is no representative body of owners equivalent to the one in Punjab called Punjab Guzara Advisory Committee and that all deodar (*Cedrus deodara*) growing in Guzara in the Kaghan area, whether on government or private land, are declared government property.

For deodar trees on private land, the landowner is paid half the price of any timber sold, after deduction of NWFP Forest department's costs for extraction, taxes and management. The Forest department claims that the ownership and tenure are generally well defined and recorded in NWFP. The jural tenure is very complex and there are several ways in which the

rights are defined. For instance, a right holder cannot be defined with a uniform set of rights. In some cases all rights are permissible to the right holders, while in other cases some of the rights are frozen by the department. The complexity continues to increase with buying and selling of Guzara forests since these are sold with different terms and conditions by the owners and the price is fixed with respect to the rights sold together with the land. Tenure systems, laws and administrative arrangements also vary among Pakistan's provinces, which further add to the complexity. The process of recording these tenurial details revealed that not only the original architecture of the arrangement but also their diverse interpretations have an impact on how forests are accessed and used.

### 6.3.1 Government control through Working Plans

The legal definition of Guzara implies that the trees growing on it are subject to government control and regulation, despite that the State does not own them. A system of quotas for right holders is maintained in *wajib ul arz*, and the law provides for grants of trees to local people, subject to the verification of rights. Commercial sales are allowed, subject to approved Working Plans' prescriptions prepared by the Forest department. A Working Plan determines the extent of forest to be harvested. Payment of 80% sale proceeds is made to the local owners / right holders through the relevant District Revenue Officer.

“The difference between private ownership and collective ownership is the distribution of sale income. If timber is harvested in *milkiati* owner's lands – the sale proceeds will go to him only. While in case of the *shamilat* Guzara, the sale proceeds will be equally divided among all the right holders to be distributed amongst themselves, whose names are present in the revenue record for enjoying rights on Guzara.” Hanif Khan, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

Forest Working Plans and land settlement reports form the basis of all management by the government in the forests. Forest owners and users often do not participate in the preparation of these Working Plans. They cannot auction their forest and decide who to contract to carry out the harvest. Legally, they cannot penalise forest offenders since this is the job of the Forest department. Owners are involved only in determining usages such as grazing, and it is the Forest department that decides the extent to which these can be carried out. The *de jure* owners are therefore, passive spectators to the decisions made by the Forest department. Scott (1998) makes a comment about the State imposed tenure system and the old customary system that the State wants to override. To him, there is always a 'shadow' land tenure system 'lurking' beneath the official deeds and office records as he said, “Paper owners may not be the effective owners” (Scott 1998: 49). This is where the discussion on emotive relationship with mythical lands comes back. Often an emotive claim is strategy, justification or a technology to defend their historical tenurial claim. They present their emotional setback when boundaries are fixed, disrespect boundaries, but when the same boundaries are owned by the people themselves, they expect others to respect them.

### 6.3.2 Guzara forests - Selling and entitlement

The titles and rights admitted in forestland settlements are reflected in *wajib ul arz*. The Forest department in Abbottabad Circle NWFP (of which district Haripur is part) does not keep ownership records for Guzara forests as these can be sold, so their ownership keeps changing. District Revenue Officer under the Land Revenue Act of 1967 keeps these records. Both private and communal Guzara may be bought and sold.

The sale of communal Guzara is not common. When a right holder wants to sell his piece of forest from a *shamilat* Guzara, the permission of all the co-owners is necessary. This is primarily the sale of rights exercised in the forests, and not the land since lands have not been demarcated for each individual family. In the hilly district of neighbouring province Punjab, the Guzara forest rights cannot be sold because the Forest Act of 1927 provides that the rights can be transferred only through inheritance. An owner of a Guzara forest can therefore sell his/her share of ownership (with the consent of other co-owners), but not the associated rights. Therefore, the sale and purchase of Guzara is rare in Punjab. In NWFP *de jure*, private forest is the property of its owner. The owner who sells, surrenders his land, and another person becomes the owner and enjoys the same right as the outgoing owner used to enjoy. Owners can also sell and buy forest land without rights. When a right holder of a communal Guzara sells his rights, as an outgoing right holder he surrenders them.

In NWFP the data on owners of Guzara forest is not updated, mainly because ownership of private and Guzara forests keeps changing as these forests are transferable through inheritance. According to forest authorities, it is practically impossible to keep records of private/communal forest landownership. Revenue authorities claim that owners' records are up to date and well maintained. However, where rights are multiplied through inheritance and not brought under the notice of the Revenue department, they are not updated. Number of owners in *shamilat* Guzara has tremendously increased due to increased number of heirs within the original entitled families.

“Today when I see that document (*wajib ul arz*), it is hard to count number of right holders against each entry.” Hanif Khan, Retired Conservator, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

Privately owned Guzara are subject to a complex ownership and usufruct rights system. Only the Forest department has the right to harvest trees, and the owner is not allowed to cut a single tree for his/her domestic use without the department's permission. Until the first regular land settlement of 1872, there was no record of rights to Guzara forests. The settlement recognised that arable lands in the possession of the people were their property, but they treated forestland differently. During the course of settlement, the people's customary uses of forest were ascertained from the village elders, recorded and admitted as rights to the *shamilat* Guzara forests.

### 6.3.3 Rights in Guzara forests

Guzara forest rights have been maintained in subsequent land settlements. The rights in Guzara forests are inherited, along with property in the village concerned. A person acquiring property in the village by means other than succession may or may not be entitled to exercise rights to the Guzara forest, depending on whether the property was acquired with or without such rights. People acquiring only land or only Guzara rights in a village may be entitled to exercise only some of the rights to the Guzara forest; e.g. a person who purchases rights in village Guzara (without landholding) is not entitled to free grants of trees, while certain privileges such as the utilisation of dry and fallen wood may be available even to non-right holders by virtue of his presence in the village. Hence every case of succession other than inheritance can be different. The most important rights to Guzara forests include seigniorage fees, timber for domestic use, royalties from sale proceeds, collection of dry, brush and green wood, use of wood for charcoal and kilns, lopping of trees for firewood and fodder, and grazing of animals. Seigniorage fee was the result of first agitation against territorialisation of forests. Local people resented the government after first land settlement (1872) because the forests which they accessed rather freely were now being reserved by the State and only a part was left for local use. The British rulers introduced Seigniorage fee paid per unit of tree felled, stump of a harvested tree, or a percentage on the overall sale proceed. The rates to be paid are fixed by the government. Seigniorage fee is a reciprocal right enjoyed by the people for Reserved forests and by the government for privately owned Guzara forests. Hence when harvesting takes place in Guzara, the fee is payable to the government from the owners' share and when harvesting takes place in Reserved forest, the fee is paid to the recorded owners of Guzara from the government share. In this arrangement too, the non-right holders are not entitled to receive Seigniorage fee.

The right to free grants of trees is available to the people through permits. Permits are given to those who acquired their rights in the Guzara forest through succession, and to those who purchased their Guzara rights along with landholding in the village. The Forest department issues permits to right holders and transit permits for the movement of wood that has been legally extracted from private or *shamilat* Guzara forest. The application is first verified by the village *patwari*<sup>100</sup> that the person is a valid right holder or entitled as *per wajib ul arz*. This application comes to the Range Forest Officer. He would check silvicultural availability of trees. A preference is given to dead, dried trees. The application moves on and is approved by the DFO. Resident right holders get the first priority, but each family can receive only one grant every three years. Non-resident right holders are allowed a grant once every ten years. This happens only if there are excess trees after residents have received their grants. Gifts of trees are allowed only to charitable institutions and for community purposes. Gifts can only be made with the agreement of co-owners when there is still an excess of trees after right holders have received their due grants. Revenues from Guzara forests are shared between the people (80%), and NWFP Forest department (20%) as Guzara management charges. On receipt of the sale proceeds of wood, the Forest department deducts its share and sends the remainder to the Revenue department for distribution among the owners according to the shares determined in the *wajib ul arz*. The seigniorage fee is deducted from

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<sup>100</sup> Patwari is the lowest rank clerk in Revenue department who conducts measurements of land at the time of land settlements, selling, buying and issuance of permits of various kinds.

owners' share. The DFO records the landholding numbers of every tree marked for harvesting and communicates to the Revenue official who sends the patawri for verification and then the payments are made.

All the right holders in a Guzara are entitled to free and unrestricted use of dry wood, whether it is standing or fallen. Non-right holders may also use dry wood free as long as the owner, right holders and the Forest department do not object. Resident right holders and non-right holders specifically authorised by the Forest department may collect dry wood for sale, but non-right holders need to obtain a license on payment of a fee. The sale of dead dry wood is only permitted to owners and right holders in head loads within or outside the village, provided that the co-owners do not object. Collection of any dry or green wood from a forest that is being harvested is prohibited. Right holders and the non-right holders (if the former do not object) may use the bark of harvested or fallen trees to make agricultural implements and for burial purposes. Collection of NTFP from Guzara forests, except with the permission of Forest department, is prohibited. Revenues from the collection of medicinal herbs are also shared between the Guzara owners according to the same principle of 80:20. Rights to Guzara forests do not clearly include the rights to lop trees for firewood and fodder, to cut grass, or to graze cattle. Where there are few or no trees and grass grows well, some villages leave portions of their Guzara land treeless for use as pasture or collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP). Many of these pastures are open for animal grazing to the whole village. These are closed in the rainy season to allow grass re-growth for cutting in September/October for haymaking for the winter. Permanent tenants or Gujars cut the grasses and a certain percent of the hay or its value is given or paid to the owners as annual



**Picture 6.1:** Firewood stocks normally stored in the houses in Najafpur

land rent. Patches of standing grass can also be purchased. Village agricultural wastelands are under private ownership and are open for grazing throughout the year. A few big landowners control their Guzara lands very strictly and do not allow grazing or grass cutting. This is particularly common where there are young tree plantations.

## 6.4 Major changes in the landscape of Haripur

### 6.4.1 Proliferation of Guzara owners and their priorities

The Foresters' opinion about selling of Guzara forests, particularly shamilat, was rather divided. Some firmly believed that shamilat Guzara can be sold and purchased. Some believed that Guzara shamilat cannot be sold since demarcation for individual families was not conducted during 1872 and for later settlements. I conceded that selling shamilat Guzara is only possible when the new buyer agrees to become a co-owner with others and the forest tenure continues as shamilat Guzara. Buying a share in shamilat Guzara does not make the new owner a private owner of a privately identifiable area. In this manner, the buyer primarily purchases access to forest and the rights associated with shamilat Guzara. The number of owners in shamilat Guzara has multiplied manifold. A retired forester shares,

“Not every inch of Guzara was divided and given to the individuals. Considerable area was left to village shamilat. These Guzaras are victims of ownership disparity. Who owns these lands is no longer that easy for us to ascertain. Ownership has to be clear. Revenue records have to be updated.” Khurshid Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Khurshid Anwar is concerned that now there are too many owners, and since buying and selling of these forests has continued actively, it is hard for the department to keep track of the present owners. Another indirect indication relates to wajib ul arz. This document is not in custody of the Forest department. I will come back to this discussion later that the way Revenue records are maintained also leaves a big vacuum to figure out who the owners are. An owner at one time may not be so at another. He continues,

“The owners' interest in forest is now lost. One share (from timber harvesting) is now divided amongst several families (sons, and grandsons). It is no longer attractive to own a small piece of Guzara. A range of owners exists, there are those who own only half an acre of forest and then there are those as big as Raja Saqlain of Haripur. Sometimes when we conduct commercial felling, we allocate checks in the name of all the owners in the revenue record, but often people do not come to claim them since the money is too small. Those who live in the villages can be present in the auction and claim their amount as per wajib ul arz”. Khurshid Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

A multiplied number of owners and a lack of interest in forest implicitly pertain to the trees. On a small Guzara of half an acre, the owner may find one or maybe two trees. Hence the level of interest of a single owner may be rather less. This owner though is not bothered about the ban on green felling. However, the assumption that a marginal share at felling of trees negatively affects his interest in the forest is erroneous.

Another person from the Forest department adds:

“Large owners do have an interest in trees. Small owners are more concerned with their daily fuel needs, their livestock and water. They don’t need big wood to repair their house. They don’t need trees”. Muhammad Saleem, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1911, Peshawar.

The interest in the forest therefore remains, but not necessarily for the trees. An example from Dhunya conforms to this. Akhtar Zaman (Gujar, age 41) lives in village Dhunya with his parents, wife and four children. He has five buffaloes which give only twenty litres of milk. He has two dogas<sup>101</sup> of land, not enough for an annual need of grain for the family. His father was also a milk farmer. In his time, the profit margin was higher. In Dhunya, twenty such farmers are in the milk business. Akhtar cannot meet the cost of required feed hence animals don’t produce up to their potential. He shared,

“My animals graze in the shamilat Guzara and sometimes I chop fodder for animals. But these Guzaras are owned by Najafpur people. Sometimes they make a lot of fuss over it. Beyond this is Reserved forest. If we go there, we have to bribe the Forest Guard if he is around. So we decided to buy a part of forest for our own. We have a small piece in Siradhna village. We can cut the grasses and bring them back on a donkey and make our stocks for the week. No one has an objection. I sold one buffalo and all my savings for buying this land. I also took some personal loan. At least it is an asset for my children”. Akhtar Zaman, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2009, Dhunya.

I could sense that part of the fodder still came from the same Guzara and Reserved forests, but his investment in land contributed to removing the label of being thieves. It seemed he created a justification for a better access for himself. But what is important here is to know that his interest, as he reports, is in fodder. This indicates that with proliferation of owners, the meaning of forest is also changing. New owners are emerging and the forest is providing different needs. Saleem added,

“They can meet these basic needs in other ways too (accessing shamilat Guzara, illegal access to Reserved or through providing labour), but buying a piece of Guzara legitimises their position. No matter how small the area, they are called owners. They can sit in jarga meetings or any other consultation that takes place between owners and Forest department.” Muhammad Saleem, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1911, Peshawar.

A highly important trend is that one piece of Guzara forest earlier owned by one owner, is now owned by several owners. This is about private Guzara, which is sold to new owners bit by bit. The new private owners are often small and have a different purview of using forests. I asked one of the villagers, who recently bought a small piece from an owner from Najafpur,

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**101** Doga is a land unit in Haripur referring to a quarter of an acre of land (2 kanals of land).

“I bought a 9 kanal<sup>102</sup> piece from Raja Khaliq Nawaz of Najafpur. Once this family owned a huge area but now they are selling their lands. My cousin Tufail, who lives in Lassan, also bought some land from him.” Salman, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008, Dhunya.

Salman is a born dairy farmer, whose life seems to be devoted to his eight buffaloes. The land he purchased was not far from his house, which was perfect for his buffaloes to graze. What we gather from his statement is that Raja Khaliq (and his brother) who owned large tracts, are now selling lands – but not to an equally big owner. They are selling it to several smaller owners. Raja Khaliq said,

“The largest tracts were with Raja Iruj and Raja Sikandar Zaman. Most lands have been sold. Those which are left behind are either for their own little use or are remotely located where either local people are too poor and do not have enough money to buy or external buyers were not interested. My brother and I are hardly left with any land. Lands are also sold to outsiders, if they are interested.” Raja Khaliq Nawaz, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

Among the largest owners of forest estates, Raja Sikandar Zaman (late) and his sons Raja Aamir and Raja Faisal, Raja Shiraz, Raja Iruj and Dr. Raja Javed have sold lands to the villagers from various ethnic roots (e.g. Dhanyals, Awans, Gujar, Bhatti). As per revenue records, this trend has been noted since 1960s. I came across 5 specific cases in my villages of study where one large owner (Raja) has sold his Guzara forest estates to several owners from different ethnic groups.

1. The oldest and most historical cases of selling lands to the villagers were noted in 1964 and 1965. In village Dhunya, the mother of late Raja Sikandar Zaman sold little parcels of lands to local residents who were Awans.
2. Village Dhartian (about 10 kilometres south of Najafpur) is a unique case in this regard. The total area of the village is 2238 Acres. This village was the property of two brothers, Raja Aziz Ahmad and Raja Habib Ahmad. They sold out all the forestlands to villagers. The Raja brothers now own nothing in this village. These sales date back to 1970s.
3. Raja Khaliq Nawaz and his brother Nawaz sold about 200 kanals of land to Gujars and Dhanyals within Najafpur and Dhunya. The selling of lands began in 1980s in parts.
4. Raja Ali Akbar Khan and his family have sold about 100 kanals of lands to the villagers of Khoi Kamma from 1983 onwards. These lands were mainly bought by Gujars.
5. In village Dhunya, Raja Iftikhar has sold 162 kanals of lands to buyers from Awan, Gujar and Dhanyal clans. These transfers were recorded from 1990, the last being in 2008.

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**102** Kanal is 1/8th of an acre or 5445 square feet in terms of area (506.11 square meters).

One of the buyers is Ehsan Ilahi. He bought land from Raja Iftikhar in Dhunya in 2008 close to Kurwali. He has been selling firewood for the last three years and serves as a labourer to collect wild pomegranate and other NTFP for small traders for over eight years. Among selling lands to outsiders, the following examples came in the discussions:

1. Two brothers, Raja Sagheer Khan and Raja Faqeer Khan from Village Siradhna sold their land to Syed Rahat Mehmood Qadri from Rawalpindi in 2005. This is a large scale transfer in which the buyer purchased over 585 Kanals of land. The buyer still lives in Rawalpindi.
2. Raja Sikandar Zaman sold his land to Mian Rashid Arshad in 2005, who lives in Lahore. He purchased 207 Kanals land. This land is located in village Nafaz Pur.
3. Daughter of Raja Mehmood Akhtar from Kamalpur sold her land to Major Zaheer Ghani. He lives outside Khanpur but he is Awan and basically belongs to Khanpur.
4. In Bakka village, Raja Saqlain sold a large piece of land to a retired army officer from Lahore. The area could not be verified.

These are the only sale records that I could access. I was told that there are hundreds of such examples from the same and other Raja families which prove that their forest estates are being sold to the villagers in fractions (personal conversation with Mr. Taj, Qanungo, Revenue department Haripur). These examples show that there are two types of cases of

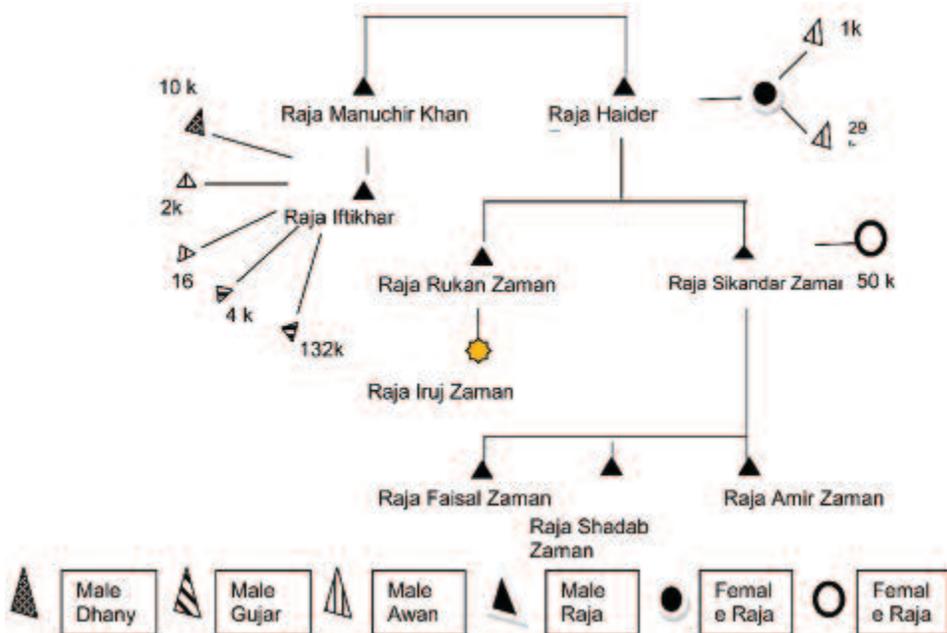


Figure 6.2: Proliferation of Guzara owners in Khanpur as a result of selling and buying land

selling Guzara forests. One, to the local villagers (who also use forests) and two, to the people who do not come from the villages, they live outside the village in the cities and do not use forests at all. Both cases are significant for the future of forests in this region. A new order is emerging and boundaries, which are created through commoditisation of forest property, may have an impact on its traditional users. One phenomenon is very clear that the forests are not legally owned by one traditional owner – but a variety of owners in terms of ethnic identity and economic levels. The other phenomenon is fragmentation of forestland, which can be termed as reconstitution of forest since fragmentation relates to new actors and their social configuration. The following chart describes the case for proliferation of owners and related to that, a fragmentation process of forestlands. I had difficulty to figure out, for instance, how much land in total Raja Manuchir Khan owned, however it is clear that his son has sold it to five different owners outside his family from different ethnicities.

One of the owners of private Guzara shared,

“(Shamilat) Guzara were left for the poor, those who came later to the villages also use shamilat. We don’t stop them. My family received 13 kanals of forestland. If I want to sell my area, I would first go to the Revenue department, ask for delineation of my area. They will do this through drawing a shajra of my family (family tree) and then inform me what I have inherited from the land given to my ancestor in 1872. Then I would seek permission from the Forest department to sell the area.” Malik Mahfooz, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Najafpur.

This shows that those becoming owners by virtue of buying lands are supposedly in Forest department’s records since the department issues permission to sell land. A retired forester said,

“The entire local population’s landscape has changed. We have to take stock of who lives here, who has agricultural land and then find all the owners and right holders. Why should we continue with more than 100 years of ancestral records? Many people have left. New people have bought lands. Some people have just left (the village) without making any settlement.” Hanif Khan, April 26 2009, Islamabad

The number of increasing owners though occupies the department. He continues,

“An opportunity must be given to local residents who have no right otherwise. Until local people see their ownership rights in revised wajib ul arz, they will only damage the forest. Fire incidences are also frequent because basically the locals have nothing to do in the forest. Often they don’t support planting lands because they are more interested in using lands for grazing. They want grasses not trees!! Old wajib ul arz is rotten!!” Hanif Khan, April 26 2009, Islamabad

Hanif Khan describes these records as virtually rotten since in many ways they have gone outdated. On the other hand, I found them even physically rotten since they can only be interpreted through family trees / records of shajras (inheritance) which are no longer

readable. Only few have been refreshed – but the rest are in dilapidated condition. The origin of wajib ul arz was from the Hazara region which included all the people who lived in the village at the time of first settlement in 1872 (legally termed as adverse possession). All the men, women and children are the right holders. When sale proceeds are distributed, all the right holders receive their individual share (including men, women, children). Hence when the revenue is Pak Rupees 100,000 and the population of the right holders is 1000, a family of four will receive Rs.400 and the family of ten will receive Rs.1,000. According to the department's view, several right holders / owners now live out of the village or Guzara lands, but they still have their entries in wajib ul arz. Contrary to this, many who reside in the villages do not have their rights noted in the document. This is the reason that there are conflicts on the use of forests, interference with Reserved boundaries, and non-cooperation in case of fire incidences. Hanif further adds,



**Picture 6.2:** (Top) Old Aks e Shajra records stored at record room of the Revenue department.  
 (Bottom Left) Family tree with details on transfers and rights in Persian  
 (Bottom Right) A newly produced Shajra

“Trend shows that most milkiati owners are out of lands and reside elsewhere. Most right holders are still in the forest. Landless users, whose names are not in wajib ul arz, are also in the forest. Big Rajas are selling lands as they don't see any benefit due to ban on commercial harvesting. Hence from one owner, now 20 owners are coming in the record. I don't think it is a good trend!! Because ownership crises continues!! A small owner from within the village who bought an acre of land is highly subsistent!! If he cuts the only two or three trees he has

in his area, he would be left with just the grasses. I oppose this fragmentation of land and forest scale". Hanif Khan, April 26 2009, Islamabad.

Foresters oppose fragmentation of forestlands. And certainly this phenomenon is attached with too many people buying lands from too few owners. At village level on the other hand (see the notes from Akhtar, Salman and others), people are always looking for a situation when they can buy a piece of forest as their livelihood security. This gives rise to a conflict of interest between villagers and Forest department.

The diminishing interest of owners' is associated with ban on commercial harvesting of green trees. Since they cannot draw benefit from the forest, they quit forestlands in pieces. Owners cannot cut wood from the forest for their personal use without permit from the department. This permit is issued from the DFO office and the sole purpose is to declare legality of the wood. Each owner has a fixed quota, that too depending on availability of trees. He cannot cut as many trees as he pleases at any time. Big owners with a lot of political power do not bother about it. A majority of the average owners suffer deeply due to the permit system. It is long, cumbersome, involves informal payments, and a lot of time lapses before a tree can be harvested for personal use. Therefore the owners either steal, or put the area on fire or light up the area after felling. That at least gives a justification for felling under special rule, to salvage dead dry trees or hides the fresh debris and stumps after felling. Azhar analysed the deforestation issue from the perspective of Guzara owners and suggested,

"It was much less the burden of rights than the manner of regulation - through the process of settlement - that started the self-perpetuating process of degradation.... The disputed lands were given communal status, but the rights to trees of spontaneous growth on such lands were retained by the State, presumably to insure an orderly exploitation of these forests. However, usufruct rights to these lands, including to the trees of spontaneous growth, had traditionally existed and were duly recorded. The exercise of such rights was now subjected to prior governmental approval. Yet the government reserved for itself the right to cut as many trees as it wished from these communal lands. In one sense these forests were communal, but in another they were not." Azhar (1993: 118).

This indicates to a half-hearted privatisation on part of the government under the label of handing over large tracts of forests under the ownership of local people. Azhar (1993) also explained that most of these forests were already contested due to recent struggles between Rajas and other ethnic groups (e.g. Abbasis, Swatis), just before the British took over Hazara in 1849. These disputes only multiplied after land settlements between the people and between the people and government. Foresters agree that the forest tenurial system needs to be revisited. But which forests? In Hanif's words,

"The current tenurial system needs to be looked at afresh. There is a need for land reform in forests. Some big landowners may not like it and will resent it. Hence no one wants to open this debate." Hanif Khan, April 26 2009, Islamabad

Hence in a forester's opinion, it is only the Guzara forests that need land reform and Reserved are not to be touched. Hanif adds with emotion,

“Big owners do not stop intruders in their areas. But they come to us and shout that their Guzara forests are under threat. We ask them to come along with us and talk to the people, but then we hear no, it's your job. Why is it the job of the Forest department alone? We handed over these forests in 1872 in order to reduce our management burden. How come owners can put the entire blame on the Forest department?” Hanif Khan, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

It is true that the ownership pattern in Guzara forests need a through stock-taking. However a continuous lack of admittance that the crises do not only relate to Guzara, is worrisome. Foresters believe that Guzara forests are denuded because they are owned by (more and more) people, are encumbered with rights and are not under strict control of government just like Reserved forests. Senior foresters point out that they are concerned about bad Guzara management and they see that their idealised or normative forests (with trees) are threatened due to proliferation of owners and fragmentation of forest lands. Some foresters shared that a proposal was put forward to the then President Ayub (1965) to recentralise all the forests under State control. A proposal argued that this pertained to repealing 1872 settlements and paying back the rights to right holders based on certain criteria. The idea was based on the concept that in order to reform, first the resources have to be recentralised. This never materialised since a huge quantum of funds was needed. It was anyway a much delayed move since revenue records were already 90 years old. If the government had the money to buy those rights, the rights would have been suspended. Then those would have been reallocated and re-recorded as per resident people. Analysing timber harvesting ban in the same spirit one senior forester said,

“Timber harvesting ban is illegal. The government has ceased people's timber harvesting rights without paying them. Either government should pay for confiscating this right from the people or let them enjoy their rights. Now due to the ban, owners are doing what they want in an uncontrolled manner.” Zia ur Rehman, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2009, Peshawar.

This thesis has discussed in chapter 5 that not only the owners, but the government has also tried to overcome the revenue limitations imposed by the harvesting ban in other (however controlled) manners. So the case for revisiting Reserved forests tenure persists. Foresters fear that smaller ownerships are less interested in trees but more in the undergrowth. This does not help in ensuring that the trees would stay on the forest floor. The logic of resident and non-resident owners points to the dilemma of decision making in the forest. The resident people have a larger stake, but their longer term interest in sustainable forest management dwindles since they do not own these lands.

The forefront policy dilemma for any of the government's move on tenure now is to engage much larger and diverse population of owners in consensus building – than was the case some fifty years ago.

#### 6.4.2 Owners' relations with the villagers and the State

A mirror effect of the owners' multiplication is that the traditional owners, namely Rajas in Khanpur, are selling lands fast. The traditional owners of these forests are now limited in number.

“Once, all these areas were with the Rajas – they were the sole owners, now one fourth remains with them. But the three-fourth, is not with one family or caste – it is with everyone – anyone who has the purchasing capacity.” Mohammad Khaliq (Dhanyal), 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Najafpur.

A daughter of a Raja says,

“250 kanals of land owned by my father is now illegally occupied by his tenants – he died at a young age. The tenants occupied his lands since he did not pay attention. He was a habitual gambler. Now, when we are trying to retrieve our lands, the tenants refuse. They have built their houses on it and are more powerful than us – we live like beggars.” Naila Raja, daughter of late Raja Ashraf, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

This specific example explains changing power dynamics in this specific case. Perhaps there are more such examples in Khanpur. I learned that in village Desra, a person from Nowshera bought a piece spanning 10 kanals. I could not trace this new owner. Two relatively smaller owners also live in this village who shared that they had sold all their forestlands and only symbolically occupied the last holding. The people of the village are very poor. Desra is a rather remote village and not perfect for an outsider to invest in land. Most of the land in Desra is still owned by the family of an ex-Chief Minister of NWFP, late Raja Sikandar Zaman. These owners still have a very strong presence in the village and their tenants in the village depend on their say in any decision regarding forests. I explored a few big owners and their relationship with the villagers. I had the opportunity to personally meet some of them and record their views. The wife of late Raja pointed to the change in land ownership pattern,

“We measured our power and dominance with the number of villages (we owned). Today, it is not like that, people are just proud of few acres they own, the bungalows in Islamabad and some orchards in Khanpur. Not much is left now. It is tough to maintain agricultural crops and orchards. It is even harder to find people to manage all this for us.” Begum Gul e Rukh (wife of late Raja Sikandar Zaman), 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010, Khanpur House, Rawalpindi.

Mrs. Sikandar Zaman's two sons are successful politicians holding seats in national and provincial parliaments. For them Khanpur is still significant for contesting elections. From several examples it appears that the ingredients of power for Rajas have changed from mere landholding. They are depending more on their political careers and networking to gain power. Rajas as rulers of Khanpur were the largest beneficiaries of the 1872 land settlement. Even now when ownership is becoming more and more fragmented, some of the largest

tracts of Guzaras are with Rajas. I will first reflect on a few accounts which show a struggle between big owners and the department. Many field foresters have often experienced big owners to be politically stronger than their big bosses in the department.

“Guzara owners know that despite being owners, tree cutting is only allowed as per government’s rules. Owners do not like this. They want to enjoy a full-fledged ownership right. They often exaggerate the title of owners. This is what we saw during Cooperative Societies period when they did not care about the rules and managed to conduct massive felling. Later on, the government imposed ban on commercial harvesting, so the forests can no longer be liquidated for money. If it is clear who fully owns the forest, one party will manage the forests and get the blame or appreciation.” Khurshid Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2010, Islamabad.

Sharing a few letters, another forester shared,

“When we intercept someone illegally cutting wood from the forest, Raja Saheb (no name mentioned) sends a letter and pressurises us to let these people go free. He does this to save his electoral constituency. When people set fire in his forest, he asks us to arrest people but he himself does not want to show that he wants them arrested.” Mansab Ahmad, SDFO, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

Yet another forester said,

“Once we arrested a person on account of setting a forest fire in a private Guzara of a Raja. He was released due to political pressure from the Raja himself. The Raja personally went to see the DFO and made a recommendation. An alternate scenario is that he himself may have asked this culprit to fire his forest.” Saeed Forester, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Birlay.

When big owners in politics feel aggrieved, they expect the department to take an action while they themselves remain in the grey area. But at the same time they feel obliged to protect people coming from their electoral constituency. There are other accounts which suggest that owners of big forest estates are now rare since most of the lands have been sold. In a forester’s words,

“Many owners have no more means to exploit locals and use their powers. They have sold their lands to spend money during election campaigns. Politicians look up to locals to let them win. So the owners are weak – local residents (right holders and users) are much stronger.” Hanif Khan, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Islamabad.

One of the richest Rajas of Khanpur and owner of some of the Guzara forests studied in this research, says,

“The British mandated the Forest department to manage these forests. Why? They should technically know better than us how to manage these forests. But the

department itself is playing the role of a mafia. Forests are facing a greater danger due to bad management by the department. They are not loyal to their work and duties. And when trees are cut, all blame falls on owners as if we are the ones asking our tenants to cut the trees.” Raja Saqlain, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Tarnawa.

He avoided giving further details, strictly asked to switch off the voice recorder, blamed Forest department, and continuously referred to his appointee tenant Tika Khan who would give every detail about the Guzara forests he owned. He termed timber harvesting ban as illegal and a short-cut decision to cover inefficient management of the Forest department. He then added,

“I have no intension to sell my lands like other members of the clan, since my tenants and other people yield benefits from those. On the opposite side of the Bakka, in the foothills of the mountains there is a village called Talaar. Murghuzar zoo of Islamabad is situated at the lower end of this village. Many of our tenants trespass this forest to go and work in Islamabad. So this is a very valuable land for me. If I sell this, I can earn a fortune. But I earn enough from my shops.... People harvest NTFP and grasses, no problem. If I would ask them not to, they would still do that. They are very poor.” Raja Saqlain, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Tarnawa.

Raja’s reply was not in conformity with what I found in Bakka later. Some villagers indicated that a large piece of land has been sold to an ex-army officer from Lahore. This is the land which is close to Murghuzar Park, Islamabad. When I interviewed the villagers, they could not say with confidence if their right to trespass will not be affected. The big Guzara owners, like Raja saheb, have private farmlands, big orchards and other estates. They live in other cities and appoint one of the tenants in their villages to keep an eye. Everything comes to their notice. All intruders are punished indirectly without damaging the entity of the politically active owner. There are increasing but invisible tensions between the appointed tenant (often from the same village) and the rest of the villagers.

The villagers access forests as they please, they steal, they burn. They try not to resist in a vocal manner. They respect the tenant appointee of the Raja as a survival strategy. However another survival strategy is to remain hidden in the background and not come in the forefront. Struggle between owner and tenants seemed to take the shape of a guerrilla war. Ishtiaq is from Bakka and works in Islamabad for Pakistan Navy in Islamabad. His brother Nawaz lives in Bakka and owns 7-8 kanals of land. Raja Saqlain receives tax (called *faslana*) for these lands collected by his appointee Tika Khan. Ishtiaq is a frequent visitor to his birth village and expresses his deep relationship with the landscape where he was born,

“We have lived here for generations (100 years). We were born here and will die here. It is our right that we should be asked first before lands are sold to others – otherwise we can go to the court and seek stay orders.” Ishtiaq, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Bakka.

This statement points to a claim from local users and residents based on their legitimate right on resources that are legally owned by Raja and that he is independent to sell. Tika Khan, the special appointee tenant of Raja Saqlain answered,

“Selling of Guzara started in 1960s. Rajas started selling their Guzara forests estates and settled down elsewhere. Most of the lands were first bought by the local villagers themselves. The entire Guzara forest of Birlay owned by Raja Habib and Raja Zahid is now under several owners within the village. The Rajas did not stop anyone from buying lands. Anyone can buy if they have the money.” Tika Khan (tenant of Raja Saqlain), 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, Birlay.

These accounts show a heated struggle between owners and the department (often absentee owners), and among owners and villagers. The department does not want to solve the owners’ problems alone, besides many field officers know that if they catch someone indulging in damaging the forest, the politically active owners will pressurise the department to set them free. Therefore the department no longer attends to what happens in Guzara forests. Chapter 5 on forest fire analysed local conspiracy about the large owners’ involvement in initiating forest fires. The main reason being, that the dead trees are more valuable now than the green ones. The powerful Rajas are distancing themselves from the rural setting – they don’t need a forest, they want to cash them as soon as they can and pass on forestlands to other owners in a degraded form. Forest fires are increasing, so is the selling and buying of land. Shabir indicated to this dynamics, in his words,

“One indicator whether owners are satisfied with the policy or not, is the selling of Guzara forests. During Cooperatives Societies, big owners purchased shares from several smaller owners in Upper Hazara.” Shabir Hussain (senior forester), 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011, Peshawar.

This again relates to timber harvesting ban. During Cooperatives Societies, large scale cuttings were conducted (section 4.6). The statement suggests that for big owners these forests were a business opportunity since trees fetched a lot of money when harvested and sold. Since owners do not get what they want out of the forests, they sell the land. Apart from most of the big owners selling lands and being involved in politics, another trend is absentee landlordism. All the big owners that became known to me during this study did not live in Khanpur. In Najafpur and other study villages, most of the people own small agricultural lands which they manage themselves. Only in villages (such as Bakka) where big owners still have agricultural lands, tenants stay in the villages and live in the houses provided by the owners. I asked a villager, why in a region where people have little agricultural lands that they can manage on their own, absentee landlords prefer to keep big chunks of forests under their ownership, much more than what they need? He said,

“Land is power. If he would not own big pieces of land, who will call him Raja and come to him for favour? They have to contest elections. He wants to be a politician, so this is his need.” Tauqeer, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2008, Najafpur.

The present numberdar of village Najafpur gave his justification for retaining ownership of lands while he lives away from his village,

“Land is our mother, I live in Taxila with my family but my lands are here in the village. I do not even need these lands. Poor people use them for their needs.”

Mahboob Ahmad, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Najafpur.

Is it that absentee landlords continue to own vast pieces of lands so that the poor can use them for their needs? He added,

“Even if we don't live here, as long as we have land in the village, we belong here, if our land is gone, it is as if our roots are cut”. Mahboob Ahmad, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2008, Najafpur.

The value of land is more than what trees can pay. In the social arena of forests, land holds mythical as well as identity and political values and this guides the ownership tendency. The change of ownership needs to be analysed. The power does not only rest with the traditional Rajas but now also with several owners who have stepped in as righteous stakeholders. Post land settlement conflicts reflect the villagers asserting their power to challenge this step from the government. The recent changes are however, more difficult to ignore.

#### 6.4.3 Jural boundaries of territorial forests are dissolving

I do not claim that Reserved and Guzara forests are merging, but the boundaries affixed in a deep rooted history of land settlements are certainly blurring. Most of the foresters shared that people often approach Reserved forests for their needs and when intercepted, report as if the wood comes from Guzara. Many women mentioned that it is normal for them to approach Reserved forests, one of them saying,

“We have no area of our own, Shah Kabul forest is close to us, I go there with my daughter in law.” Salma, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

She said this in confidence. A few women also shared how they manage to hide themselves when they see a Forest Guard. Hence their action remains punctual, yet escapes an open argument between them and the department. Most of the men and women have enjoyed the same practice. They are not organised amongst themselves, but their practice is rather well organised. Raheem Jan recalls,

“When a sipahi is around, I do not cut wild olive branches as he intercepts people who collect wild olive and fines them. Once I was caught. I told him that I had picked the bundle from the ground someone may have left it in the forest. He told me, give me some chaye-pani<sup>103</sup>, only then I will let you go. I said, okay, come to my house this evening. He came down to my house in the evening. I sent my son with a cup of tea and a glass of water. He was furious and said, ‘that's not what

**103** Chaye-pani in Urdu means tea or a drink which is offered to a guest. It is a symbolic formulation or terminology to ask for a tip or a bribe.

I meant. I gathered a few neighbours with the noise and asked him to leave otherwise I will make a complaint to his boss. The sipahi felt embarrassed. He was always afraid of me". Raheem Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

In this case it was a clear manifestation of resisting the power of the Forest Guard. Chattering and laughing she said that she continued to do what she did before. Forest department staff acknowledges that this happens on routine basis but they tend to ignore it,

"In Najafpur about 50% of the population does not have private Guzara. They use shamilat. No one objects. Some people also go to Reserved for subsistence use, we don't catch them". Forest Guard Siddique, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur.

There are also the cases of highly influential owners disregarding the difference between Guzara and Reserved:

"Some strong owners, such as one in Balakot, refused to accept the rule that they needed Forest department to approve a permit for tree felling. This owner organised tree felling from Reserved forest and said that this was his permitted share of wood. This way he chose to keep his own forest intact." Hanif Khan, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Islamabad.

Hanif shared that this is more often the case that permitted wood is taken from the Reserved forest. The most outspoken example of blurring boundaries between Reserved and Guzara forests are the events that took place during the period of Cooperatives Societies (section 4.6). These societies were formed by the department to encourage owners to manage their own forests. These cooperatives were hijacked by big owners and resulted in massive ruthless cuttings. The example is relevant in this case because the societies fully denied the boundaries of Guzara and conducted their operations in Reserved forests. Forest department individuals appointed for preparing Working Plans advised felling prescriptions in collaboration with big Guzara owners and/or other external pressures. Such Working Plans not only prescribed harvesting volumes far in excess of any sustainable yield, but also identified standing stock on tree-less areas. The volumes prescribed for harvesting in these areas were actually harvested from the adjoining forests, including Reserved forests. This process continued for years and in all the Reserved forests that adjoined Guzara forests.

Azhar (1993) challenges a widely shared discourse on Cooperatives Societies. He agrees that the societies failed because they were hijacked for political and financial interests of the few. But at the same time compares their fate to what happened to earlier pre-independence Cooperative Societies established in Murree-Kahuta region (neighbouring Punjab province) in 1940 and then closed down in 1960. "Had the cooperative societies been given a chance to function, they would have provided useful empirical evidence for (success). In the absence of an effective political process in Pakistan, the monopoly bureaucracy completely disregarded the cooperative societies and eventually got rid of them in the early 1960s" (Azhar 1993: 126). The entire initiative went down the drain since the situation was used by individuals from the Forest department who used State machinery to serve political and financial interests of a few influential owners.

Forest fire incidents are increasing in Haripur. This has been reported in the project document prepared by the Forest department for controlling fires in Reserved forests (GoNWFP 2008). The same has been claimed by the villagers. None of these fires are natural or usual seasonal fires. Many believe that forest fires are instigated to kill trees or to hide stumps of the harvested trees. This technique is used by influential Guzara owners in their own areas for cutting dead, dry and fallen trees as allowed in the rules. Therefore one can say that there is no difference in actions and practices when it comes to either Guzara or Reserved forests. The only difference is that the department takes special measures to control fires in Reserved forests while nothing is done in Guzara forests.

There are also contradictory accounts about fire, whether it comes from Reserved to Guzara or engulfs Reserved when it is instigated in Guzara. One can ecologically argue about the spread of fire, however, the blame game in any case suggests that fires cross one forest boundary and enter another.

### **Patwaris**

The revenue system of Pakistan primarily operated by patwaris is another factor which leads to boundary crisis. Patwari system was introduced by the British in 1872. The system has a unique language and terminology for the entire working. One patwari is responsible for six to seven villages (one patwar halqa of 15000 people). By the restriction in the revenue laws, patwari and his boss Qanungo are never deputed their own villages of residence. However they come from the same district where they permanently live. Frequent visits to the villages familiarise patwaris with all the families, their compositions, history and feuds. Every four years, the patwari goes to his patwar halqa and rechecks boundaries for encroachments. The Qanungo's job is to check patwari's entries on sampled basis but in most of the cases if the papers are in order, this does not happen beyond simple checking. Even today, the measurements are made using ropes, not with inch-tapes. Use of GPS is alien to patwaris. Patwaris have access to old records, and one of their jobs is to prepare maps of a given property using latha<sup>104</sup>. Forest department has its own Patwaris who keep records of forest boundaries. A copy of revenue records is also kept in the Forest department. The main latha is with the Revenue department, from which maps are produced.

None of my respondents trusts patwaris and their system of measurement. At the same time, the patwaris from the two departments do not trust each other and often blame each other for the anomalies that have occurred in unclear boundaries. While describing the distribution of revenue from commercial harvesting, the Conservator of forests from Hazara marked a dot on my notebook and said,

“Do you see this dot? What if I put this dot slightly right-ways, not farther than the thickness of this dot? It would not matter on your note book, but on a GT sheet it will create a difference of 8 acres. So if the patwari wants to favour you, he will just make mistakes in dots. Locals would not find out, if they do, they cannot sue them, people are scared or are uninformed.” Khursheed Anwar, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2001, Islamabad.

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104 Latha is a white, starched, cotton cloth on which the (sub-continental) practice has been to draw basic maps onto it. From this cloth, the required piece of map is drawn on paper for measurements and is placed in the revenue file of the owner.

The sale money is distributed only after the patwari measures, checks the plots in his records and identifies the owner. Revenue is then calculated as per number of trees falling within the plot of each owner. In this process several tricks can be played. This may create conflicts not only among owners but also between owners and the Forest department even though it may not be the department's mistake. In this manner, patwari system is a catalyst to changing boundaries and emerging conflicts. Aiming to maximise the return on their estates, big owners with feudal background and influence, achieve their goal by manipulating units of measurement. Haroon works for local government Tehsil Municipal Administration office in Haripur. I asked him about his experience working with patwaris, to which he had a strange (slightly discriminatory) impression that he shared with me,

“When I meet a patwari, I can always recognise him from afar. He has an indescribable expression on his face, he looks like a patwari. When they become part of the system, they are forced to become what they are. The opportunity this key position gives is so tempting. It is a kind of an inoculation.” Haroon, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Haripur.

### **Muhafiz Khana**

Revenue records are kept in the record room (called muhafiz khana) of the district Revenue department. In Haripur I had an opportunity to visit the muhafiz khana of the district Revenue department. The moment I entered the door of the record room, it felt like being in old Egyptian pyramid with relics all around – a mysterious silence and echo of my feet in this graveyard of old records. It was an astounding scene. Nearly a 30 feet high roof, stair case within the hall leading to the second floor, both the floors with steel racks and each shelf packed with piles of records tied into bundles. Each pile was at least one meter high. I had a feeling that if I touched a single pile, it will turn into dust. Papers had lost the crackling sound. The sketches were fading away. The writing was hardly readable. The Qanungo explained special features of the hall and racks made to avoid fire and termite hazards. But he also added that this muhafiz khana was rather new as fire broke out in the old one in 2008. If these records are lost, there is no other basis to determine landholding in the district. This would be less of a risk for well-connected owners, but a big threat for small owners who spent all their income for ensuring their rural access to land.

Patwaris have a toolbox of tactics. Only they are capable to make use of a place like Muhafiz Khana. An owner can manage to exclude a living and eligible heir sharing his property. The patwari, despite knowing this man and his co-owner, supports him. Plot numbers (locally called khasra numbers) are changed from one file to another.

This is taking the benefit of rotten records since nobody other than a patwari dares to dig out through the graveyard. When he cannot find a record, he makes fresh measurements. A dot here or there accomplishes high benefits for him. Introducing delaying tactics in property feuds presented to the court of law is another means for informal income since a patwari is the most needed man in such cases. Court cases remain pending for years. A regular fee is charged to draft a copy of ownership deed. It is a small piece of paper with the stamp of the Revenue department. This is the key job of a patwari which he must perform without any fee. There is no receipt of anything paid in patwari business. Change of boundaries and



**Picture 6.3:** (Top) An overview of Muhafiz khana with old records. Some of the important records in tin containers (provided by Swiss project). (Bottom) Old decayed records (left). Records which were salvaged from fire in the previous building, but cannot be properly retrieved anymore

measures makes a big difference to an owner. Patwaris can also affect forests through mapping a land use change (or not mapping a change). This can be a lucrative action. For a shift of a few dots for instance, a hotel owner can build a hotel on Reserved land since the land use change is not reported. Forest department staff argues that the boundaries of Reserved forests are strictly guarded through the boundary pillars. Causing a wilful damage to a boundary pillar is a punishable offence. However they also depend on a patwari's reports, in this case the patwari of the Forest department. The departmental staff also admits that

there is an increasing number of pending court cases against people violating Reserved boundaries and intruding with some kind of illicit action including illegal tree felling.

Legally the forest is managed by the Forest department while the land titles (intiqal) are maintained by the Revenue department. Most of the land titles are demarcated on latha and other details are in the century old files kept in muhafiz khana. Any dispute on land ends up either in Revenue department or the court. The court also depends on the Revenue department records which the patwaris are expected to present in the court.

On examining the latha one finds an evidence of ever changing dots and lines. Change of a centimetre of a line or dots on the cloth sheet can exclude an owner from his land and from rights to Guzara forest. A retired patwari told me,

“It is in the Patwari’s interest to create a conflict in a village. And this can easily be done by just drawing a wrong demarcation line with space. People come to the patwari to solve the problem and the patwari solves it by charging informal income. If the parties do not agree with his decision, they go to the court. The court summons the patwari for records. The patwari has another chance of earning income since in Pakistan there is no other chance to testify land titles except the Revenue records.” Malik Sadaat, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Rawalpindi.

There are no alternate systems that may have existed at the community level centuries ago when the forests were declared under the State management.

Patwaris are close to numberdars of the villages. Most of the meetings take place in the numberdar’s house. The numberdar of village Najafpur shared about his perks. As numberdar, he cannot be arrested under clause 107 of the Pakistan Penal Court, he has a provision for a free licence of a firearm, police gives him special concessions and immediately attends to him, it always seeks his opinion in any criminal case, patwaris conduct meetings in his hujra and his opinion is important in solving land feuds. This implies that the villagers must keep well with him since they may need his favour at any time. Numberdar can do everything that a patwari can or at the least, influence him. He can use his influence to cover land grabbing in his village. This he does for his political or personal relations with the beneficiary. But unlike patwaris, numberdar has a challenge to face, as Zubeda (the niece of numberdar of Najafpur) reports,

“He must maintain his respect in the village. If he continues to do unfair things, he will lose his rapport in the village. He wants to maintain his pressure group.” Zubeda, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Haripur.

Contrary to this, he may have to keep a good relationship with the big landlords since they are the ones who serve as a real pressure group. She replied,

“No smaller land owners or peasants are in a larger number. It is no longer easy to avoid them. A big landlord may be one or none in a village.” Zubeda, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Hariipur.

The answer was rather contextual. In case there is a village where one big owner dominates (some of the examples we have seen in earlier sections), it is very likely that the numberdars are simply the representatives of these owners.

“In old times when people did not have enough education, exposure and knowledge, the numberdar used to collect revenue from villagers, feed government officers coming to his hujra, identify criminals and report to the police. People used to follow him like a holy figure, never challenged him as they thought he will never decide anything wrong for us. He will only think good for the village. Numberdari is usually within the family from father to son. His son watches him from his childhood and learns how to deal with people, how to manage people.” Sabiha (widow of a factory clerk), 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011, Najafpur.

However, a patwari can also do all the tricks without conniving with a numberdar,

“Numberdars can be of three types. One who fights for the villagers, doesn't compromise – this person does not (or cannot) stay for long; one who gets along well with the patwari, and one who is passive, who does his job and lets the patwari do his job. Passive is more liked by the patwari.” Malik Sadaat (retired patwari), 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009, Rawalpindi.

What about the cases in which the numberdar lives outside the village (e.g. Najafpur)? Is this a passive case?

“No. His younger brother who lives in the village watches the affairs as delegated by the numberdar. This is because the matters related to numberdar do not require signatures. In serious matters where witnesses are to be collected and signatures are required, the original numberdar comes in.” Zubeda, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Hariipur.

How is an acting numberdar seen by the villagers? A young girl from Najafpur said,

“For us it does not matter who the numberdar is. His entire family acts as a numberdar. They are heard in all the matters. People try to keep good relations with them.” Lubna (a student), 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011, Najafpur.

Another woman said,

“In our village one woman was extremely skilled in thread embroidery. Her masterpiece was sold for over a 1000 Rupees. But when a numberdar's wife asked for one, she sold it only for 30 Rupees to her. They exploit their position, but

people accept this as they may need their favour at any time in their lives.”  
Zulekha (daughter of Sabiha), 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010, Haripur.

A Patwari has very little salary and the government has not provided him with staff. He keeps his own staff and funds them from his informal income. Usually these are retired persons from the Revenue department who know all necessary patwar matters. There is no official link between the two patwaris of Revenue and Forest departments. If there is a conflict on forest and private lands, both patwaris go and determine boundaries (had bandi). For example the lease of forestland is always challenged by Revenue department as illegal. They suggest that the Forest department must consult Revenue department in such matters since this is the case of change in land use. The Revenue department does not want to change its systems (mapping, digitised record keeping, measurements, monitoring.). The patwari of the Forest department has access to better equipment (GPS, topographic maps, measuring tapes), however they depend on the latha of the Revenue department.

All these accounts indicate that the boundaries are disappearing. Three main reasons seem to be more prominent:

- The usual, daily practices for subsistence needs are met from Reserved forests. These practices have increased with consistent weakening of the department and less coercive controls (see chapter 5). Vandergeest and Peluso (1995: 416) described that with the improved coercive capacity of the State (supported by international aid and legitimation), the government gains a larger capability of implementing some of these strategies (e.g. territorialisation and related controls). The case of Khanpur confirms this, with an opposite trend – weak state and reduced controls.
- The second set of activities relate to more pronounced actions that denounce these boundaries, branded as, e.g. greed for land, illegal income from trees, encroachment for non-forest use. It is hard to explain, without having access to actors involved in such acts directly, whether this is a form of resistance, denial of the State control or is perceived as rights based access. It is quite interesting that women users openly admit using Reserved forests on a daily basis, but the same courage is not found among owners.
- The third means to territorial erosion is the system which is made to guard these boundaries. It is decayed and has failed to produce results. The mythical boundaries, on which these territorial structures were built, are reappearing. These forests are gradually turning into an open access resource. Not only are the boundaries dwindling, the forests enclosed within these boundaries are also disappearing.

## 6.5 Conclusions from Khanpur example

The case of Khanpur gives concrete examples that the legally defined territories are subject to contestation. The idea of territorial division of forests was imported. The resettlement missions arrived for short durations, defined forests, and performed demarcation and left. They implanted regulatory boundaries on mythical lands during colonial period and till today one cannot say with full confidence that this top down jural effort to change land

tenure was successful. Their action decided the fate of lives and the forests for centuries. These territories determined the administrative reordering of governmental working through the Forest department. The chapter reveals that while the State used its power and prerogative to introduce territories, now there is a whole process of reconstitution of forest underway through involvement of new actors with their interests in new forms of forest access and use. Forest users have never been convinced about the reordering of boundaries and have defined them to make their historical claims. The rights defined at that time have been too open ended, including those to do with selling of lands. The rules which govern management of Guzara (2004) are silent about several aspects confronted in the field by the staff.

This has provided an opportunity to create new spaces, make new interpretations and institute a reworking of the legal discourse through tactical networking. Reserved forests face being no longer reserved as was desired by the State. Field evidences and opinions from several actors, including senior forest officials, suggest that there is a need for a surgical deliberation on territorial forestry of Pakistan, since stock-taking merely on one of the tenurial arrangements would not serve the purpose. The complex pattern of Guzara ownership, rights and control has several management and policy implications for any programme seeking to improve forest management and poverty alleviation. New actors are emerging, or reintroducing and transforming themselves. Several new owners have acquired land entitlement and many of them have the pride to be the first ever forest landowners in their family. Most of the new ownerships comprise small pieces of lands which do not have a huge timber value in future. However these lands legitimise the owners' position as the righteous members of decision making in the village. New owners are also slowly changing the meaning and form of the use of natural resources. One cannot predict if this will suddenly change when timber harvesting ban will be lifted, but at least now it appears that the ban on tree felling does not bother smaller owners as much. People are trying to create and recreate their own resources, giving them a new meaning and giving birth to new discourses. My sense is that in this process, the weak are also gradually succeeding through their participation. This may bring some unpredictable results, which can be rather inconvenient for policy makers, but something that cannot be ignored by them.

It is also very likely that commoditisation of forests and increased selling and buying of land has created more exclusion, since not everyone can afford to buy a forest. With few actors buying lands, they now expect that their boundaries must be respected while they, themselves did not do that before acquiring entitlement. This pressure then either shifts to Reserved forests or is forced to subsist from limited shamilat Guzara in the village. The struggle does not seem to be passive anymore. It is more a tactical one, in which people are trying to find their solutions, but as far as possible without being visible. Some are also putting their financial resources in the struggle and this way they are changing their status and redefining their own territories. Followed by changing boundaries and territories, it is also visible that the nature of power in the contemporary society of Khanpur (and beyond) is changing. Power once measured through landholding, is now measured through other symbols, such as political connectivity and affiliation. Actors are living within the social arena with a complete lack of mutual trust and empathy. Dwindling trust in any representative of the government from any tier is diminishing power of the State actors.

In a situation like this, there is a greater reliance on the abilities of the self (to find spaces to access resources) rather than a mediator who can dialogue for a shared alternate discourse.

One feature of the NWFP Forest Ordinance of 2002 is the power of the government to assign a Reserved forest to any community as village forest; such assignments are reversible. The government may make rules to regulate the management of village forests, prescribe conditions for the provision of timber and other forest products to the village community, and prescribe joint responsibility and liability for the contravention of provisions of the rules. Rules have been notified by the government (Community Participation Rules 2004) declaring village forests under the Joint Forest Management (JFM). The Forest Ordinance of 2002 gives the DFO revocable powers to designate any Reserved forest, Protected forest or Guzara to a JFM committee. The JFM committee can be registered on the request of more than 50 percent of the Guzara owners, as long as their total land holdings account for more than two-thirds of the Guzara area. According to the rules, JFM committees have 15 elected members: seven from among the owners; three from among the non-owner beneficiaries; three from civil society or village councillors and two nominated from the Forest department staff. The composition of JFM committee is still based on the assumption that half the owners living in the Guzara forests will have a large proportion of forests holding, and besides, even if this happens, it inclines to engaging larger owners. Most of the expected functions of the JFM committees are in line with timber management – the function that overrides the entire working of the Forest department: Protect, harvest and manage the timber. Several authors have criticised these policies since there are wide and open spaces left for several manipulations (Ali, Ahmad et al. 2007; Shahbaz 2007; Geiser and Rist 2009; Shahbaz and Ali 2009). There is likelihood that timber contractors, forest officers, and influential owners or their representatives dominate JFM committees as office bearers. To date, there are no examples of JFM committees which are fully operational and have conducted all their legal tasks independent of donor funded projects. Also there are no intentions to explore communities for independent (rather than joint) management of forests. All powers are revocable which suggests that the major balance of power rests with the department. Yet, this opens a window of hope that the department is trying to make an effort to change the obsolete and centralised forest management system.

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**105** Recently Pak-Swiss Integrated Natural Resource Management Project launched Village Planning and Joint Forest Management Planning; this was achieved together with the relevant village committees, whose establishment was also facilitated by the project. The experiment conducted in three regions of NWFP gives a lot of hope for the future of collaborative forest management for the forest communities in the country.



# 7

## **Gender and inclusive spaces in the social arena of the forest**

The previous chapter builds the case that the forest in Khanpur is being reconstituted due to commoditisation of the forest land that is either bringing new actors with their interests, or changing positions of the previously dominant actors. New actors give birth to altered forms of forest access and use. These altered forms are not essentially new per se; but are complimenting some of the existing practices in the forests. It is building a critical mass of people who use forests differently which takes the management perspective away from only timber. These usages are referred to in literature as Non-Timber Forestry Products (NTFP). The new actors appearing on the scene as land owners, even if their land parcels are small, redefine the mutual relationships in the forest arena. This chapter argues that the changes observed are not in a single direction, which adds another dimension to the social arena, and that is its dynamism. Multiple changes are taking place in the social arena in terms of forest actors, their interests, relationships and power regimes. As a response to the dynamic social arena, forest users continue to adjust their practices to these changes. The lack of interest of the traditional owners in anything but timber provides various kinds of space (or room for manoeuvre) for other forest dwellers. New space for actors in the forest arena does have an impact on the political economy of the forest. One example is how actors position themselves regarding forest fires. Forest fires are in the interest of those that see the forest as land that produces timber. NTFP users, mainly women, hold a different point of view as forest fires destroy their resources and threaten their livelihoods. Such opposing positions on certain practices can manifest into passive or active struggles among the actors.

This chapter draws attention to a yet another forgotten dimension: gender and social inclusion. Gender is understood both as cultural construction and as an analytical concept, as well as its intersection with variables such as socio-economic class and ethnicity (Buchy, Giri et al. 2012). It looks into gendered access to forests (e.g. for NTFP use), and women's interaction with men in various roles such as male family members, NTFP contractors, forest owners, forest guards and other members of the Forest department. A more inclusive dimension in this chapter deals with forest users from the marginalised groups (women as well as men), often landless and engaged in NTFP collection and processing. Some of the men in these groups have bought little forest lands. It was interesting to study whether acquiring ownership will change their way of using forest or reinforce their practices (e.g. NTFP collection and sale).

The shifts in land ownership are unprecedented, yet they have not provided entitlement to women as owners of the forest. The forest is still a predominantly male domain. Men decide to own or sell the land. However, there are spaces in the forest in which women manage to acquire access to resources from which they derive personal and family benefits. Though men from often landless, poor and (locally considered to be) socially inferior tribes have not managed to acquire forest lands. Therefore it is important to go beyond the issue of land ownership, and to look also at the relationship between people (particularly those who do not enjoy land entitlement) and the resources. This was partly captured in the discussion about redefining boundaries between Reserved and Guzara forests in relation to different usufruct benefits in chapter 6.

There is a phenomenal engagement of women in the use of NTFP from the forests in Khanpur (firewood collection, grazing, extraction of wild fruits, seeds, herbs and other products). This chapter outlines a few such examples from my research, which illustrate that there is a gendered nature of access to and claims on the forest, even without seeking land ownership title.

There is a wealth of literature on the significance of NTFP for the livelihoods of people living in and around forests (Menton 2003; Ojha and Bhattarai 2003; Shackleton and Shackleton 2004; Ros-Tonen and Wiersum 2005; Stoian 2005; Viet Quang and Nam Anh 2006; Belcher and Schreckenberg 2007; Kelkar 2007; Chauhan, Sharma et al. 2008; Christensen, Bhattarai et al. 2008; Rasul, Karki et al. 2008; Gauli and Hauser 2009). Various terms have been used to describe the users of NTFP e.g. forest citizens (Tiwary 2003), ethnic or tribal people (Guha 1997; Christensen, Bhattarai et al. 2008; Rasul, Karki et al. 2008), indigenous people (Stoian and Henkemans 2000; Fu, Chen et al. 2008), agro-pastoralists (Bogale and Korf 2009) and so on. All these terms emphasise that access to and use of NTFP is rooted in the very history of interaction between resource and people living in the forest. Their indigenous knowledge about the resources adds value to NTFPs, which otherwise hardly appear in the State concept of a normative forest. Quoting Robert Repetto, 1997 (p. 471), Hazra (2002) maintains that studies have shown that the value of income derived from NTFPs extracted in a sustainable manner can greatly exceed that of timber harvests. He argues that NTFP harvesting diversifies livelihood options for people and the reduction in NTFP can also lead to an increased dependence on agriculture (Hazra 2002: 13).

The relationship of the rural and indigenous women to their natural resources is intimately linked with their traditionally assigned social roles. While men use resources for commercial purposes, most women look at their subsistence needs (Jamisolamin 2011: 1). There is a host of literature on NTFP in many parts of the world, including Pakistan and other South Asian countries, which suggests that women are directly involved in collecting, processing and sometimes selling NTFPs to supplement and diversify their family income (Kelkar 2007; Tiwari 2007; Nahuelhual, Palma et al. 2008; Gauli and Hauser 2009). The literature also argues that whilst in many cases women have substantial labour and management responsibilities for a particular resource; it is the men who control selling of products as well as the distribution of benefits within the household. At the same time, some of the authors also argue that recognising access and control over resources separately by women and men does not necessarily tell us who has what level of access to which resource, since both often enjoy the use of specific plants and animals within public spaces or on the private property of others. Therefore it is necessary to analyse access to resources by specific groups / ethnicities, their ownership rights and their relationships affecting exclusion as well as practical control. This broader view can be problematic since it is likely that the women's struggle to create new spaces will be overshadowed by other indicators, e.g. ethnic identities, age groups, groups (including women and men) marginalised for various reasons etc. Therefore, I opted to take the perspective of inclusion: analysing how classically marginalised groups are asserting themselves in terms of reconstituting forests in their favour, and capturing examples that are more specific to women, particularly with regard to the use of NTFP for subsistence use as well as for earning income.

Forest or forestland tenure in most of the regions is controlled by the State, a powerful elite, or (in case of both genders) men (Benda-Beckmann 1997; Leach, Mearns et al. 1997; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997; Tiwari 2007; Sultan-i-Rome 2010). Therefore many authors argue about the significance of tree tenure, rather than forest and forestland tenure to claim better access to resources by women (Fortmann 1985; Fortmann and Bruce 1988; Rocheleau 1988; Fortmann and Nabane 1992; McLain 1992; Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997; Sikor 2006). Rocheleau and Edmunds (1997) suggest that unlike two-dimensional maps of land tenure and ownership with delineated boundaries, tree tenure is characterised by nested and overlapping rights that are products of social and ecological diversity as well as the complex connections between various groups of people and resources. They argue that the concepts of property, based on land, are too simplistic and do not help in improving equity for women and men.

A more appropriate approach in their opinion is recognising the aspirations of women and men as well as the complexity and diversity of rural landscapes. The introduction of gender adds a dimension to the analysis of rural landscapes defined by space, time, and specific components of the biological forest, which generate specific products and uses. According to Rocheleau and Edmunds (1997) the concept of tree tenure is more inclusive and neutral about women and men in opposing power relations. In exploring the use of the Khanpur landscape the discussion should thus focus on the specific groups of people who, due to lack of forest ownership rights, have remained at the margins in drawing their livelihoods from the resource. Questions include whether the resource tenure regime favours these people, and if not, what measures do such people adopt to ensure that they still have access to the resource?

### 7.1 NTFP endowment in Khanpur

It is important to understand what is included in NTFP classification. Firewood for subsistence use is one form of non-timber product collected on a daily basis for domestic needs. It is also commercially collected (legally or illegally) but as this commercial use has been discussed in previous chapters, it is not included here. Domestic firewood collection is mainly carried out by women in most of the Hazara region, particularly in Khanpur. There are also professional wood cutters who sell wood bundles to the families who do not or cannot approach the forest directly. These wood cutters are young to middle-aged men, usually from landless groups, who live in remote areas close to the forest. Grazing is another non-timber use of the forest and it is mostly recognised as a usufruct right of communities in the forest. Women and the youth are responsible for grazing livestock. Other NTFP include grasses, flowers, fruits, seeds, bark, roots, herbs and water. Table 7.1 lists major NTFP resources growing in the hills of Najafpur and neighbouring hills.

The seasonal distribution shows that the collection and processing of NTFP continues nearly all the year round. Most of these NTFPs are collected for personal or family use by women, also for selling in the market. Women and men sell them to the village middlemen in smaller quantities, or to relatively big traders in Najafpur village, and occasionally in Ganj market of Rawalpindi town. The landless are mostly engaged as collectors of these products. The collectors are increasingly aware of the exploitative behaviour of big traders, as they do not

**Table 7.1:** Major NTFP resources growing in the hills of Najafpur and neighbouring hills

Product	Use	Collection Season	Supply to Market	Rs/kg (2012)
Amaltaas ( <i>Cassia fistula</i> )	Pods used in herbal medicine	June to August	August-September	Rs.120
Amla ( <i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> )	Seeds used in ayurvedic medicine	November to April	April	Rs.160-180
Banafsha ( <i>Viola serpens</i> )	Flowers for herbal medicine	October to December	December-January	Rs.700-900 (grades A and B)
Banafsha ( <i>Viola serpens</i> )	Leaves	September-October	December-January	Rs.100
Kachnar ( <i>Bauhinia variegata</i> )	Fresh blossoms are used as a vegetable	March-April	April-May	Rs.250
Kangar Phali / kakar singhi ( <i>Pistacia integerrima</i> )	Used in ayurvedic medicine	September-October	November-December	Rs.200
Khukhan ( <i>Myrsine africana</i> )	Used in ayurvedic medicine	November	November-December	Rs.200
Tavi ( <i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i> )	Flowers used in ayurvedic medicine	July to September	September-October	Rs.50
Timmer ( <i>Zanthoxylum armatum</i> )	Seeds used as a spice	April-May	April-May	Rs.200
Wild pomegranate ( <i>Punica granatum</i> L.)	Flowers are used as a natural dye; seeds for a spice called anardana.	July-August	September	Raw: Rs.700 Processed: Rs.13000

Source: (Ara 2010)

offer good prices and usually do not pay cash. Collectors' access to market information has improved with new technological gadgets such as cell phones. In the case of most prominent value chains (e.g. wild pomegranate and amla), smaller traders buy standing crops and engage men and women as labourers to harvest and process them. Women actively use these products in their daily lives too. In every house of Khanpur, wild pomegranate chutney is part of the meal and even at times it is the only thing to serve with home-made bread and goat butter amongst the remotely located poor families in the hills. Therefore the landless people in both ways directly use resources and apply their knowledge to resources – either independently or by virtue of a trader's entitlement – through paying the market value. The policy documents defined by the NWFP Forest department provide little coverage of NTFPs.



Picture 7.1: (Top) *Adhatoda vesica*: An important NTFP in Najafpur and neighbouring villages.  
 (Middle) Grazing and firewood collection from the hills for domestic use.  
 (Lower Bottom) Tens of such flocks with women can be seen every morning in Najafpur beside daily firewood collection of shrub branches

Collection of firewood and grazing are the only two subjects mentioned. NWFP Guzara Forest Rules 2004 state,

“In all Guzara forests dry wood whether standing or fallen or brushwood may be utilised without restriction for domestic or agricultural purposes by the land owners and resident right-holders within the limit of the village in which it is found and by non-residential right-holders in the limit of the village where they reside and also by the persons whether resident or non-resident who are not right-holders so long as the right-holders raise no objection to their doing so and the Conservator (Forest department) does not think it necessary to interfere in the interest of forest conservancy.” NWFP Guzara Forest Rules 2004, Section 4.

In case of Reserved forests, such rights must be granted by the State appointed Forest Settlement Board,

“If the board admits, in whole or in part, any claim under section 12 (claims on right to pasture or to forest produce: the board shall pass an order admitting or rejecting the same in whole or in part), it shall also record the extent to which the claim is so admitted, specifying the number and description of the cattle which the claimant is, from time to time, entitled to graze in the forest, the season during which pasture is permitted, the quantity of timber and other forest produce, which he is from time to time authorised to take or receive, and such other particulars as the case may require. It shall also record whether the timber or other forest produce obtained by the exercise of the rights claimed may be sold or bartered.” NWFP Forest Ordinance, 2002, Section 14.

In another place (Section 26), the Ordinance lists acts prohibited in Reserved forests, including grazing, kindling fire, cutting grass, lopping trees, removing bark or any other forest produce. Among economically important plants, Mazri dwarf palm (*Nannorrhops ritchiana*) is the only one controlled through a special legal document called “NWFP Mazri Control Rules, 2004”. This plant grows in Reserved forests in the arid belts of southern parts of NWFP. There are no other economically important plants mentioned in the rules.

## **7.2 Women’s access to forests for firewood and grazing**

In Khanpur, women are responsible for two chores: firewood collection and grazing livestock. They access communal Guzara forests for these purposes since it is legally permitted in these areas. Women are rather careful in approaching the forests, as they are afraid of being fined or denied access on a permanent basis; yet they continue their activity. Their interest is in branches and dead wood lying on the forest floor.

Several women I met (right-holders and non right-holders) skilfully cross boundaries and illegally ensure their regular firewood supplies from Reserved forests or private Guzaras. There is no clear evidence suggesting that they felled trees for their firewood needs. On the contrary, commercial wood sellers, all men, would not hesitate to do so if given a chance.

This discussion leads to a gender segregated understanding of who in Khanpur uses the forest in which manner. A forester states,

“Mostly we encounter women in Reserved forest since they are the ones who go to the forest for their daily needs (firewood and grazing). But we respect them. And one reason for respecting them is that they always come for their genuine needs. They use forest for firewood for their homes. Even when they approach a prohibited olive tree, they just take away the branches. So we spare them. Men create more damage. If we notice undue damage, we fine the perpetrators”. Forester Mumtaz, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Khanpur

This attitude of the field staff of the department towards local women allows them certain space to meet their daily needs. Hence with time this de facto practice to use forests has turned into a customary claim on nature. As one woman suggested,

“All we take away from (Reserved) forest is a bundle of branches for that day. We don't sell wood and we don't do any damage. Department people sell these forests hence nothing much is left now”. Fareeda, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, Par wala Mohalla, Dhunya.

Another one says,

“Fuel wood collection is the responsibility of women and children. Younger women stay home since they have small children. They clean, cook, and fetch water. Middle aged or older women go to the forest for wood collection. All I have is a sickle, I cannot cut down a tree. If I do, I cannot bring it home. It is really a hard job”. Gul Nisar, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Partal Mohalla Najafpur.

This suggests that the women define and legitimise their space by their needs and collection behaviour without causing damage to the forest – precisely what Mumtaz had earlier pointed out. There is a strong social pressure to adhere to the norms of behaviour, which support women's access. Women are generally respected in Pakistan and unrelated men are careful in the villages to avoid any unwarranted act towards women that can spoil their social relationship with the men who are related to the women. Women therefore may easily get away with some violations of boundaries. In a de facto access to forests, women can often call on male leaders to enforce their access rights to trees. Women's ability to assert and perhaps formalise their rights to the resources within these smaller spaces is of vital importance as they try to meet their daily responsibilities (Rocheleau and Edmunds 1997).

Five depots were visited in Khanpur where firewood was being sold. All the stocks comprised trees which were felled and chopped down for convenient selling. Some of the stocks even included stumps which were skilfully excavated from the ground. This is something which requires a lot of labour, essential equipment and time to perform. Everything was being sold from dry roots to the branches (see section 7.5). An interesting feature was that the depot owners hurriedly retrieved sale permits to prove that the wood being sold in the depots was legally approved by the Forest department of Haripur. The permit indicated that the wood

(verified by the Range Forest Officer) had been extracted from farmlands. This was true for the species like mulberry (*morus alba*), dhumman (*Grewia optiva*), and simal (*Bombax ceiba*). However it was not clear if pomegranate, acacia and Chir pine may also have come from farmlands but still sold under the same permits.

There is a widespread persistent idea that a continuous (and increasing) daily extraction of firewood contributes to the declining state of forests. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) published the Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy (SPCS) for NWFP in 1996, which became the basis of several environmental projects with international funding in the province. The strategy gives fourteen key recommendations to ensure a sustainable environment (IUCN 1996: 133): (i) eliminate political interference in the functioning of the department, (ii) re-organise the Forest department, (iii) enhance the quality and implementation of forest management plans, (iv) improve forest laws and their enforcement, (v) improve forest education, (vi) settle the rights of local people in Protected forests, (vii) alleviate poverty of the mountain people, (viii) reduce the excessive removal of timber, (ix) decrease the use of forest trees as fuel, (x) ensure prompt and adequate regeneration, (xi) control grazing in forests, (xii) rehabilitate natural vegetation in the southern districts and (xiii) reduce cultivation on mountain slopes.

These recommendations assume that people who are engaged in using the forests, particularly for firewood collection and grazing, have alternative means to meet their needs. Hence one day when the strategy is truly implemented, we will not see any firewood collection from the forest and animals grazing. The document was approved by the provincial cabinet in 1996, including the recommendations decrease use of trees as fuel, and control grazing. Approval by the cabinet and adoption of this document by environmentalists suggests that they signed up for these recommendations for future actions. The magic set of interventions required to accomplish these recommendations is still awaited.

Fischer et al. (2009) in their study on Timber Harvesting Ban (THB) suggested the following,

“The owners (...) as well as non-right holders depend heavily on forests not only for subsistence (e.g. fire-wood, construction timber, livestock grazing) but also for their livelihoods by cutting trees for additional income. There are also commercial interests to serve supplies to the timber market and to satisfy Government revenues from forestry. Alongside there exists a large scale illegal commercial exploitation of forests by the so-called timber mafia” (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009: page13).

Multiple demands on forest point to the complexity of the issue of deforestation. The study report continues to say,

Commercial harvesting and fire-wood consumption contributed to the decline of growing stock to the extent of 38.3 million m<sup>3</sup> in the study-period. 2% of this is attributable to recorded commercial harvesting and 84% to fire-wood consumption. The remaining stock of 8.3 million m<sup>3</sup> or about 14% is from unrecorded harvesting attributed to other factors (Fischer, Khan et al. 2009: page14).

Hence a large part of the blame is still pinned on firewood consumption, which is debatable. But one thing is worth noting: both IUCN and THB reports, point to cutting of trees for firewood. They do not point to lopping of tree branches or clipping of shrubs which mostly women as firewood collectors do. A daily subsistence use, if left alone to women in Khanpur, would not cause dramatic degradation.

Women are exclusively responsible for managing livestock in Khanpur. They define grazing patterns for livestock. Most families, particularly those with no private Guzara lands, have a few heads of livestock, which they keep for their family needs. For poor families, particularly from the Gujar tribe, uninterrupted grazing is the most important form of forest use. Communal Guzara are designated grazing grounds. However in practice it is different. Livestock in Najafpur and its neighbouring villages generally enjoy open grazing. The villages situated at the periphery of the Reserved forests also send their livestock for open grazing. Livestock are taken to the forest in the morning on fixed paths and brought home around late afternoon. Dhunya is the only village in which medium sized herds are kept for milk production. In this village stall feeding is also common and mostly men are responsible to chop fodder from the forest, agricultural fields or wastelands to bring home.

Firewood collection and grazing are the most frequent uses of forests in Khanpur. The fact that in Khanpur women are responsible for these two activities means that they are virtually the managers of forests and have a critical role to play in the shaping of the resource. For many Gujar women in the high hills, access to Reserved forest is more convenient for grazing than to access a private Guzara since the owners or their representatives would object. Despite their access to communal lands, many now prefer to invest in buying forest lands of their own. In this way, they gain entitlement to private Guzara lands, but at the same time continue to use communal lands as they did before. A villager said,

“Gujars came to this region 150 years ago. Maximum land holding (in Khanpur) in forest estate now belongs to them”. Maqsood (76, Dhanyal), 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Najafpur.

Another one said,

“Gujars were forerunners in buying lands. They were more interested in what they had occupied. Then follow Dhanyals and then Awans who started buying lands twenty years ago. There are villages where Awans are in lead in terms of property ownership. But many Gujars still live at or below subsistence level”. Malik Mahfooz (56, Dhanyal), 12th January 2009, Najafpur

Land revenue records show that the Gujars mostly buy small pieces of lands, but since they are much larger in numbers like the title owners, their political presence in any dialogue on forest matters would be significant. This suggests that buying lands will not just support their livestock profession but will also gain them political and social strength. Gujar women are also actively involved in fruit and herb collection and processing for selling purposes. They are mostly active as labourers while the resources may still be owned by men (within or outside the family). These women have managed to occupy the space through diversifying

their income options as well as through a more liberal social interaction within their villages. Awan women on the other hand, who are also actively engaged in this diversification, are socially limited to only working for the men from their own clan. This kind of clan-hood also excludes women with genuine need for income, such as Bibi Jan of Najafpur who is the only Bhatti in the village. She is extremely poor and lives on charity – but she is not invited to join the seed extraction teams. Women's individual acts of firewood collection and grazing are independent from their clans. For Bibi Jan, firewood collection and gathering of other little products for her own use from Reserved forest is not an issue at all, as she says,

“I insist on more control by the department. Poor like us use forest in an appropriate manner, we shouldn't be afraid of this checking. But those who set fire and take away loads of timber should be controlled. They spoil our name”.  
Bibi Jan, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

### 7.3 An NTFP example from Khanpur – Anardana

Wild pomegranate is a small, spiny, deciduous tree found naturally in sub-tropical forests in NWFP, Punjab and Balochistan. In India it is abundantly found in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir. It grows between 900-1800 meters elevation above sea level (Shinwari, Rehman et al. 2006: 348) in combination with other high value tree species, such as Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) in Khanpur area which grows between 830-1870 meters (Ahmed, Husain et al. 2006). This tree is found in abundance in Khanpur. It also grows on farm land, but is usually removed from small-holdings as farmers believe it reduces the yield of cereal crops. It grows in uncultivable private lands and in scrub forests. The pomegranate is believed to be native to South Asia and eastern Iran. The tree grows rapidly, suppressing other wild shrubs and thrives in areas exposed to direct sunlight.

Generally the trees are found in a scattered distribution. They are typically found in mixed vegetation, rather than in monocultures. The tree requires no specific tending, and its fruiting cycle is adjusted naturally. Once in four years is naturally a bad fruiting year. It is generally resistant to diseases and suffers no major pest attacks. Fruit is susceptible to early drop due to hailstorm or early rain shower and fire injuries. It has scarlet flowers, small fruit, the seed inside has juicy outer coat in pink and is sour in taste. These seeds (or fruit) are used as a spice (condiment), as an acidifying agent in Indian sub-continental and middle-eastern cuisine, but are not eaten as a fruit as they are very sour. It is also used as an ingredient in herbal medicine by renowned companies such as Hamdard Pakistan and Dabur India. The rind of the fruit is used for preparing feed concentrates for lactating animals and for other medicine. Its flowers are also used sometimes to prepare dyes. The stem and root bark are used as an astringent and against tape-worms. For fruit purposes, other varieties of pomegranate are cultivated in orchards.

Pomegranate collection and the trade of processed seeds of wild pomegranate started some 45 years ago (1935). This, according to the villagers, coincides with the Awan tribe settling in Khanpur. The Awans were traditional cloth-weaving artisans. They were highly business oriented and hence gradually diversified their skills and businesses, the most prominent being anardana. There are over a hundred small traders of wild pomegranate seed

(anardana), the majority being Awans and Gujars. Other tribes have also engaged in the business. Tribes such as Dhanyals who claim to be the next superior tribe after the Gakkhars in Najafpur, do not like to engage in the business in any role.



Picture 7.2: (Top) Pomegranate trees with flowers and fruit.  
(Middle) Fruit collection from Pomegranate trees.  
(Bottom) Pomegranate raw fruit ready for extracting and processing anardana

**Table 7.2:** Anardana processing units visited with production and income details

Processing unit	Number of women	Volume processed	Collective income of women (Rs.)
Sagheer (Unsurabad, Najafpur)	22	1100 maunds <sup>106</sup>	110,000
Ismail Awan (Doga, Najafpur)	19	750 maunds	75,000
Fayyaz (Maari, Najafpur)	9	250 maund	25,000
Maqsood (Ranjha)	18	700 maunds	70,000
Saleem (Maari, Najafpur)	31	2000 maunds	200,000
Nazakat	9	200 maunds	20,000
Ghulam Sarwar (central, Najafpur)	11	285 maunds	28,500
Allah Din (Mohra, Najafpur)	8	210 maunds	21,000
Muhammad Din (Maari, Najafpur)	7	175 maunds	17,500
Abdul Rashid (Darra, Najafpur)	12	300 maunds	30,000
Hasan Din (Shah Kabul, Najafpur)	16	650 maunds	65,000
Mahmood (Tai Adda, Najafpur)	13	310 maunds	31,000
	175	6930 maunds raw fruit (25 tons processed seed)	693,000

Nearly 11Kg of raw anar fruit is required to produce 1kg of best quality processed seed. One kg of raw anar fruit is sold for Rs.600<sup>107</sup> while one Kg of seed, depending on its quality, is sold for Rs.13000 or more, which is double the total price of raw anar fruit needed for this quantity of seed. Nearly 20% of the total volume of raw anar fruits is lost into peels. Though a difficult process, the peels are also dried and sold for Rs.180-200 for livestock feed. I visited at least 12 processing groups (Table 7.2) where I have seen and met 175 village women at work. I accompanied 3 anar collection groups, totalling about 99 persons. I was told that the entire Khanpur valley has over 800 processing units, small and large, and many choose to sell their produce to small traders living closest to them or directly to big traders in Najafpur. I tend to avoid making a projection of total labour engaged for processing anardana in 800 units based on my calculations from 12 units that I visited. The reason is that there are units that are as small as constituting 3 members and as big as those with over 40. Hence making a projection for number of women involved in 800 units based on my data from 12 units may produce a wrong picture. Instead, I am only making a projection on anardana economy for Najafpur and neighbouring villages based on the total produce that goes from here to national market. Ganj Mandi is the main market which buys and sells anardana with an annual turnover of 600-800 tons. Najafpur alone has 40% share in the total production handled by national market (240-320 tons).

106 1 maund equates approximately 40kg

107 Throughout this chapter, the exchange rate of 1 euro to Pak Rs.115 applies. The wage / sale rates for anardana were taken in August 2012.

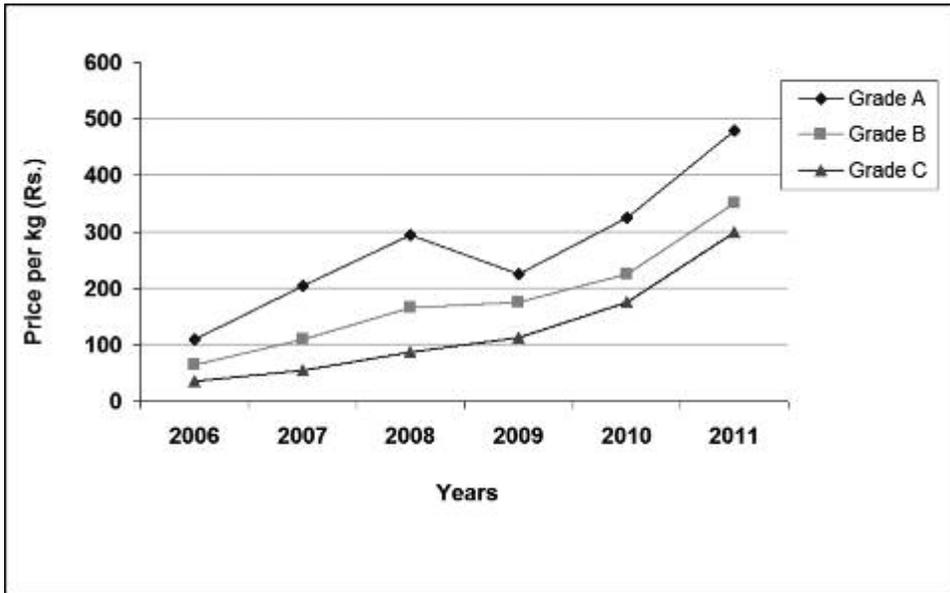


Figure 7.1: Average price trend for anardana over the last six years (Source: Ganj Mandi Rawalpindi 2011)

If we take 40% of 600 tons production coming from Najafpur, we can project that 26,400 person-days are required only for extracting seed from fruits<sup>108</sup>. All of this is provided by women through waged labour @Rs.100 per maund of fresh anar fruit, generating Rs.6.6 million or 57,391 euro for the whole season. Another 6000 person-days are required for drying and packaging this seed. This task is often performed by unpaid skilled labour within the family, which in monetary terms comes to around Rs.900,000 or 7826 euro if valued @Rs.150 per day which is a prevailing rate for skilled labour. Therefore we conclude that the anardana business alone engages over 32,400 person days of women directly generating Rs.7,500,000 or 65,217 euro income annually from the valley. This is not insignificant. This section will first introduce anardana, and then discuss how women and men participate in producing it.

Most farmers and Guzara owners sell their wild pomegranate fruits while on trees to village based small traders before the harvesting season. Pomegranates in communal Guzara are

108 With 40% share, Ganj Mandi receives around 240 tons of anardana seeds from Najafpur annually. For producing each top quality 1 ton of anardana (25maund), nearly 11 tons of raw fruit is required (275 maunds). Each woman can process 2-3 maunds of raw fruit in one day. Taking a daily average take out in a day at 2.5 maunds, 110 person days are required to produce 1 ton of processed seed. Women are paid on the basis of volume of raw fruit processed. Rs.100 is paid for each maund of fruit processed by a woman. This way, for each one ton production, a woman earns Rs.27,500. The same quantity of produce requires 25 woman days for drying the produce. This task is often performed by unpaid labour within the family, which in monetary terms comes around Rs.5000 or 44 euro.

collected by right holders on a first come first served basis. The main national market hub for this spice seed is Gunj market situated in Rawalpindi, at a distance of about 120 kilometres, a two hour drive from Khanpur. Gunj market sells around 400-600 tonnes per year and this volume is growing annually. The price/Kg is growing each year despite increasing supply, which shows that demand exceeds supply. Part of the produce is also exported to other countries. 40% of the high quality share for annual market from Khanpur is a lifeline for the national market. This particular seed is of the best quality and fetches the maximum price. Other suppliers include other parts of Pakistan such as Kashmir, the Gallis, Kohistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kurram Agency in Pakistan, and bordering areas of Afghanistan



Picture 7.3: (Top) A common view in Najafpur during July-September – Stocks of pomegranate fruits arriving in the village and anardana drying on every roof top (Middle) Processing units: Left, Fayyaz's house; Right, Maqsood's house (Bottom) Processed seed and fruit peels for drying and selling

and Iran. The market prefers red, neat, very sour and large-sized seeds against pale white, unclean and mixed seed sizes. Sometimes seeds that are pungent in taste and have turned black due to moisture are admixed with good quality seeds. This is often the case with anardana supplied from Kurram and other regions. Pure and high quality seeds can fetch much higher price.

**Table 7.3:** three quality grades of Anardana

Quality grades		Price / Maund in the Market (2008)	
A	Red in colour, neat and clean, sour in taste, big in size	Rs.13000	
B	White in colour, not as clean as Grade A, sour taste, small in sizes	Rs.7000-13000	
C	Mixed junky quality (seeds mixed with coloured peel), dark red in colour, pungent in taste, size mixed	Rs.3500-4000	

The main harvesting season is late June, July, August and part of early September. The best marketing season when the selling price of the seed is the highest, is just before the fasting month of Ramadan when most of the speciality snacks are prepared at homes and restaurants. Sometimes there is a sudden drop in supply due to two main factors: Forest fires (the year with reduced supply is congruent with more fires that year) and early monsoon and storms resulting in early fruit drop. Najafpur village serves as the main hub in Khanpur from where the large quantities of produce go to the national market. The main control of this supply rests with six big traders in the village who have direct links in the market. They often form a cartel to fix the purchasing price from smaller traders. This implies that these traders have a better bargaining power since they bring a big share of the produce to the national market. Small traders with limited quantities of seeds cannot afford to directly sell their produce in Gunj market. Their bargaining power is low and they are paid per Kg of

the processed seed according to the price fixed by the big traders in Najafpur. Village based anardana traders often receive advance payments from big traders and buy the future harvest on standing trees. When the fruits are mature, the traders engage groups of men (anar collectors) for harvesting. There is a clear gender segregation of roles. Seed extraction is done by women as wage-labourers. Women are also responsible for managing the processing and packaging functions, such women in most cases being directly related to the trader. These women managers are unpaid and basically form a family enterprise together with the trader (usually a relative). One of the managers is Irshad, who worked as a wage labourer before her marriage to Sagheer. She shared,

“Sagheer takes care of anar collection from the field or organised through small traders, I take care of engaging women, processing and their payments. We also sell other things such as bahekar, kichnar and reetha. Bahekar is the easiest to do... I clip the leaves and sun-dry them. Sagheer takes dried Bahekar to Gujranwala (Punjab) for fodder concentrates”. Irshad (wife of trader Sagheer – 39, Awan), 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

I observed a group of eleven women and one man in Najafpur who processed anardana for a small trader Fyyaz, an Awan. Nine of the processors came from Awan families. It was an exception to see a man in this group; the reason was that he was jobless, having experienced a stroke some years ago and being still in the process of recovery. The group seemed to enjoy the seed extraction activity. Many a times the discussion got so lively that women became chatty and started telling details about each other – and no one was offended. They smiled at each other, sometimes saddened while telling their life-stories, and all this for me was worth recording, only sometimes on paper.

For me this repeatedly demonstrated a relationship based on empathy – and this happened over a dozen times in similar groups. Sughra, wife of Fayyaz, said,

“We prefer to engage women from our own birathari . It is easier to manage. Their men do not object if they work at my house. And we accommodate each other”. Sughra (wife of the trader Fayyaz– Awan), 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Najafpur.

In Ranjha, I observed that Maqsood’s entire family was engaged in the processing activity. He says,

“When the season arrives, we only work on processing. My wife and two daughters look after the women extracting seeds, she spreads the seeds on our rooftop and watches against rain. When I am not around, my mother also helps”. Maqsood 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2010, Ranjha. Maqsood (Gujar), 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Ranjha.

These discussions suggested that where women were able to create a distinct space for themselves in the business as the backbone of the anardana value chain, their space also tended to be limited by social groups defined by family and ethnicity. They remain the vulnerable and weaker players of the chain for a number of reasons. Often their wages are



**Picture 7.4:** (Top) Pomegranate trees that burned down during various fire incidents. (Bottom) Jamil (third from left) and his collectors' group in Kurwali

not pre-fixed or well negotiated. They are mostly close to the trader through family relations, neighbourhood or clan. At times wage-labour invitations are also made through the male family members who negotiate wages on the women's behalf. There are occasions when male family members receive loans from the trader during the off season with or without prior permission of their women. Women usually believe that enough effort was made to bargain a proper wage-rate with the trader. This way, sometimes women have a limited choice to select their employer and are bound to work with the one who has provided a cash advance

or lives closest to them. They are not provided with special equipment such as gloves, skin treatment and clothes. Their hands become stained, cracked and sore due to the acidic anar juice. Their wounds take at least a month to heal. In some cases, women use gloves to protect their hands. They can extract faster and better this way, and the skin remains in good condition for other daily chores when the anar season is finished.

Women and small traders are always worried that the forest fires that often occur just before the prime anar picking season may engulf the money hanging in the trees. Many anar collectors shared that 2009 was a bad year due to large fires in Khanpur. The main risk is borne by the traders. In panic sometimes, small traders engage collectors to go for premature harvesting in early July. Collectors on the other hand are more concerned with the kilograms of produce they pick and therefore only unwillingly harvest premature fruits. In the struggle to get maximum, they cause damage to the tree or its branches while harvesting. Some traders and collectors are now becoming more conscious about sustainable harvesting techniques and use improved tools so that the fruiting for the next year is not damaged. They harvest larger quantities and make minimum damage to the fruit and their hands. The drying technology is also very poor. Sun-drying on rooftops of houses is a risky business. Rain showers are rather frequent during August and may destroy the hard work of women. Women as product managers remain worried since blackened seeds will be rejected by the big traders. The chain is buyer-driven, with collectors, women and small traders having little ability to influence the selling price of their product. It is a highly competitive market.

#### **7.4 Creating spaces – a continuous struggle in Khanpur**

I met six pomegranate collectors in Kurwali through Jamil (Bhatti). Jamil is a small trader in Kurwali. He also deals in other NTFPs and has been engaged in this business for the last seven years. He organises the collection of NTFPs and trades them. Therefore he is busy in the forest round the year. The collectors told me enthusiastically about their anar collection techniques and other details. Liaqat was one of them. He was the youngest and the quietest in the group, but appeared to be very knowledgeable with the little he said. Liaqat has a Bhatti background and owns 18 kanals of which 8 kanals is cultivable and the rest is scrubs forest. First, he makes his own collection and sells the fruit to Jamil rather than taking it all the way downhill to the shops or Najafpur. After this, he engages himself as labourer with Jamil. There is an unwritten agreement between the two that Liaqat will work for Jamil. He trusts Jamil as he always tries his best to negotiate the best prices from Najafpur traders. Liaqat had earned Rs.5000 from Jamil till that point and the season was still on. He also earned Rs.3500 for the anar collected from his own land. Liaqat and his sisters also earned Rs.11500 from collecting Banafsha, Khukhan and Kangar phali from Guzara and Reserved forests. Liaqat is uneducated, and has no other source of income. Sometimes he works as a helper in the local school but that too is a temporary employment, only when he is required. Therefore his income from all sorts of NTFP is a significant source of living for his family.

Jamil made Rs.20,000 after paying everyone else. From this profit, he will pay for transporting the product to Najafpur, which may cost him another Rs.2000 or so. He shared,

“This year (2009) we are thinking to sell anardana seeds directly to Ganj market, if fruiting will be good, but if we cannot produce more than 200Kg, we will sell to big traders in Najafpur”. Jamil (Bhatti), 12th August 2008, Kurwali.

His main concern is the volume of production. He can only produce large volumes if able to organise the collection of anar fruits in large quantities. This is where the competition lies. It is a race against time all around. Pomegranates from Reserved forests also arrive in small quantities and add to the volume. All small traders actively seek to buy standing crops. However they can only buy as much as they can pay. A few receive an advance payment from larger traders, but that comes with risk since they also fix a lower price and it is hard to bargain. Jamil on the other hand prefers not to take advance and buys crops with his own finances (savings). The largest trader of anardana in Najafpur is Saleem Gujar. He is very active and knowledgeable in the anardana business, having worked in it for the last 45 years. He owns 20 kanal of agricultural and 20 kanal of forest land. Most of the small traders feel bound to sell their produce to him since he produces the largest volume in Khanpur. Besides having strong bargaining power in the national market, he is also known for his exploitative attitude towards small traders. Jamil made a reference to Saleem and added,

“If Saleem drops the rate of anardana, I would prefer to sell raw whole fruit to Tariq (a shopkeeper down-hill) since that pays profit and I have cash every 2-3 days. Saleem exploits. He does not pay easily. He obliges to buy cheap grocery items from his shop instead. No hard cash”. Jamil (Bhatti), 12th August 2008, Kurwali.

Certainly selling whole fruit instead of processed seeds will put women's wages in jeopardy. Therefore women are also concerned about the purchase rates of anardana. I had the opportunity to observe a fruit collection organised by Jamil in Kurwali village. A small, interactive and hardworking group used every single minute to do the job. Jamil too, remained busy in collection and helping the collectors. As an outsider, it was hard to differentiate between the collector labourers and the trader. Adeel (Bhatti), age 32 was one of the collectors with his two younger brothers (aged 28 and 24). They earn their bread only as wage-labourers. The three of them have no other source of income except some livestock for milk production. They own no forest land, and only 10 kanals of agricultural land which they share with their father.

Ehsan (Gujar) bought private Guzara forest in Dhunya from Raja Iftikhar of Khanpur (see section 6.4.1 of this thesis). He has two brothers but they have no share in that land. He inherited 12 marlas from his father, and now owns in total 50 kanals. He, together, with his brothers works for Jamil to earn some income during the season. His wife and sister-in-law work as anardana processors in Ranjha village with another trader. Imran and Luqman (Gujars) ages 17 and 19 jointly own 50 kanal of forest and agriculture. They shared,

“Most of the labour (you see around here) is seasonal. Even when people have temporary jobs out of the village, they return to the village during anardana and amla seasons because employment opportunity is confirmed”. Imran, 12th August 2008, Kurwali.

Sagheer (Gujar), a school teacher from Kurwali added,

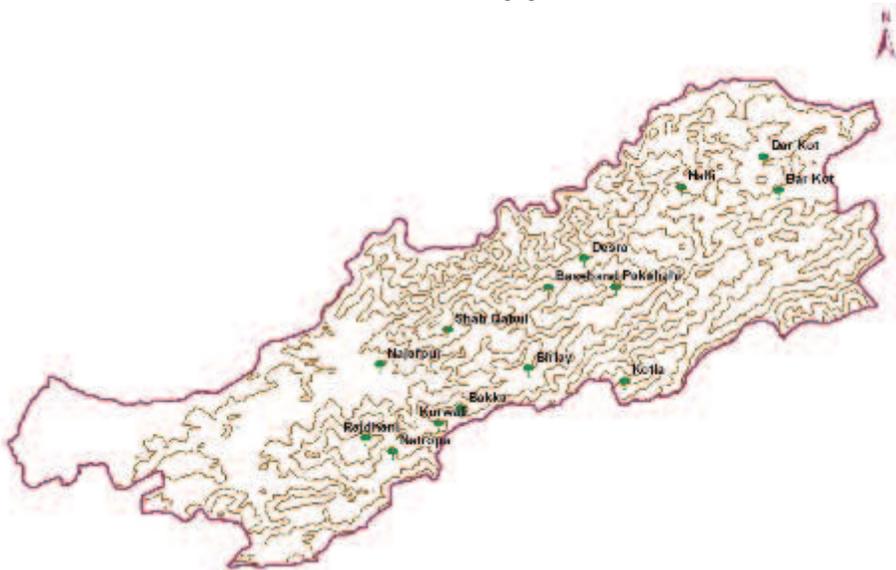
“In Kurwali, 98% of the villagers come from Gujar community, 2% are Bhatti and only 1% Lohar. Anar collection and processing work is mostly with Gujars and Bhattis. If they would not collect, the business will not get anywhere since they are the only ones who can do this tough job of collecting fruits”. Master Sagheer, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2009, Kurwali.

He also added that of the entire privately owned forest of Kurwali village, about 50% constitutes large forestlands with only few owners. These areas produce bulk produce, about 40-50 maunds each. The rest are small areas, each producing not more than 10 maunds.

Kurwali has a significant part of Reserved forest where wild pomegranates grow. There was no estimate about how much produce came from there. Kurwali village was reported as the most significant source of anardana. Other top villages included Rajdhani, Halli, Natropa, Bakka, Birlay, Pakshahi, Sarbarot, Desra, Baseband, Bar Kot, Dar Kot, Kumuli, Loran, Kotla, Ranjha and Shah Qabul (Najafpur). This was significant information since many of these villages have large chunks of Reserved forests. The answer came from the collectors,

“We hasten to harvest fruit from our own trees first so that they don’t remain unattended. Then we have to hurry to join Jamil (trader) since he buys standing crops in advance and that brings us good income. If we go after anar growing in Reserved areas, we have to go in far-flung areas; it takes us a lot of time. Saleem (Gujar), 12th August 2008, Kurwali.

It is correct that Reserved forests are on higher reaches, and therefore only the villagers living closer to the boundaries of such forests must be engaged in collections,



**Map 7.1:** Khanpur villages where Pomegranate trees are thriving

“Free collection of NTFPs is not allowed. There is a need to apply for a permit. The revenue goes to the government”. DFO Shakil, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008.

This response was a hard line on accessing Reserved forest for NTFP collection and deeply rooted in policy discourse. The DFO however did not single out the case of wild pomegranate in the policy. A member of field staff had something different to say,

“In principle the commercial picking of anar should be auctioned by the (Forest) department and the same rule should apply as in case of timber (referring to 80% sale proceeds going to the department). However we do not make an issue out of poor people going and collecting anar as they please as long as they do not harm Pine trees”. Saeed Forester, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, Barley.

A collector confirmed saying,

“I individually collect anar fruit from sarkari (Reserved) forest, nobody stops me. Everybody does that”. Fazal Murad, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2009, Ranjha.

The Gujar trader in Ranjha added,

“We don’t make a group collection in Reserved forest. People collect and bring it to sell to the nearest trader. I never ask them where they collected the fruit from. I pay them on the basis of each kilogram as I would pay to my group of labourers”. Maqsood, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Ranjha.

It seems to me that the only reason that group collection does not take place in Reserved forest is to keep a low profile. As Saeed the Forester suggested, the jural way to deal with pomegranate trees (and any other NTFP for commercial collection) is to conduct a public auction. The buyer will buy on a winning quoted price, conduct his harvesting activity and sell the whole or processed anar on a margin. However, this is an expensive option for him. A cheaper way is to supplement this volume by buying the produce from individual collectors who search for the fruit in far off places and bring a few kilos of fruit to earn quick cash. A trader however, adds in an angry voice,

“At the forest check-post we often give bribes, although they do not have control over the collection of anardana. But they insist that it was collected from Reserved forest”. Sagheer, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2008, Najafpur.

It appears that part of the challenge is of transportation of processed seeds from the check posts is bigger than collecting fruit from the forest. However the collection of wild pomegranates continues to be a systematic and growing business engaging several families in the villages. People are improving their skills and market information and this helps expand the space for those who have no or little jural claim on timber in the forest. For example, Fazlur Rehman a collector (age 49) commented:

“With time we are becoming more professional. We have a better instrument to pick the fruit. We receive better payments as we know what Gunj market offers, we have a better bargain. Four years ago we were paid on daily wage basis which now we would not accept. We are paid for each Kg of harvest”. Fazlur Rehman, 12th August 2008, Kurwali.

Collection of other NTFP is not as well organised, but since the poorest women and men collect and sell them on little returns, no one objects. I came across an interesting element of winning space for anardana collectors. In the very early days of 2008 when I started interacting with collectors and women processors, I decided to approach forestry experts to seek a basic understanding on the ecological characteristics of the wild pomegranate tree. Most of the foresters suggested that I approach the Agriculture department, since this is not a forest tree. A few foresters went a step further and strongly suggested that this species only grew in farmlands and agricultural wastes and not in the forests. I then approached the Agriculture Research Station at Tarnab, Peshawar. The experts at the station knew a little about the tree, but they insisted that wild pomegranate is not their business. It is the sweet pomegranate fruit that comes within their domain as a commercial horticultural crop.

“To date proper research has not been conducted on pomegranates. Especially the sour/wild species is completely neglected, although it has a large use in different food items specifically in India and Pakistan. When tomato prices are sky-rocketing, anardana is used in cooking as an alternate for acidifying. Similarly it is a highly wanted spice during Ramadan”. Ghulam Nabi, Research Officer, Horticulturist, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2009, Tarnab Research Farm.

I concluded that there were no silvicultural data available for wild pomegranate. The only information was provided by Shinwari (2006) in Medicinal Plants of Pakistan. This account further adds a dimension to the discussion regarding space to manoeuvre. As long as it is not determined whether wild pomegranate is an agricultural crop or NTFP, the collectors and processors continue to enjoy benefits without any interruption.

## 7.5 Forest fire and NTFP

Several interactions in the field suggested that the women perceive forest fire as their enemy – it burns down their personal spaces, their only chance to earn income. However a fire that does not cause major damage to pomegranate trees and other NTFPs ready to be collected at that time is not perceived negatively. One of the women said,

“This year most of the anar trees were burnt in Birlay village. Women were very sad, they were the only ones who tried to put out the fire”. Lubna, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009, village Birlay.

It reminded me of my personal experience in Birlay in which I saw a few women and children desperately trying to put out a fire. A trader added,

“Anar trees are increasing in numbers. There is no dearth of production. We cannot even collect 100% in one season, a lot of fruit is lost on trees. No one cuts anar trees. But only when fire burns them down, they become useless. Fire is very bad for them”.  
Maqsood, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Ranjha.

Forest fire in March 2009 was not as dramatic. I returned to the scene three months later. There were plenty of burned and dried up shrubs, most clipped away from the tops. Some of the tree trunks were burned up to the height of one meter. Several wild pomegranate trees were badly burnt at the trunks but flowering was profuse. I could not ascertain the impact on other NTFPs, yet the ground situation did not show a large impact. Fresh grasses were coming on the ground. However the Baghbodehri village fire resulted in desiccation of numerous wild pomegranate trees in June 2009. Hence this hillside was wiped out for pomegranate collectors at least for this season.

More important was to find out whether the wood-sellers leave these trees standing or also chop them down along with other damaged shrubs and small trees. A visit to a few firewood sale depots was an eye opener. Most of the wood came from burned forest areas. In five wood depots of Khanpur nearly all scrub species were being sold, including the wild pomegranate, wild olive and acacia. All of these species are important for NTFP collectors and fetch them reasonable income each year. The villages of Najafpur, Baghbodheri, Siradhna, Dhunya and Gram Thun served as the main sources of wood for these depots. They also sold wood from farms such as Shisham (*Dalbergia sissoo*), Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Bakain (*Melia azedarach*) and Mulberry (*Morus alba*). Some of these were also charred, which suggested that



**Picture 7.5:** (Top) Firewood sale depot - selling burnt wood including those of dhamman, pomegranate and mulberry - all important as NTFP. (Bottom) Chir tree with cups for resin tapping in Badrassi, Mansehra district (picture taken in 1991)

sometimes fire encroaches on private farmland where these trees are cultivated. The depot owners said that several stocks of firewood are regularly transported to Punjab for charcoal and clay-brick production kilns where they are sold on much higher rates. During the detour to the firewood depots, a discussion on resin tapping was triggered. This activity was banned by the State in 1992 on the grounds that resin is highly inflammable and aggravates forest fires. Another reason provided was that resin extraction by local labourers negatively affects the quality of timber.

Resin is a hydrocarbon secretion of the coniferous trees. On distillation, the resin yields an essential oil, commonly known as turpentine, and non-volatile rosin. The proportion of rosin and turpentine oil in Chir Pine is 75% and 22% respectively with 3% losses. The turpentine is chiefly used as a solvent in pharmaceutical preparations, the perfume industry, in the manufacture of synthetic pine oil, disinfectants, insecticides and denaturants. It is one of the most important basic raw materials for the synthesis of chemicals used in a wide variety of industries such as adhesives, paper and rubber. Chir Pine resin is used in paper, soap, cosmetics, paint, varnish, rubber and polish industries. Besides these, other uses include the manufacture of linoleum, explosives, insecticides and disinfectants, as a flux in soldering, in brewing and in mineral beneficiation as a frothing agent. Chir pine is one of the richest species among conifers in resin. Until 1992, resin was extracted commercially, with the Forest department issuing contracts and distributing the revenue as in the case of timber. Extraction entailed inserting a metallic extractor, usually a simple concave metallic plate, into the stem of the trees at eye level. The resin oozed out and was captured in small pots hung under the extractor. A few villagers mentioned about the ban on resin tapping.

“Resin was banned due to fires. At that time we had less fires but resin brought money to the people. Now there are even more fires – and no resin”. Subedar Jandad Khan, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Najafpur.

This connected to my curiosity regarding NTFP collection, whether the department has any objection to women and landless people engaging in the collection of NTFPs. Each time I got an answer that their activities went on without any interruption and their intrusion went deeper and deeper into the Reserve forest. However a woman processor of anardana in Ranjha indicated at one occasion,

“My husband used to extract resin from trees many years ago. But government banned the business. Now he collects anar fruit sometimes as labourer. What can one say about the government, if one day they will ban anar collection too?” Sabeeha, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Ranjha.

Many women agreed, a little ironically, pointing out that the State can only close down things that benefit poor. A few women added that just searching for options to earn a living chops off half the lifetime of the poor. There are not many options for forest dwelling people. Women are keen to keep a quiet and consistent engagement in NTFP exploitation, as collectors, labourers or managers, and earn a small benefit for their families. Many of them do not insist on selling processed NTFPs in larger markets because they do not want to be visible. In any case, small collections are not viable for such an economic leap and hence

they prefer informal contracts with easily approachable small traders in the village. On the one hand, many live in a state of unease for indulging in a kind of 'crime' as they know that they are entering into prohibited territories; but on the other hand, they continue to make a huge contribution to the national market.

## 7.6 Conclusion – gendered and social spaces in the forest arena

Regular access to NTFP by non-right holders for income is an illustration of their struggle, or more strongly put, an in-between expression of resistance. It is a collective noncompliance to the policy discourse, but at the same time their struggle is passive and quiet. This is the terrain of struggle, which is an everyday defiance but due to the fact that it is vital for the way in which natural resources are used and accessed, it is exceptional in many ways. People from poor ethnic groups, particularly women, access NTFPs without challenging powerful actors or becoming highly visible, yet they remain vital as a backbone for the business which reaches up to the national market. In this way, they use spaces that are considered undesirable by other forest actors. These spaces cannot be completely separated within the social arena, but they are knitted into the day to day practices of people. Women and socially marginalised groups are increasingly concerned about State intrusion into their customary and de facto practices regarding use and access to forests. They fear that this will only reduce their chances of earning a modest livelihood from the forest.

Women are creative in reshaping their practices and relationships with every change that takes place around them. For subsistence use, there are no boundaries. Women have acquired uninterrupted access for products that are still in the grey area for their economic significance, no matter where they grow. Patterns of access to resources are complex and vary with different products that the forest offers. Different products have attracted people from different identities but not all can essentially enjoy the same level of access either in a legal or de facto sense. Even the most established and clearly codified rules are constantly being reinterpreted, renegotiated, reconstituted or rejected. This is a struggle for securing livelihoods. A gender and social division of forest tasks, plants and products is becoming evident. However, there remains a problem of tree tenure in the sense that trees are subject to nested and overlapping rights of different actors. In a situation where women do not own lands, and trees are bought with their produce/products by the women's employers, do they have any control on tree tenure? Their interest certainly is high for these plants due to income opportunity and this is the reason that they even provide protection services, such as fighting fires. Yet, the Khanpur case suggests that in case of commercially recognised non-timber crops, women's right to tree tenure is only limited to communal Guzara and serving as paid labourers.

Firewood collection is the most visible, uninterrupted and non-compromising activity for women. In a large part of Hazara this is the women's domain. In their daily struggle to feed the family, they virtually manage and control the forest. They have a power to draw (and redefine) the boundaries for their domain. In such cases tenure changes in land use may trigger redefinition of "resources" and a subsequent reconfiguration of gendered spaces. Firewood extraction is considered one of the largest responsible drivers of deforestation (loss of forest areas) and forest degradation (thinning of forest cover). Without disregarding other

actors also involved in firewood extraction (commercial wood sellers and professional woodcutters), there is a need to carefully rethink the drivers of deforestation. In the absence of alternate energy options, is it the daily subsistent use that is responsible for the damage or is there more to it? This is where the risk lies from generalised conclusions and solutions drawn from them. Women's access to and control over spaces is for their families' livelihoods. Their control over resources and products adjusts according to changes in a host of ecological and social factors. Disregarding them as managers of forests is a mistake. Alternatively, they need to be recognised and made part of the negotiation process in order to help secure their forest spaces.



# 8

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This thesis has set out to conceptualise the forest as a social arena. I have argued that efforts to understand the forest should move away from seeing the forest as a physical resource which has a certain composition of species, and rather incorporate the social in the equation. I have explored the social arena as historically built with deep and long lasting institutional roots. Taking stock of actors' changing positions is at the core of such an approach. On the one hand, we have seen multiple actors operating within complex interrelationships and ushering claims that are embedded in the social history of the forests. On the other hand, we have seen new sets of actors emerging, creating new relationships, and reconfiguring existing networks that transform the meaning of the forest. The buying and selling of forest lands is a case in point.

The forest landscape is shaped by actors that are linked together by a kaleidoscope of rights, claims, negotiations and relationships. The State actors map territories with boundaries and establish a set of rules assuming that these rules will discipline people and hence the forest use can be managed. In reality however, such a State and expertly designed scripts do not work out that way. I have explored the situation in Khanpur as an arena whereby the State's script is contested and a range of actors continue to find ways and means to follow their own scripts in many differently seeking ways to fulfil their needs. They may resort to (opportunistically) network amongst themselves, manipulate nature, negotiate their claims or act as per their will without being visible. In one or the other way, scripts are defined, reformulated or misused for various purposes. Another aspect is that the State's plurality as the script becomes victim of the State's own functionaries who interpret it at their own level as per their capacity and contexts – and these interpretations may be worlds apart from each other.

Forest users often do not recognize the territorial boundaries either based on their historical claims, or first looking at their needs associated with the forests in an opportunistic way. This suggests that it is no longer the State actors alone engaged in defining territorialisation; also individual actors and their networks are now giving a new shape to old territories. New claims are also emerging in privately owned forests with the changing ownership from large owners to smaller owners and to those who did not own land before. Local people recognise that the forests are being misused and are under an immense threat of being eliminated. The Forest department also admits, however, frustratingly, that the forests are declining fast.

### **8.1 The State's plurality**

This thesis emphasises that the State does not act as a monolithic and one-dimensional institution. Multiple layers of several actors who make and act according to their own interpretations of the State's discourse thereby creating new and alternate discourses strengthening in turn that the forest is an arena composed by multiple, often contrasting discourses. Interventions by the State have a long history of inclusion and exclusion, conditioning access of people to the forest. The Forest department retained a lot of power for itself in the processes. Decentralisation efforts reinforced the existing balance of power in favour of the already powerful, thereby adding an additional layer of government on the forest and its people (Chapters 4 and 6). This ran counter to the expectations of forest dwellers when the decentralisation policy was enacted, which increased feelings of

frustration among them. The frustration was further aggravated by the incidents in which the department intercepted 'smaller thieves' on a donkey load of fuel or fined a young boy trapped in fire due to sheer miscalculation, but at the same time quietly abandoned the site when the elite asked the department to leave the fire ablaze.

Strong frustration and quiet resistance seem to be in the air in Khanpur. So far there are no signs of people (mainly users) taking a firm stand, revolt and take control of resources. As argued by Scott (1986) and Leach and Mearns (1996) it is rare for the peasantry to take such actions, as they are too likely to lose. Instead they adopt passive resistance or the resistance of the third kind (van der Ploeg 2010) - notably taking as much as they can, or diverting dependency on the forests to searching for alternative livelihood options. A complete loss of trust in government is leading to a short-term attitude: seeking to benefit from these resources today, because tomorrow is not secure. However these users are creating an alternative discourse by purchasing land, hence changing their social position (Chapter 6).

There are multiple scales of policy articulations, alliances and struggles within and around the State. The Forest department, the department's structure and positions changed from time to time. These transformations were influenced by several internal and external factors (Chapter 4, section 4.3). Various technologies were applied, including Cooperative Societies in the 70s and later reorganisation within the department, with good intentions to include people and to exercise power differently. These however did not transform the forest arena in favour of the people directly related to forests (e.g. forest owners and users).

The toolbox of the Forest department seems to be empty after trying all possible technologies in forest management. Time to time Changes, policies and reorganisations within the organisation were tailored in a manner that power was retained within the department. This way, multiple layered State gives room to everyday forms of resistance and manipulations by the elites. Except for a few project-driven examples, forest users have been ignored and the efforts made in this direction were hijacked by the more powerful, like the Cooperative Societies. The disciplining of users empowered the already empowered (Sundar 2000). Creating Village Development Committees (VDCs) does not automatically restructure the power structure in the villages and cannot prevent the elites from (re)gaining control over the forest and the poor. The latest Village Planning Manual prepared by the Forest department (2011) gave hope that the process would be accompanied by an in-depth analysis of power relationships, but it is yet to be seen what happens on the ground. The struggles continue, the relationships are shaped and reshaped accordingly and trust among actors continues to diminish. Actors on the ground continuously find a way to rework policy measures and hence nothing on ground is truly applied on the basis of which the results could be drawn and generalised. The question we have tried to answer is: 'Why is it that nothing could work on the ground?' One explanation is that the latest policies introduced in 2002, with the reorganisation of the Forest department, were not quite new. They were implanted on the old ones, which has created a complex and sometimes confusing mixture. They were a mix of concepts inherited from pre-independence and more recently imported concepts which have never been rooted in the governmental practice. For example, the department introduced a matrix organization in which the pre-independence territorial structure was retained while five thematic units were added to address community

development, human resources, NTFP, research, and planning and monitoring needs. The leadership and staffing in these units however comes from within the department by virtue of internal transfers. Adding a thematic layer to the department without allowing conditions for acquiring thematic excellence only complicated the situation for the departmental staff and the forest communities (Chapter 4).

One dismal conclusion derived by the personnel of the Forest department is that the department, despite being equipped with full powers has failed to perform its role (Chapter 4). However examples show that the department has made a genuine effort to meet the new demands from the internationally accepted discourse of participatory management of forest resources. There are individual actors within the department who tried different things within their limits despite their structural constraints to reduce the impact of institutional failure.

Devolution to the provinces through the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment (2011) also came with a certain hope. Provinces now cannot shift the blame to the central government for loss of forest. The provinces indeed can break the inertia that currently exists in Islamabad around the State actors, including the international actors interested in classical biodiversity conservation. The experiment will, however, come close to a failure if a similar move will not be made in favour of the districts and lower levels of administration (Chapters 4 and 6).

## 8.2 Fire as a burning discourse

Forest fires in Khanpur turn out to be clothed in a management discourse from a historical slash and burn agricultural practice to the more serious forest fires of today for which often the graziers are held responsible, even though fires may occur due to the forest owners' will (Chapter 5). Fire is an example of shifting powers exposing complex relationships and networks. Persistent ideas regarding graziers' engagement in fire incidents are rooted in false understanding and erroneous responses institutionalised in policies by colonial rulers. Graziers set fires in selected areas where grasses can grow fast. Such fires are considered to be beneficial for the forest as accepted by many respondents during this study. The daily firewood collectors have adapted to this indigenous tool for managing the resources. However, the key players in the discussion on fire are not only the graziers and daily firewood collectors but mainly the Guzara forest owners who have no right to legally use the forests that they own. Guzara owners can only sell dead trees after formal permission. They want to sell trees for their financial needs and the commercial firewood traders need dry sticks as they sell better in the market. The political ecology of fire wood marketing thus creates new consortia that pave the way to set fire to the living forest resources. Only burning brings fortune and therefore the mass murder of the forest has become unavoidable for them by lack of alternative ways to improve their livelihoods.

Collectors of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) are mainly concerned about the vegetation that is directly beneficial to them. They are not happy to see their pomegranate trees dying, and those who live close to the forests have to safeguard their private properties. There are several confronting discourses attached with forest fires. An inclining graph of forest fires, decreasing self-initiative among people to control fires, and department's

management bias towards Chir, are various causes mentioned during the field research. The Forest department is also reportedly slower than expected in reaching the site and controlling the fire.

Chir is adapted to fire, but the colonial rules that are still valid today are based on the premise that any fire is bad. Consequently, the prescribed measures to control fire expect villagers to put their lives in danger to fight fires and save Chir. While there is zero tolerance for graziers setting fires, controlled burning remains a highly trusted local method to reduce chances of fire. Chir is not only valuable for the State, but also for Guzara owners. Hence there is a conflict between the State-led resource management regimes to control fire, based on sound scientific grounds, and private Guzara owners using the resource for financial returns, even if this results in wilfully instigating fire. Although this controlled burning action is based on long-term local knowledge and experience to safeguard the value of the forest resources locally the conflict with the State leads to forms of resistance and manipulation.

Using a political-ecology perspective, the argument does not end here. There is also an element of networking between the government functionaries and the powerful owners, who also network with local users providing them with the means to manipulate nature. The villagers believe that the fire is used to make the trees eligible for legal felling in which a few green trees are also felled which escaped fire. Another is to use fire to hide the remainder of the stumps after felling. Most of the recent fire reports by the field staff of the Forest department that I have seen (2007-2009) state that the ground vegetation was damaged while Chir trees were not damaged (example Appendix 2). But then, in older fire plots, Chir trees can be clearly seen to have dried up or been cut within one to three years after a fire incident. Hence one actor comes with certain knowledge to support another actor who has the influence. These networks have increased the distance between the department and other actors. Self-initiative of people is diminishing as they do not want to get into other people's business. The ordinary villagers are not equipped to handle the intensity of fires that occur these days, while the forest owners use their position to dominate the politics of Guzara forests. The firewood traders benefit from a general chaos in Chir dominated Guzara and make use of the opportunity at the cost of the livelihoods of NTFP collectors. It would be wrong to hold the Forest department collectively responsible as an organisation for the continued occurrence of forest fires. However, local people doubt if the department is fulfilling its role for guiding fire control through villagers' collaboration, as argued by Gupte (2004). Only mutual trust can make this happen (Chapter 5).

Villages are far from homogenous, and there is an interesting configuration of groups within the villages. The details on deliberate fires by subsistent forest users including graziers are never revealed by villagers.

First, these cases in scrub fires anyway go largely unattended and unrecorded by the department, and secondly, the villagers seem to believe that these fires are rather harmless. A silent agreement exists between villagers of one group not to divulge secrets of the other. This is a sort of norm which is quietly followed among villagers. However one stakeholder may blame another, which creates much anxiety amongst local and poorer villagers for being blamed for fires set by large owners for harvesting Chir, and also to be blamed by commercial

firewood collectors to hide their act. Nevertheless, a form of connivance exists between the owner and the land occupants who are subsistence firewood users and graziers to allow them to set smaller fires for meeting their demands for rejuvenating grassland and exploiting this trade off for much larger fires later in the season. This agreement secures dependency of both actors within the forest (Chapter 1 and 5).

### 8.3 Changing territories and actors

History is evolving, and while the territorial shape of the forest is changing, actors are also changing positions and new discourses are emerging. The case of Khanpur gives concrete examples that the legally defined territories are subject to contestation. The idea of a territorial division of forests into Reserved forests and Guzara forests was imported during colonial times. The British resettlement missions arrived for short durations during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, defined forests, performed demarcation and left. They imposed regulatory boundaries on mythical lands and till today one cannot say with full confidence that this top-down effort to change rural land tenure was successful or not. In any case, their action decided the fate of people's lives and the forests for centuries. These territories determined the administrative reordering of governmental action through the Forest department. Forest users have never been convinced about the reordering of boundaries and have defined them in their own ways to make their historical claims. The rules defined at that time for determining the rights were too loose, including those that had to do with the selling of land. The revised rules (2004) governing management of Guzara remain silent about several aspects confronted in the field by the Forest department, such as proliferation of Guzara owners and an increasing interest in NTFP. This has provided an opportunity to non-State actors to create new spaces, make new interpretations and institute a reworking of the legal discourse through tactical networking. Field evidences and opinions from several actors, including senior forest officials, suggest that there is a need for a surgical deliberation on territorial forestry of Pakistan, since stock-taking merely on one of the tenurial arrangements would not serve the purpose (Chapter 4).

The complex pattern of Guzara ownership, rights and control have several management and policy implications for any programme that seeks to improve forest management and poverty alleviation. New actors are emerging, or old actors are reintroduced or transforming themselves (Chapter 6 and 7). One noticeable way of local actors to change their position is to acquire forest land entitlement. Many of them are proud to be the first forest landowner in their family. Most of the new ownerships comprise small pieces of lands which do not have a huge timber value in the future since only few or no trees may stand on them. However these lands legitimise the owner's position as the righteous member of the decision making elite in the village. New owners are also slowly changing the meaning and form of the use of natural resources. Sooner or later, when the ban on green felling imposed in 1993 is lifted, it is possible that the large owners will be inclined to buy back lands from smaller land owners. Although one cannot predict if this will happen quickly, it appears that for the moment the ban does not bother smaller owners so much. People are trying to create and recreate resources, giving them a new meaning and giving birth to new discourses. Chapter 6 reflects in detail that in this process, the weak are also gradually succeeding to participate. The response from senior officers of the Forest department is that for them, a situation with

too many owners with multiple interests would be more complex to handle (Chapter 4). A new face of participation through buying lands and giving a new meaning to resources may bring some unpredictable results such as more interest for NTFP than timber, greater attention for daily energy supply and a demand for fast growing species. This change cannot any more be ignored by policy makers who maintained their management view for one high value species for too long. There is a need to take stock of the proliferation of owners in Guzara forests which challenge the results of the survey conducted in 1990 which determined that 81% of the Guzara forests were owned by 12.3% of the households in this part of Pakistan (Rafique 1990). This research gives a firm indication that the situation has changed.

It is not unlikely that the commoditisation of forests and an increased activity around selling and buying of land may create more social exclusion, since not everyone can afford to buy a forest. With few actors buying lands, they now expect that their boundaries must be respected while they themselves did not do that before they acquired entitlement. The pressure from the excluded poorer people either shifts to Reserved forests or to the already limited *shamilat* Guzara in the villages. The struggle does not seem to be passive anymore. It is more tactical, in which forest owners, traders and graziers are trying to find solutions, but as far as possible without being visible. This way they are changing their status and redefining their own territories.

With changing boundaries and territories, it is also visible that the nature of power in contemporary Khanpur society is changing. Power, which was once measured through land holding, is now also measured through symbols such as political connectivity and networks. Actors are living in the social arena with a complete lack of mutual trust and empathy. The forest owners do not trust the State actors, nor their own tenants or forest users who are settled in the villages. Forest users do not trust owners for their loyalty to the people either. Finally, the Forest department always gives the impression that no one is trustworthy since forest depletion goes faster with every single attempt from their side to curtail the situation. In a situation like this, there is a greater reliance on the abilities of the self to find spaces to access resources rather than a mediator to share an alternative discourse.

One of the features of the NWFP Forest Ordinance of 2002 is the power of the government to assign a piece of Reserved forest to any community as village forest. Although such assignments are reversible, this is the first statutory provision to engage the forest community as a manager. Yet, the government makes the rules to regulate the management of village forests, prescribes the conditions for the provision of timber and other forest products to the village community, and prescribes joint responsibility and liability for the contravention of provisions of the rules. Rules have been notified by the government (Community Participation Rules, 2004) declaring village forests under the joint forest management (JFM). The Forest Ordinance of 2002 gives the DFO revocable powers to designate any Reserved forest, Protected forest or Guzara to a JFM committee. JFM therefore is seen as one window of hope that the department is trying to make an effort to change the obsolete and centralised forest management system. Policy measures hint to good intentions – yet they confront risks to which Sunder is pointing (2000). The criticism is that the “joint management” still keeps

the department on a stronger side. The department is not even considering handing over management of forests to communities even as an experiment in any tenurial arrangement.

The JFM committees can be registered on the request of more than 50% of the Guzara owners, as long as their total land holdings account for more than two-thirds of the Guzara area. According to the rules, JFM committees have 15 elected members: seven from among the owners; three from among the non-owner beneficiaries; three from civil society or village councillors and two nominated by the Forest department staff. The main lacuna in the rules is that the composition of a JFM committee is still based on the assumption that half of the owners living in the Guzara forests own two-thirds of the forest land.

Even if this were the case in reality, establishing a JFM committee will be an incentive for larger owners. Smaller owners would have to either engage larger owners to meet the requirements of the size of the forest land holding or they would have to make a lot of effort to mobilise sufficient smaller owners to agree on establishing a JFM committee. In both cases, the JFM committee initiative will provide an opportunity for different owners to come together. However, there remains the risk that one large owner will dominate several smaller owners since his withdrawal of membership can cause the dissolution of the entire JFM committee.

Most of the expected functions of the JFM committees are support functions in line with timber management – the function that overrides the entire working of the Forest department, namely to protect, harvest and manage the forest; carry out timber harvesting under written agreement from the Forest department, sell the timber, distribute the net income, reforest and plan. Several authors have criticised these policies since there are wide and open spaces left for manipulation (Ali, Ahmad et al. 2007; Shahbaz 2007; Geiser and Rist 2009; Shahbaz and Ali 2009). They argue that there is likelihood that timber contractors, forest officers, and influential owners or their representatives dominate JFM committees as office bearers. Recently the Pak-Swiss Integrated Natural Resource Management Project launched Village Planning methodology which was already institutionalized in the Forest department. Joint Forest Management Planning was an integral part of village planning in order to provide a support to materialize Joint Forest Management in a manner that chances are minimised for elite taking over the JFM committees. This experiment was conducted in three regions of NWFP giving hope for the future of collaborative forest management for the forest communities in the country.

The forests' administrative reordering has not stopped. It is still in process after almost one and a half century, for example in the shape of the 18<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment to devolve a number of central State functions to the provinces (Chapter 4). A number of committees have defined the architecture of such devolution. Experts from experienced backgrounds present well-thought out models to the decision makers who approve them after lengthy deliberations. The discourse produced in such encounters can only be challenged by an equally powerful discourse. One source for such alternative discourse that challenges the official discourse(s) may be the citizens, the people who live in the forest; or civil society. However, ordinary citizens do not usually have the power and capacity to challenge the discourses grounded in political and scientific knowledge.

Civil society (often represented by national NGOs) on the other hand, does not truly represent the interests of forest users. Firstly because they are not aware of the problem themselves, and secondly because many of them depend on the government for funds as sub-contractors or for their legal legitimacy. In Pakistan during the 1980s, a number of NGOs chose to take advocacy roles for themselves. There are examples of vocal NGOs which challenged the Forest department of NWFP during the reorganisation process criticising them for replicating the same colonial laws under new titles. Several factors, including the events in the aftermath of 11th September 2001 when the World Trade Centre was attacked in New York, have changed this scenario. As of today, NGOs are obliged to abide by the government since most of the large donors made a policy decision to implement their programmes through the government. At the same time, the government of Pakistan continuously formulates new policies to introduce a stronger hold on what national and international NGOs do with donor funds. This implies that the continued reordering by the government, forces the NGOs or civil society to become less and less involved making them act on generalised assumptions and hardly reaching the people on the ground.

#### **8.4 Carving out space for livelihoods**

Access to NTFP by forest users is a regular feature in Khanpur. The fact that even non-right holders, who live in and use the forests, regularly access this resource for their livelihoods, illustrates that they are firmly determined to use their agency for defying their exclusion from resource access and management. They keep their actions relatively invisible and quiet. This is the terrain of struggle which is very close to everyday collective defiance of the policy discourse. People from poor ethnic groups, particularly women, access NTFPs without being visible, yet they remain vital for the business of producing and marketing NTFPs such as spices, wild vegetables, medicinal herbs and natural dyes. Many of these NTFPs are locally used but some of them reach up to the national market. In this way, mostly women, but also men, from poor and landless groups use spaces that are considered undesirable by other forest actors (e.g. forest owners). These spaces cannot be completely separated from each other within the social arena. They are knitted into the everyday practices of people. Women and socially marginalised groups are increasingly concerned about the State's intrusion into their customary and de facto livelihood practices involving the use of and access to forests. They fear that State intervention will reduce their chances of earning a modest livelihood from the forest. They are also aware that their well being is tied to survival of the forest and when fire sweeps the forest floor, it burns their bread and butter (Chapter 7).

Patterns of access to resources are complex and vary with different products that the forest offers. Timber is not the only high value resource. The example of wild pomegranate, which is used as an Indian spice, suggests that different products have attracted people from different identities. In Haripur alone, at least nine marketable NTFP are relevant for the income of landless and small-holder families. The de jure or de facto access to forest for these resources is blurred. Even the most established and clearly codified rules defined by the Forest department are constantly being reinterpreted, renegotiated, reconstituted, or defied by local people when they collide with people's livelihood logic. For example, it is well

known to the women that Reserved forests are not meant to be accessed for firewood collection purpose, but they nevertheless do this. They do so since either they live closer to the Reserved forest, or they do not have any right of firewood collection in the nearest Guzara forest, and they have a hard time searching for the desired wood elsewhere. In this process, they are tactful in their networking with the forest guards and are able to escape his eyes or negotiate with him to give them relaxation (Chapters 4, 5). In another example, wild pomegranate trees in Reserved areas are accessed by individual collectors rather than by groups organised by a middleman. This is done to ensure that the action remains invisible without jeopardising future access to these trees (Chapter 7), thus to secure their livelihoods.

Firewood collection is socially assigned to middle-aged women and children. This practice is as old as is the history of forests in sub-continent. A gender and social division of forest tasks, plants and products is becoming more evident with increased exploitation of NTFPs for income generation over the last six decades (Chapter 7). However, there remains a problem of tree tenure in the sense that trees are subject to nested and overlapping rights of different actors. In a situation where women do not own lands, and trees are bought with their products by the women's employers, do these women have any control over tree tenure? Their interest in the NTFPs is certainly high because of their economic, health, and cultural values – and this is the reason that they provide protection services, such as fighting fires (Chapter 4). Despite this service, the Khanpur example suggests that in case of commercially recognised non-timber crops (e.g. wild pomegranate), women's right to tree tenure is only limited to communal Guzara, and only when they are serving as paid labourers (Chapter 7). For subsistence use there are no boundaries. In their daily struggle to feed the family, women virtually manage and control the forest. They have the power to draw and redefine the boundaries of their domain. In such cases tenure changes introduced from outside and changes in land use may trigger the redefinition of “resources” and a subsequent reconfiguration of gendered spaces (Chapter 6).

### **8.5 Policy challenges for natural resource managers and policy makers**

Firewood extraction is considered one of the largest responsible factors contributing to deforestation due to loss of forest areas, and to forest degradation by the thinning of the forest cover. Most policies in Pakistan are based on this generalised conclusion and the solutions drawn are oriented toward controlling encroachment for firewood collection. Is the need for firewood for daily subsistence use alone responsible for the damage or is there more to it? There is a need to carefully rethink the drivers of deforestation. Forest dwellers have historically defined their practices to use forests in a benign manner. These practices need to be observed and registered and new spaces need to be supported recognising forest dwellers as important participants of their own development (McGee 2004). The most important challenge is to create the mechanisms for discussion, negotiation, and arbitration of gendered access regimes under a variety of circumstances. New spaces for livelihood require a particular kind of the State or behaviour. In other words, forest needs to be conceptualised as a social arena rather than as a biological resource. In this context, the most relevant example is women's access to forest for multiple uses. It is extremely important to understand that forest use is increasingly feminised – a male dominated Forest department needs other eyes and ears to support this phenomenon for translating it into an opportunity

for the future. Another example is the changing patterns of land ownership. The Forest department has to open up to this reality and learn to collaborate with new owners who may bring new aspirations, and deal differently with the old, traditional ones. The first challenge for the department would be to first take a fresh stock of the forest landscape as a gendered space, and have a serious look at who actually owns the Guzara forest.

At the same time, forest dwellers, whether owners or users have to recognise that that the department is not a singular entity and does not speak with one voice because of the multiple interpretations of discourses by its officers. In this process, they would need to learn to deal with the multi-faceted nature of actors and define their course of action accordingly. Women have a capability to adjust control over resources and products according to changes in a host of ecological and social factors. A clear example comes from Haripur where women were actively involved in controlling fires (Chapters 5, 7), or decided to access a particular hill for firewood collection (Chapter 6). Women have suffered most from forest degradation, travelling longer distances to fetch forest products (Chapters 4, 7). In remote areas they team up with their children for help after their school hours, and they fight for the protection of pomegranate trees and protested against putting the trees on fire (Chapter 5). These examples bring women to the forefront as managers, despite that they are merely excluded from membership of Joint Forest Management committees which are dominated by men. Disregarding them as managers of forests because they remain invisible is a mistake. Alternatively, they need to be recognised and made part of the negotiation process in order to help secure their forest spaces.

As a practitioner I have learned from this scientific research that it is useful to understand the forest as a social arena. It is essential to remember the three elements of the concept of arena that lead to a more nuanced analysis of natural resource governance: Firstly, to move away from using predefined categories of actors. I have shown that the positions assigned to actors are not fixed. Secondly, an arena has multiple dynamics and fluid boundaries. The State is not a homogenous, single layered institution, but is given shape by the many daily interactions between the State, the forestry staff, village elites and forest dwellers. Thirdly, the relationships between the social actors in the arena are not always hierarchical despite power differences. The notion of a forest as an arena makes the forest into a relational space with fluid boundaries. This view challenges the idea that the forest's fate does not only rest locally within the forest boundaries. There are also multiple actors outside forests and their interests assert local influences on the forest and vice versa. The discussion on forest management must begin locally in order to understand history and actors' diverse interests. However the discussion must not end here and should be taken to a broader level for interpreting local interests in view of dynamic discourses influencing the forest.

I do not make a value choice between the two main discourses of localised development interventions undertaken by multiple actors based on locally defined practices to use forests, and the global discourse which sees forests predominantly as a source of carbon trading. I have argued in favour of a dialogue between the two discourses in order to produce an alternative discourse (Chapter 4) which is to make the global relevant for the local, through encouraging symbiotic relationship and mutual benefits. There are, for instance, fears attached to global mechanisms under the climate change mitigation agenda that they may

give way to recentralisation of resources which may disturb the current trend for securing livelihoods. Without disregarding a global or national political economy, there is a need to carve out pathways to continue with the livelihoods-forest discourse translated at provincial, district and lower levels. This study has built a case for a flexible approach with a focus on localised development rather than working through pre-defined plans, actors and actors' categories.

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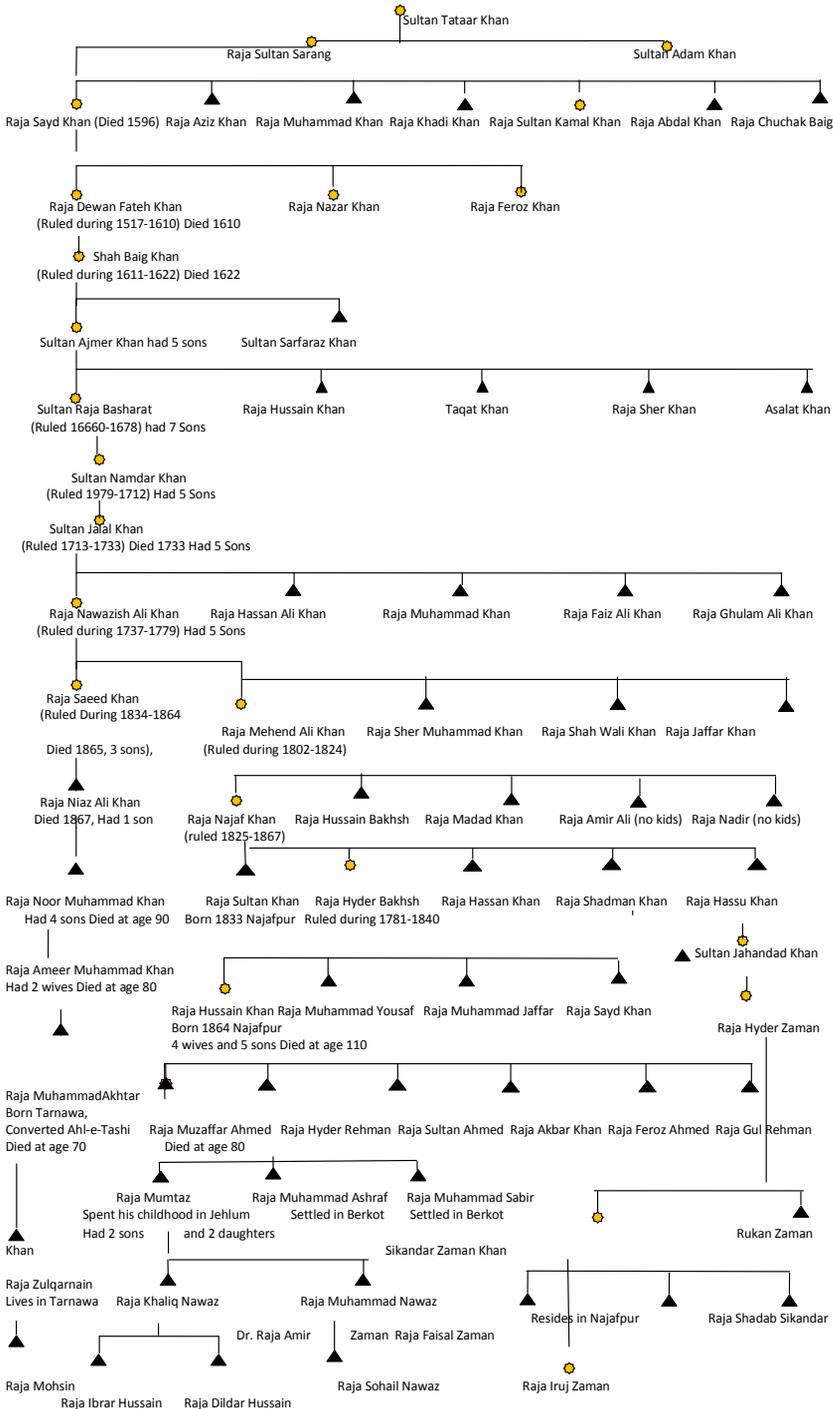
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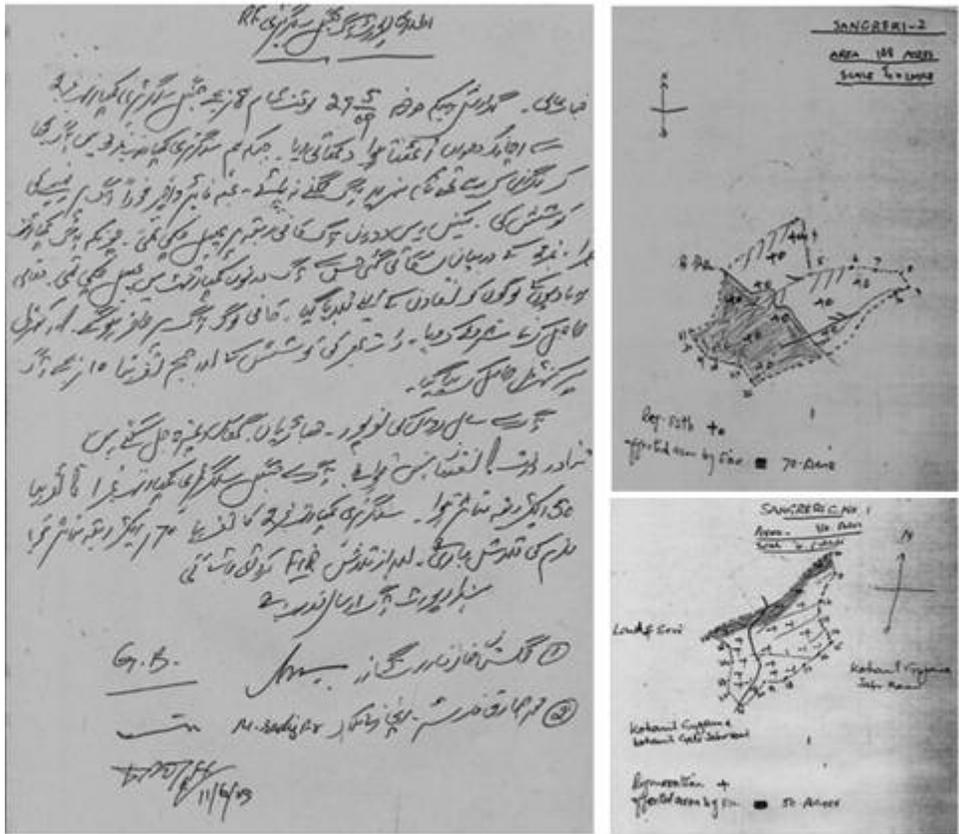
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Appendix 1: Family Tree of Raja dynasty



**Appendix 2:** A typical fire report from the field staff of the Forest department



Field report from Forest Guard and Block Officer: Forest fire on 29th May 2009 in Sangreri forest. The report says that the fire went out of control but mature trees were not damaged. Main damage occurred to grasses, shrubs and small trees. 70 acres area is reportedly burnt. The report also mentions that local people were called for help and many people reported on the scene. The author of the report assures that a police case will be registered against the culprit as soon as identified. Two maps of affected areas are attached with the report (Source, Forest department Hazara Circle).

## Appendix 2- Cont....

Report of the same fire incident by the DFO

N.W.F.P. FOREST DEPARTMENT.

1. Name of Division	Haripur Forest Division
2. Name of Range.	Makhnial Forest Range.
3. Forest Fire No.	04/2008-2009
4. Report on the occurrence of Forest Fire	Sangarari R.F.C.No.1 & 02
a. Estimated area effected.,	1. Sangarari .No.1 = 50 Acres. 2. Sangarari .No.2 <u>70 Acres</u> Total:- 120 Acres
b. Estimated damage done	Regeneration Grass brushes was burned completely in the effected area .
c. Supposed caused of out break.	Accidental
d. Locality inspected by the Range Officer	Inspected. On 29/5/2009
e. Locality inspected by the DFO	-
f. Measures taken to bring the offenders to justice	The Fire was Accidental and Fire Watcher Local

Report of the same fire incident by the RFO

## Remarks.

The Fire was  
burning of the

No. 2974

1  
2DIVISIONAL  
HARIPUR  
R & TFOREST DEPARTMENT  
N.W.F.P.Division Haripur Range MakhnialForest Fire No. 04/2008-09.Reports on the occurrence of a fire in the Sangarari R.F.C. No. 1 & 2  
on the 29, 30 of May 2009.I. Estimated area effected Sangarari No. 1 = 50. Acres. a Sangarari No. 2 = 70.II. Estimated damage done Regeneration Grass bushes was burned completely in the effected area.III. Cause of the outbreak - AccidentalIV. Locality inspected by the Range Officer 29 of May 2009.

V. Locality inspected by the Division Officer -

VI. Measures taken to bring the offender to justice.

The Fire was Accidental and Fire Watcher, Local People Forest Staff helped in putting of the Fire.Range Forest Officer  
Makhnial

## Summary

### Forest Fights: In Haripur, Northwest Pakistan

This thesis is an inter-paradigmatic exchange between political ecology and post-structuralist interpretations of actor-structure relationships. The study is founded on multiple discourses where different interpretations of a particular phenomenon by various actors have been analysed. The thesis is meant to show that relationships between society and nature are dynamic, entail multi-sited struggles among many actors at several terrains and are deeply rooted in earlier history. The study transpires that the forest is shaped by a loosely knit network of actors that are linked together by a kaleidoscope of rights, claims and social relationships which seem to determine the fate of the forest in a village.

Chapter 2 elaborates the theoretical foundation and methodological trajectory of this thesis. The concept of arena is central and analytically useful for this study as it connotes and involves social actors, their social relationships, practices and struggles between them. The notion of social arena is a metaphor for the site or place where action takes place between social actors. These places are not limited by geographical, natural or administrative borders. Arenas are social locations in which contests over issues, resources, values and representations take place. These are either spaces in which contestation associated with different practices and values of different domains takes place; or they are spaces within a single domain where attempts are made to resolve discrepancies in value interpretation and incompatibilities between actor interests. I argue that the forest as a social arena stretches beyond its natural and physical borders. The arena as the site of the struggle is not just geographically confined within natural (e.g. forest) and/or administrative (e.g. political) boundaries but it stretches beyond the locality. These arenas are diverse, they overlap and co-exist, and the boundaries at a given time are defined by networks of relationships between forest users and consumers, relationships between the State, bureaucrats, forest owners, dwellers, and so on.

Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of history of Haripur and how forests were legally categorised and distributed. History helps understand the political alliances and the power struggles in the region, the district, and (sub district) Khanpur. The State, during British rule introduced a new management regime for natural resources which changed the entire social landscape of Khanpur by attaching private property rights to the trees as well as forest lands in the region. The government authorities, notably the Forest department have most often seen forest dwellers destructive for the forest, depleting its resources and interfering with nature. This premise lays foundation of mistrust between people and the government. Contrary to this, the initiatives to introduce people in forestry governance are based on the realisation that the ownership, or at least management control over forests, is critical to responsible management by the people.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed account of how the Forest department operates in relation to people and forest resources. There are multiple scales of articulation, alliances and struggles within and around the department and these positions are changeable from time to time with several internal and external factors. The case of Forest department manifests that the

State is to be seen as a multifaceted organ and not as an individual actor. Structural changes were introduced in the department but the core on which the foundation of the department was laid, was never changed. Many women firmly believe that the department must continue to use authority to control local people who cause degradation. Each reform initiative taken in the name of participation ended up with basically continuing the same centralised system. Forests were never handed over to the community along with management responsibility (e.g. Guzara forests). Only joint management of forests was enacted – yet not implemented. Trust remained a major issue in all these struggles.

The subject of forest fire, which I perceive and have experienced as a strong manifestation of resistance and also as a tool to manipulate natural resources, has been dealt with in different places in this thesis, but particularly in Chapter 5. Burning forests is an old practice for clearing land for agriculture. Fire therefore had a significant role in defining farmers' territories. Gradually these practices changed but grazers continued to light up forests to produce lush green grass for their livestock. This led to a persistent discourse based on appropriating every fire incident to the grazers' practices. This study highlights that fire is now increasingly used as a management tool for manipulating the resource. Firewood collectors and big owners use fire for obtaining dry firewood or build the case for felling dead / dry trees which is allowed in the policy after ban on green felling. Even if fires may occur due to the will of the forest owner, the policy blindly holds grazers responsible for their wasteful and damaging practices. The collectors of Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP), mostly women, are not happy with fire since their resources are burnt down due to the productive fire requirement of Chir pine (*Pinus roxburghii*). There is an incline in the graph of forest fires, decreasing self initiative among people to control fires, along with the Forest department's management bias towards Chir pine trees in fire control operations; these concerns echo in various voices from the field. The chapter also highlights a form of connivance between the owner and the occupants of lands (peasants / tenants) and also the owners and Forest department staff.

Chapters 6 deals with actors in their struggle to secure their rights to the forest through acquiring forest land title deeds. This initiative from the side of the new owners can be understood as a response to what is explained in Chapter 5. No forests have been handed over with management responsibilities to non owner forest users in nearly one and a half centuries. Non owners have resorted to buying forest lands in little parcels in creating private forests. This way, new meanings are given to the forest and new spaces are created through tactical networking among various actors. Field evidence and opinions from several actors suggest that Reserved forests are frequently being accessed by people for their needs in a de facto manner. Several new owners have acquired land entitlement comprising small pieces of lands which do not have a huge timber value in future. Followed by this, it is also visible that the nature of power in the contemporary society of Khanpur (and beyond) is changing. Power, which was once measured through landholding, is now measured through other symbols, such as political connectivity and affiliation.

Regular access to NTFP by non-right holders for the sake of earning an income (Chapter 7) is an illustration of their struggle, or more strongly put, an in-between expression of resistance. Poor women remain invisible in their daily practice to access NTFPs. They use

spaces that are considered undesirable by other forest actors. These spaces cannot be completely separated within the social arena, but they are knitted into the day to day practices of people. State intrusion into women's customary and de facto practices concerns them. They fear that this will only reduce their chances of earning a modest livelihood from the forest. However, the women are also highly creative in reshaping their practices and relationships with every change that takes place around them. Firewood collection is the most visible, uninterrupted and non-compromising activity for women. In their daily struggle to feed the family, they virtually manage and control the forest. Contrary to this, women are not part of any dialogue on forestry reform. They need to be part of the negotiation process in which their spaces remain secure. The most important challenge is to create the mechanisms for discussion, negotiation, and arbitration of gendered access regimes under a variety of circumstances.

## Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift gaat over de interactie tussen politiek-ecologische en post-structuralistische interpretaties van actor-structuur verhoudingen. Uiteenlopende vertogen over hoe bepaalde fenomenen en processen geïnterpreteerd worden door tal van actoren worden hiermee geanalyseerd. Het proefschrift laat zien dat de verhoudingen tussen maatschappij en natuur zeer dynamisch zijn en conflicten met zich mee brengen tussen actoren op verschillende organisatorische en culturele terreinen die soms een diep gewortelde geschiedenis hebben. Ik betoog in dit proefschrift dat het bos vorm krijgt naar gelang netwerken tussen actoren zich ontplooiën, waarbij een kaleidoscoop van rechten, claims en sociale relaties de toekomst van het bos in een dorp bepaalt.

In hoofdstuk 2 werk ik mijn theoretisch en methodologisch kader uit. Het concept arena staat centraal omdat het de mogelijkheid biedt om de verschillende posities en discourses te analyseren. Het begrip geeft richting aan de wijze waarop relaties tussen actoren geïnterpreteerd kunnen worden en hoe hun dagelijkse praktijken en verhoudingen zich ontvouwen in onderlinge strijd. Arena is een metafoor voor plaats, daar waar de actie plaatsvindt en waargenomen wordt. Plaats is zo een sociaal en relationeel begrip dat niet wordt bepaald door geografische of territoriale grenzen of door administratieve structuren en natuurlijke omstandigheden. In tegendeel, plaatsen als arena's zijn ruimten waar praktijken en waarden worden betwist dan wel plaatsen binnen eenzelfde domein waar gepoogd wordt verschillen in interpretaties en onverenigbaarheid van belangen te overbruggen.

Mijn centrale argument is dat het bos als arena verder strekt dan een geografische eenheid en de fysieke grenzen ervan. Arena, zo is mijn betoog, is een strijdtoneel dat de ene lokaliteit met vele andere lokaliteiten verbindt. De arena's zijn veelvormig, overlappen soms en de grenzen ervan worden gedefinieerd door de sociale netwerken op een bepaald moment. Deze netwerken omvatten zowel de bosgebruikers als de consumenten van hun producten, zoals de Staat, bureaucraten, boseigenaren, bosbewoners, enz..

De geschiedenis van Haripur staat centraal in het derde hoofdstuk. De geschiedenis is van belang om te begrijpen hoe, door wie, waarom en wanneer de verschillende wettelijke categorieën zijn geconstrueerd volgens welke bossen worden ingedeeld en geordend. Geschiedenis is van belang ook waar het gaat om politieke allianties en machtsverhoudingen en de politieke strijd in de regio, het district en het sub-district Khanpur. De koloniale Britse Staat introduceerde een nieuwe structuur voor het beheer van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen. De privatisering van bossen, bosgrond en bomen heeft het gehele sociale landschap van Khanpur sterk doen veranderen. Een belangrijk onderdeel van dit nieuwe beheer is dat bosbewoners nu werden gezien als de actoren die het bos uitputten en ten gronde richten. Dit heeft het fundamentele wantrouwen tussen de Staat en de bosbewoners versterkt waar het gaat om het beheer van bossen. Dit in tegenstelling tot recente initiatieven om bosbewoners deel te laten nemen in beheersprogramma's die uitgaan van de aanname dat slechts eigendom van bosgronden, of tenminste het hebben van controle over bos een noodzakelijke voorwaarde zou zijn voor verantwoord bosbeheer.

Hoofdstuk 4 gaat in detail in op hoe de staat, in dit geval het departement Bosbouw, opereert in de praktijk waar het gaat om de verhoudingen tussen mens en bos. Ik laat zien dat er meer vormen van articulatie, strijd en allianties plaatsvinden binnen het departement en erbuiten. Deze posities die worden ingenomen liggen echter niet vast. Integendeel, in een samenspel van interne en externe factoren wisselen posities soms snel en veelvuldig. Het voorbeeld van het departement Bosbouw laat goed zien dat de staat niet als een homogeen instituut moet worden gezien en begrepen, maar als een meerzijdig orgaan waarin verschillende en snel wisselende coalities van belangen zich manifesteren en het beleid sturen. De structurele veranderingen die werden doorgevoerd hebben niet of nauwelijks tot werkelijke veranderingen geleid. Veel vrouwen in ons onderzoek zijn ervan overtuigd dat het departement zijn gezag moet blijven uitoefenen om toe te zien op de lokale personen die bosdegradatie veroorzaken. Terwijl iedere hervorming die tot doel had om deelname van bosbewoners in beheer en planning te vergroten, in feite dezelfde centraliserende werkwijze bevestigde. Het bos (met name de Guzara) en het beheer ervan zijn nooit overgedragen aan de gemeenschappen die van het bos leven en er in meerdere of mindere mate van afhankelijk zijn. Gemeenschappelijk beheer werd in de wet vastgelegd maar nooit uitgevoerd. Onderling vertrouwen blijkt een zeer belangrijke ingrediënt te zijn om strubbelingen te voorkomen en beheer te veranderen ten gunste van bosbewoners.

De bosbranden, die ik veelvuldig heb waargenomen, zijn naar mijn mening een uiting van verzet tegen de gecentraliseerde beheersstructuur. Tegelijkertijd zijn bosbranden een middel om bosbeheer te manipuleren. Hoofdstuk 5 gaat hier in detail op in. Het in brand steken van bos is een eeuwenoude praktijk om land vrij te maken voor landbouwdoeleinden. Vuur heeft zodoende een belangrijke rol gespeeld de afbakening van het grondgebied van boeren. Deze praktijken veranderden geleidelijk, maar veehouders bleven het bos afbranden om jong groen te genereren voor hun vee. Dit heeft onder meer geleid tot een discours dat elke bosbrand door veehouders wordt veroorzaakt.

Mijn veldonderzoek laat echter zien dat bosbranden in toenemende mate een beheersinstrument zijn geworden. Boseigenaren maar ook degenen die hout sprokkelen voor commerciële doeleinden gebruiken bosbranden om het bos te beheren. Dode en droge bomen mogen immers worden gekapt; levende bomen, exclusief dennen (*Pinus*), staan onder gezag van de Staat en mogen niet worden gekapt. Zelfs bij bosbranden die overduidelijk op instigatie van de eigenaren zijn aangestoken, worden de veehouders verantwoordelijk gehouden voor deze vernietigende praktijken. De verzamelaars van Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), hetgeen vooral vrouwen zijn, zijn niet gelukkig met deze bosbranden omdat de producten die zij zoeken meeverbranden. Er komen steeds meer bosbranden en er is minder animo van de mensen zelf om er iets aan te doen, gekoppeld aan de bias van het departement om vooral Chir dennen (*Pinus roxburgii*) te beschermen. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat hierbij een zekere vorm van samenwerking is tussen land/boseigenaren en de boeren die het bos pachten en bewerken enerzijds, maar ook tussen bouseigenaren en medewerkers van het Bosbouw departement anderzijds.

Hoofdstuk 6 gaat over de strijd van de actoren om hun recht op bomen en bosbosgrond zeker te stellen middels het aankopen van grondenrechten. Dit initiatief kan worden begrepen als antwoord op hetgeen in het vorige hoofdstuk werd uitgelegd; in de laatste

anderhalve eeuw heeft geen enkele overdracht van bos met beheersverplichting plaatsgevonden aan bosgebruikers die geen formele eigendomsrechten hebben. Om hierin verandering te brengen kopen steeds meer mensen een stukje bosgrond, soms zijn deze zeer klein en vaak is de economische waarde niet erg groot. Deze vorm van privatisering geeft het bos een ander aanzicht en door hun tactisch handelen wordt een nieuwe betekenis gegeven aan het bos. Het karakter van macht, machtsverhoudingen en invloed van bepaalde actoren in Khanpur en daarbuiten verandert aanzienlijk. Macht en machtsposities stoelden in het bos recentelijk vooral op grooteigendom en dat is nu sterk versnipperd. Nieuwe vormen van macht ontstaan en die hebben niet veel meer te maken met landbezit of boseigendom, maar scharniert om andere symbolen, zoals politieke relaties en affiliaties.

Hoofdstuk 7 richt zich op de bosgebruikers die niet in een positie zijn om landeigenaar te worden, zoals de verzamelaars van bosproducten anders dan hout (NFTPs) die hiermee een inkomen verdienen. Zij weten zich toch toegang tot het bos te organiseren, wat kan worden beschouwd als een tussenvorm van verzet. Vooral arme vrouwen maken zo dagelijks en veelvuldig gebruik van het bos en de natuurlijke hulpbronnen. Ze gebruiken delen van het bos die voor de andere actoren, zoals de landeigenaren, niet wenselijk of interessant zijn. Toch kunnen deze plaatsen niet los worden gezien van wat ik eerder als arena heb bestempeld. De vrouwen moeten er telkens strijden voor hun recht op de voor hen nuttige delen van het bos en de bosproducten. Zij vrezen de interventie van de Staat die hun gebruik van het bos aan banden wil leggen; zij zien dit als een inbreuk op hun gewoonterechten en hun alledaagse praktijken van verzamelen van bosproducten en als een bedreiging van hun bestaanszekerheid. Maar, de vrouwen spreiden ook listige, creatieve strategieën en praktijken ten toon teneinde te blijven doen wat ze al jaren doen. Het verzamelen van brandhout is een belangrijke bron van hun bestaan en is een duidelijke manifestatie van de plaats die vrouwen in nemen in het bos alsmede het beheer ervan. Ik durf te stellen dat de vrouwen in hun alledaagse strijd om het bos zich ontpoppen als de ware beheerders van het bos. Zij zijn het die het bos onderhouden. Ondanks dat worden vrouwen (nog steeds) uitgesloten van deelname in beheersprogramma's, zij nemen geen deel aan onderhandelingen over de toekomst en structuur van het bos. De vrouwen die het bos gebruiken zouden deel moeten kunnen nemen aan de onderhandelingen over vernieuwd bosbeheer. De uitdaging is om mechanismen te creëren teneinde de discussies, onderhandelingen en rechtsdeling zo te laten verlopen dat een voor de vrouwen gunstig regime voor het gebruik van het bos ontstaat. Het bos is immers de plaats die hun bestaansveiligheid creëert en deze moet op een of andere manier worden bestendigd.

باب مالکان اور محکمہ جنگلات کے ملازمین اور مالکان کے درمیان تعلقات کی نوعیت کو بھی ظاہر کرتا ہے۔ چھٹا باب ان کرداروں کے معاملے کی نشاندہی کرتا ہے جو جنگلاتی زمین کے ملکیتی کاغذات کے حصول کے ذریعے اپنے حقوق کے تحفظ کے لیے جدوجہد کرتے ہیں۔ نئے مالکان کی طرف سے اٹھائے گئے اقدامات کو باب پنجم میں بیان کردہ معاملات کے ردعمل کے طور پر سمجھا جاسکتا ہے۔ گزشتہ ڈیڑھ صدی کے دوران کوئی بھی جنگل انتظامیہ ذمہ داری کے ساتھ ان استعمال کنندگان کے حوالے نہیں کیا گیا جو ان کے مالک نہیں ہیں۔ غیر مالکان نے چھوٹے چھوٹے حصوں میں گزارہ جنگلاتی اراضی خرید کر فوجی جنگلات بنالیے ہیں اس طرح جنگلات کو ایک نیا مفہوم دیا گیا ہے اور مختلف کرداروں کے درمیان موثر ٹیٹ ورکنگ کے ذریعے اپنے لیے جگہ بنائی گئی ہے۔ زمینی حقائق اور مختلف افراد کے اظہار خیال سے یہ بھی پتہ چلتا ہے کہ اپنی ضروریات کی تکمیل کے لیے عام طور پر لوگ ریزرو (Reserve) جنگلات کا مسلسل رخ کر رہے ہیں۔ کئی نئے مالکان نے زمین کی ملکیت چھوٹے حصوں میں حاصل کی ہے جن کی مستقبل میں لکڑی کے حوالے سے کوئی اہمیت نہیں ہے۔ اسی کے ساتھ ساتھ یہ بھی دیکھا جاسکتا ہے کہ خان پورا اور اس سے اردگرد کے معاشرے میں طاقت کی نوعیت تبدیل ہو رہی ہے۔ طاقت جسے کبھی زمین کی ملکیت سے ناپا جاتا تھا اب اسے دوسری علامتوں مثلاً سیاسی تعلقات اور روابط سے ناپا جاتا ہے۔

لکڑی کے علاوہ دیگر مصنوعات تک غیر مالکان کی رسائی دراصل روزی کمانے کے لئے جدوجہد کا مظہر ہے اور باہمی مزاحمت کی شدت کو بھی ظاہر کرتا ہے۔ غریب خواتین ان وسائل تک رسائی کے روزمرہ عمل سے محروم ہی رہتی ہیں وہ ان جگہوں کا استعمال کرتی ہیں جنہیں دیگر عوامل کی جانب سے غیر اہم سمجھا جاتا ہے۔ یہ مقامات سماجی اکھاڑے سے مکمل طور پر الگ نہیں کئے جاسکتے بلکہ یہ لوگوں کے روزمرہ کاموں کے ساتھ بندھے ہوئے ہیں۔ ریاستی مداخلت ان کے اس روزمرہ کام کاج کے لئے پریشان کن ہے، انہیں خوف ہے کہ اس سے ان کے ان غیر یقینی ذرائع آمدن کے امکانات بھی معدوم ہو جائیں گے۔ بہر حال یہ خواتین ان تبدیلیوں کے ساتھ روابط کے معاملے میں جو اردگرد واقع ہوتی رہتی ہیں، اپنے کاموں کو نئی شکل دینے کے معاملے میں بہت زیادہ تخلیقی ہنرمندی کی حامل ہیں۔ عورت کے لیے جلانے کی لکڑی جمع کرنے کا عمل بہت قابل توجہ اور غیر مداخلتی سرگرمی ہے جس پر کوئی سمجھوتہ نہیں کیا جاسکتا۔ اپنی فیملی کا پیٹ بھرنے کی روزمرہ جدوجہد میں وہ حقیقت میں جنگلات کو سنبھالتی اور کنٹرول کرتی نظر آتی ہیں اس کے برخلاف خواتین جنگلات کی اصلاحات پر مبنی مکالمے کا حصہ نہیں رہی ہیں۔ انہیں گفت و شنید کے ایسے عمل کا حصہ بنانے کی ضرورت ہے جہاں ان کے وسائل محفوظ رہ سکیں۔ کثیرالغرض حالات میں مباحثہ، گفت و شنید اور صنفی اصول و ضوابط کا طریقہ کار وضع کرنا سب سے بڑا چیلنج ہے۔

اسکے برعکس لوگوں کو جنگلاتی نظام سے متعارف کروانے کی تمام کوششوں میں یہ تسلیم کیا گیا ہے کہ جنگلات کی ملکیت اور ان کا انتظامی کنٹرول اس مقصد کے حصول کے لیے ناگزیر ہے تاہم عملی طور پر ریاست کی طرف سے اس پر عمل درآمد ہوتا نظر نہیں آتا۔

چوتھے باب میں اس بات کی تفصیل فراہم کی گئی ہے کہ محکمہ جنگلات افراد اور جنگلاتی وسائل کے حوالے سے کس طرح کام کرتا ہے۔ مذکورہ شعبے میں اور اس کے ارد گرد تعمیر، اتحاد اور کشمکش کے کئی درجے ہیں اور یہ حیثیتیں کئی خارجی اور داخلی عوامل کی بناء پر وقت کے ساتھ ساتھ تبدیل بھی ہوتی ہیں۔ محکمہ جنگلات کا معاملہ واضح کرتا ہے کہ ریاست کو ایک کثیر الجہات پیکر کے طور پر نظر آنا ہوگا۔ محکمے کے ڈھانچے میں کچھ تبدیلیاں متعارف کرائی گئی تھیں تاہم وہ بنیادی مفروضہ جس پر اس محکمے کی بنیاد رکھی گئی تھی اسے کبھی نہیں بدلا گیا۔ بہت سی خواتین یہ پختہ یقین رکھتی ہیں کہ محکمے کو مقامی لوگوں کو کنٹرول کرنے کے لئے اختیارات کا استعمال جاری رکھنا چاہئے جو وسائل میں کمی کا سبب بنتے ہیں۔ اصلاحات کا ہر قدم جو شراکت کے نام پر اٹھایا گیا وہ آخر کار اسی مرکزی نظام کو جاری رکھنے پر اختتام پذیر ہوا۔ انتظامی اختیارات اور جنگلات کبھی کمیونٹی کے حوالے نہیں کیے گئے۔ جنگلات کے مشترکہ نظام کی باتیں تو ہونیں لیکن ان پر عمل درآمد نہیں ہوا کیونکہ اعتماد کا مسئلہ ان تمام کوششوں میں ایک بنیادی مسئلہ رہا ہے۔

جنگلات کی آگ شدید مزاحمت اور قدرتی وسائل پر کنٹرول حاصل کرنے کا ایک اہم آلہ ہے۔ زراعت کے لیے زمین کو صاف کرنے کی غرض سے جنگلات کو جلا نا ایک پرانا فنل ہے۔ کسانوں کی جاگیر کے تعین میں آگ نے ابتداء سے ہی ایک تاریخی کردار ادا کیا ہے اگرچہ رفتہ رفتہ یہ طریقہ تبدیل ہوتے گئے تاہم چرواہوں نے اپنے مویشیوں کے لئے گھاس اگانے کی غرض سے یہ سلسلہ جاری رکھا۔ اس کے نتیجے میں جنگلات میں آگ لگنے کے ہر واقعے کو چرواہوں کا فصل قرار دینے کی مستقل بحث جاری رہی۔ یہ مطالعہ واضح کرتا ہے کہ آگ کو وسائل کے استعمال کے لیے انتظامی آلے کے طور پر استعمال کرنے کے عمل میں اضافہ ہو رہا ہے۔ ایندھن کے لیے لکڑی جمع کرنے والے اور بڑے مالکان آگ کا استعمال خشک لکڑی کے حصول اور مردہ و خشک درختوں کا معاملہ تیار کرنے کے لئے بھی کرتے ہیں جس کی اجازت پالیسی میں ہرے درختوں کی کٹائی پر پابندی کے بعد دی گئی ہے۔ آگ بے شک جنگلات کے مالک کی مرضی سے ہی کیوں نہ لگائی گئی ہو، پالیسی اندھا دھند مویشی چرانے والوں کو ہی ان نقصان دہ اور تباہ کن حرکتوں کا ذمہ دار ٹھہراتی ہے۔ لکڑی کے علاوہ جنگلات سے حاصل ہونے والی دیگر مصنوعات جمع کرنے والے جن میں زیادہ تر خواتین شامل ہیں آگ سے خوش نہیں ہیں کیونکہ ان کے وسائل چیز پائے کے جنگلات میں لگنے والی آگ کی پلٹ میں آ کر عمل جاتے ہیں۔ جنگل کی آگ کا گراف مسلسل بڑھتا جا رہا ہے اس کے ساتھ ساتھ لوگوں میں آگ پر قابو پانے کے خود اختیاری اقدامات میں کمی آ رہی ہے ساتھ ہی محکمہ جنگلات کی انتظامیہ کا جھکاؤ صرف چیز پائے کی آگ پر کنٹرول کی طرف ہے اس سے علاقے میں مختلف آوازوں کی بازگشت سائی دے رہی ہے۔ یہ

### خلاصہ

یہ تحقیقی مقالہ ماحولیاتی سیاست اور کرداری ساخت کے تعلقات کی تعمیر و تشکیل کی وضاحتوں کے درمیان ایک باہمی صورت حال کا تبادلہ ہے۔ اس مطالعے کی بنیاد زیادہ سے زیادہ گفتگو اور مکالمے پر رکھی گئی ہے جس میں ایک خاص حقیقت کے حوالے سے مختلف کرداروں کی پیش کردہ مختلف تعبیر و تشریح کا تجزیہ کیا گیا ہے۔ اس مقالے کا مقصد یہ ظاہر کرنا ہے کہ معاشرے اور فطرت کے درمیان مسلسل تعلق ہے اور یہ تعلق کئی مقامات پر معاشرے کے مختلف کرداروں کے درمیان جدوجہد کے مختلف پہلوؤں کا آئینہ دار بھی ہے اور اس کی جڑیں قدیم تاریخ میں موجود ہیں۔ یہ مطالعہ واضح کرتا ہے کہ مذکورہ جنگل کرداروں کے ایک ڈھیلے ڈھالے نیٹ ورک سے مل کر بنا ہے جو حقوق، دعوے اور سماجی تعلقات کے مظاہر سے وابستہ و پیوستہ ہے اور جو کئی دہائی علاقے میں جنگل کی قسمت کے تعین کا احساس دلاتا ہے۔

دوسرے باب اس مقالے کی نظریاتی بنیادوں اور طریقہ کار کو بیان کرتا ہے۔ اکھاڑے (Arena) کا تصور مرکزی اور تجزیاتی طور پر اس مطالعے کے لیے مفید ہے جیسا کہ یہ مطالعہ معاشرتی کرداروں کی شراکت، ان کے سماجی تعلقات، جنگلات کے حوالے سے ان لوگوں کے افعال اور باہمی کشمکش کی شرکت کا مظہر ہے۔ سماجی یا معاشرتی اکھاڑے کا تصور کسی ایسے مقام کے لیے استعارے کے طور پر استعمال ہوا ہے جہاں مختلف معاشرتی کرداروں کا ملاپ ہوتا ہے یہ جگہیں جغرافیائی، قدرتی اور انتظامی سرحدوں تک محدود نہیں ہیں بلکہ اکھاڑے (Arenas) وہ معاشرتی مقامات ہیں جہاں مسائل، وسائل اور افراد کے درمیان مقابلے وقوع پذیر ہوتے ہیں یا پھر جہاں مختلف مقاصد کے تحت مختلف افعال اور اقدار کے درمیان تضاد اور تقابل کی کیفیت پیدا ہوتی ہے۔ میری بحث یہ ہے کہ جنگلات سماج arena کے طور پر اپنی قدرتی اور طبعی حدود سے بالاتر ہو کر پھیل جاتے ہیں۔ اس اکھاڑے کو سماجی کشمکش کے مقام کے حوالے سے قدرتی اور انتظامی طور پر بھی صرف جغرافیائی حدود کا پابند نہیں کیا جاسکتا بلکہ یہ کسی خاص علاقے سے آگے تک پھیل جاتے ہیں۔ یہ کثیر النوع ہوتے ہیں ایک دوسرے پر حاوی ہوتے ہیں اور آپس میں خلط ملط ہوتے ہیں اور ایک خاص وقت میں ان کی حدود کی وضاحت جنگلات کے استعمال کنندگان، صارفین نیز ریاست، بیوروکریسی، جنگلات کے مالکان اور رہائشیوں کے درمیان تعلقات کے ذریعے ہوتی ہے۔ تیسرے باب میں ہری پور کی تاریخ اور جنگلات کی قانونی درجہ بندی کی تفصیل بیان کی گئی ہے۔ تاریخ ہمیں ضلیے اور تحصیل خانپور میں طاقت کی کشمکش کو سمجھنے میں مدد دیتی ہے۔ برطانوی دور حکومت میں ریاست نے قدرتی وسائل کیلئے ایک نیا انتظام متعارف کروایا جس نے اس خطے میں درختوں، زمین اور جاگیر کے حقوق و ملکیت کا انضمام کر کے پورا سماجی منظر نامہ ہی بدل دیا۔ محکمہ جنگلات کے ارباب اختیار نے یہ فرض کر لیا کہ جنگلات میں رہائشی آبادیاں ان کے لئے تباہ کن ہوتی ہیں، وسائل میں کمی کا باعث بنتی ہیں اور فطرت میں دخل اندازی کرتی ہیں۔ یہ مفروضہ عوام اور حکومت کے درمیان بد اعتمادی کا سبب بنا۔

## Glossary

1. Ajars nomadic, goat farming families
2. Aks e Shajra (family tree): In Revenue terms this is called Aks-e-Shajra (a family tree drawn on paper). It is done to determine ownerships. Aks-e-shajra is a family tree coincided with inheritance records of land property. These records are maintained by Revenue department. This is a private document which gives details on family property and how it is distributed (within or outside a family).
3. Chob: Register on which felling records were noted.
4. Circle: Forest department specific unit, comprising of a number of contiguous districts.
5. Gujars: In many other parts of the country Gujars are nomadic in their behaviour. This however, is not the case in Khanpur as Gujars are permanently settled in many villages.
6. Jarga (often also called Jirga): A council of elders and the respected of a village who take decisions after hearing the proceedings of a conflict
7. Latha: Latha is a white, starched, cotton cloth on which the (sub-continental) practice has been to draw basic maps onto it. From this cloth, the required piece of map is drawn on paper for measurements and is placed in the revenue file of the owner.
8. Majbur: Word used in Urdu and Hindko having the same meaning - 'being helplessly poor'.
9. Milkiat: Private property, with proper revenue record
10. Muhafiz khana: Revenue records room at district level
11. Muhafiz: Muhafiz were guards who looked after forests areas.
12. Naib Tehsildar: A Naib Tehsildar is the deputy of Tehsildar. Tehsil refers to the sub division of a district which was a revenue collection denominator during Mughal era. 'dar' in Persian is a suffix meaning 'holder of a position'. The role of tehsildar continued during the period of British rule and was subsequently used by Pakistan and India following their independence from the British. Patwaris
13. Namus: Honour in Pakhtun code of conduct – primarily connected to family women's chastity and land.

14. Numberdars: Village headmen – also a revenue position at village level.
15. Seigniorage: Seigniorage was a fee collected by the State from the sale revenue of the tree. The fee was fixed by the State in percentage of revenue. The fee wavered for different species or varieties.
16. Shamilat: Communal land. In the context of Khanpur, common property resource with users known to the community (not an open access resource)
17. Sipahi: A commonly used expression in Hindko language for Forest Guard. The literal meaning of Sipahi in English is a soldier. This may have stemmed from their uniform. They wear black militia Shalwar Qamiz and a soldier cap with the department badge on it.
18. Wajib ul arz: Revenue records established at first land settlement (1872) and maintained by the government. These records include titles and details of all land owners and their rights.
19. Working plan: This is the document which gives management prescriptions for the forest for a prefixed period of time (10, 15, 20 years) on the basis of management system and its rotation). It serves as the prime book of the forester deputed to manage this forest.
20. Zamindars: Zamin, a Persian word meaning ‘land’ and dar symbolised as ‘occupant’ or ‘owner’. In simple terms, Zamindar refers to a landowner. During the Mughal Empire, a Zamindar was an official employed by the ruler to collect taxes from peasants. The Zamindari system was a key economic and political institution of the Mughals to implement the sharia-based Islamic rule. This practice continued under British rule with colonial landholders. After independence, however, the system was abolished in India and East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) while it is still active in modern Pakistan.

Arjumand Nizami (1971) was born in Karachi and spent her childhood in Quetta, Balochistan. She obtained her Bachelors (1991) and Masters (1993) degrees in Forestry from the Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar Pakistan. Her specialization in Masters was in Farm and Energy Forestry Management / Agro-forestry.



After completion of her masters, she spent about nineteen years working with national and international organizations in the field of natural resource management and rural development in Pakistan. Her first job was with a national NGO called the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), a previously Pak-German Self Help Project, in 1993 as Programme Specialist for Agroforestry. Ms. Nizami also served Pak-Holland Social Forestry Project Malakand-Dir Khyber NWFP. She has deeply studied effects of the project interventions (extension, community forestry, village land use planning, institutional development) in the project areas. She joined Intercooperation (IC) in 1999 initially as a National Programme Officer for natural resource management programmes. In 2004, she became the Programme Coordinator Pakistan in a joint capacity with the Delegate IC-Pakistan. Her responsibilities in IC included programme management at delegation level, supporting projects and providing thematic and technical cooperation to partner organizations. Her fields of experience include management of natural resources, particularly collaborative forest management, non timber forest produce, conflict management and equity issues, dryland management, climate risk management and policy. Other areas of interest include institutional development and knowledge management. In her lead position at Intercooperation, she is actively involved in climate change agenda of the organization and encourages mutual learning and concrete action between Intercooperation and various learned institutions and people in the country in this field.

Ms. Nizami has been extensively engaged in institutional reforms and other policy dialogues related to NRM at national level. She has been extensively traveling in the country and has remained on the Steering Committees / Board of Governors of a few national and international organizations. She has published several articles from various platforms.

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**Completed Training and Supervision Plan**



Wageningen School  
of Social Sciences

Name of the activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS (=28 hrs)
<b>I. General</b>			
CERES orientation programme	CERES, Utrecht	2007	5
Summer School	CERES, Utrecht	2007	1.5
<b>II. Research Methods and Techniques and Domain Specific Theories</b>			
A practical course on the methodology of fieldwork	CERES, Utrecht	2007	1.5
Research seminars CERES/ RDS / FNP	WUR	2007	1
<b>III. Academic Skills</b>			
Sociological theories of rural transformation (RDS 30306)	WUR	2007	4
Community Based Conservation and Rural Development (RDS 31306)	WUR	2007	3
Governance	Mansholt	2007	3
FNP Summer School 'participatory forest management as practice and performance'	WUR	2011	3
<b>IV. Presentations of research results</b>			
Techniques for writing and presenting a scientific paper	WUR	2007	1.5
CERES presentation tutorials	CERES, Utrecht	2007	5.5
Scientific Writing	WUR	2011	1.8
<b>V. Other</b>			
Role of culture and religion on rights especially the state of women and children in Pakistan	School voor Imaginatie, Amsterdam	2007	1
Resource Governance and pro-poor value chain promotion	Intercooperation Switzerland	2007	1.5
International seminars on Natural Resource Governance (Bhutan and Interlaken)	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	2008	2
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>35.3</b>



