

3 The Reform Process

Thus the positive aspect is that the 1990s marked a watershed in the history of forestry in Pakistan when the Forest Department in NWFP initiated an institutional reform process with the formulation of a people-centred forest policy for the province. Further activities include initiation of forestry legislation reforms, formulation of a proposal for the establishment of a Forestry Commission, establishment of a consultative forum - a forestry round table, and establishment of an Institutional Transformation Cell (ITC) to pursue the process of institutional reorganization and reform in a consultative manner.

3.1 Mission Statement of the Forest Department

An interesting feature of the forest departments in Pakistan is that they lack mission statements. At the start of forest conservation in the eighteenth century, when the colonial masters laid the foundations of the forest service in the sub-continent, the mission was simple: *'Conserve the forests to provide timber for building cantonments and railway tracks and to earn revenue for the state'*. Although the situation has completely changed since then, the same principle is still being followed, despite the fact that there is persistent opposition from the people living in and around the forests. The punitive policing approach followed by the foresters in protecting the forests has become completely redundant.

In the Sarhad Provincial Province Conservation Strategy (SPCS) an attempt has been made to

redefine the mission statement for the department. This has been adopted in the new NWFP forest policy with the following words:

"To achieve sustainable well-being of the forests of NWFP for the benefit of communities residing around them in particular, and of the people of NWFP of Pakistan and the world in general."

This clearly recognises people living around the forests to be part of the forest ecosystem, and recognises that their well-being is closely linked to the well-being of the forests. It implies that future efforts towards the sustainable development of the forest ecosystem must devote the same attention to the socioeconomic development of the local people. The mission statement will be further elaborated during the course of institutional reform.

3.2 Identification of the Need to Reform

The need for a reform process in the forestry sector was identified in a number of studies including the Forestry Sector Master Plan (FSMP), the Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy (SPCS), a feasibility study for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded Forestry Sector Project (FSP) in NWFP, a GTZ study to evaluate the performance of the Forestry Cooperatives, and the Forest Development Corporation (FDC) in NWFP. All these studies, in general, and the SPCS in particular, have held organizational and structural failures responsible for the persistent decline and

deterioration of forest resources. The GTZ study suggested specific structural and functional adjustments in the department of forestry; and ADB funding for the Forestry Sector Project was linked to government commitment to the reform process.

3.3 Institutional Arrangements for Reform

A Task Force (TF) on institutional reform of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and Wildlife (DFFW) was established to pursue the reform process at the departmental level. Its task is to clarify details and implement institutional reforms in a phased manner as part of a time-limited action plan. Further, a Steering Committee (SC) was established, headed by the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) to the Government of NWFP, to provide policy, direction, and support to the reform process at the government level. Both these institutions meet regularly to pursue the reform process in a systematic manner. Proposals and recommendations are first finalised at the Task Force level through a consultative process. In addition to the formal meetings of its members, broader consultations with stakeholders are also arranged on specific topics and issues. The recommendations of the Task Force are examined, deliberated upon, and finally approved by the Steering Committee through a consultative process.

3.4 Institutional Transformation Cell

There is, however, resistance to the reform process within the agency. This institutional resistance to change, or institutional inertia, is a natural process, particularly for an organization that is following to the letter the management objectives established in the colonial era (the nineteenth century) when the department was created. There is a strong need to manage this resistance through a process of dialogue and consensus building.

In order to overcome the resistance to reform, an Institutional Transformation Cell (ITC) has

been established to conceptualise various components of the reform process and to build consensus with various stakeholders. The ITC works together with the TF, which acts as a filter before components reach the Steering Committee for final approval. Thus a three-tiered institutional mechanism has been set up to pursue the reform process in a systematic manner. The TF and the SC are part-time institutions, whereas the ITC works full time on the institutional reform process.

3.5 Collaborative Efforts

One distinctive feature of the reform process is that it is being pursued through the collaborative efforts of the Government of NWFP, the Forest Department, The World Conservation Union (IUCN), Pakistan, the Forestry Sector Donors' Coordination Group (FSDGC), and various NGOs, notably SUNGI. All these stakeholders are represented in the TF and the SC. Other stakeholders are also consulted in discussions.

3.6 Forestry Commission

Widespread interference in the appointment, posting, transfer, and promotion of the personnel of the forestry departments has rendered these departments completely subservient to the personal stake of a few influential people. The Forest Cooperative Societies' fraud provided a dramatic example of the effects of this. The fraud continued for fourteen years, grossly depleting about 30,000 acres of *Guzara* (private) forests in NWFP, while the forest department stood by completely paralysed. Similarly, the yields prescribed in a number of working plans have been grossly violated under the influence of politicians.

In order to remedy the situation, the GTZ study to evaluate the performance of the forestry cooperatives and the Forest Development Corporation (FDC), recommended the establishment of a Forestry Commission, which could act as a filter between forest management, the administration, and political decision-making processes. A draft Bill to establish a three

member forestry commission has been formulated and is now being processed for formal approval by the Provincial Cabinet.

3.7 Forestry Round Table

A forestry round table has been set up to provide a forum for the stakeholders in forestry. It has more than 50 members, comprising representatives from a wide range of groups and institutions such as the the forest department, forest owners, forest users, NGOs, journalists, industrialists, educationalists, and contractors. The round table will be a kind of assembly in which stakeholders can voice their concerns and express their opinions on issues related to natural resources. It will be a unique experience for the foresters to sit together with the stakeholders and debate the *pros* and *cons* of their decisions and actions on the management of natural resources.

3.8 Reorganization of the Forest Department

With the establishment of a forest policy and institutions like the Forestry Round Table and the ITC, the stage is now set to start discussing the important but complicated and sensitive issue of actual reorganization of the department. The broad features of the reformed forest department are indicated in the GTZ study. These features have been further elaborated by capacity building consultants for the Forestry Project. Essentially, the reform involves reorganizing the department into a line and staff organization, reducing administrative jurisdictions, introducing different chains of command, and encouraging functional integration, decentralization and devolution, and a balance in gender.

In essence, reorganization will entail changing the culture of the department, with a shift from authoritative to participatory management and from top-down to bottom-up decision-making and planning processes. This will take a long time and will only be possible through training, sensitisation, and an extensive information campaign addressing all segments of the

stakeholders' groups and of society. Arrangements for large-scale training to encourage attitudinal changes have already been started in the Forestry Sector Project.

3.9 Forestry Education

A specially designed forestry education system was one of the three pillars (the forest department and forest law being the others) of the forestry administration system established in British India to further the goals of the colonial government. This system aimed at producing 'generalists' in forestry who could protect and manage the resource through coercive policing methods. An essential feature of this education system is the limitation of access to nominees of the forest departments only. There is no form of forestry education open to members of the public. Thus the education system can at best be described as 'pre-service training'. This applies to both professional and technician level training, the former imparted in the Pakistan Forest Institute and the latter in Forestry Schools.

The outcome of this 'closed' educational system has been that specialisations have been unable to develop, and the discipline could not become popular with ordinary people. This has led to a lack of public support or lobby for the foresters. This unique system of forestry education, practised nowhere else in the world except to some extent in India, is still being religiously upheld in Pakistan 50 years after independence.

Forestry education at the Pakistan Forest Institute and the Forestry Schools leaves a deep imprint on forest functionaries. Throughout their lives, they continue to believe what they were taught at these institutions unless they pursue advanced education abroad.

The forestry education system lays the foundation for the forestry institutions in the country, thus if the intention to introduce long-term and sustainable reform of the forest department is serious, it will be imperative to reform the education system. This important

point was recognised at the time when the basic parameters and components of the reform process were defined. Arrangements to reform forestry education have been stipulated within the capacity building component of the Forestry Sector Project.