

# **Land Policies, Land Management and Land Degradation in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas**

**Nepal Study Report**

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**Socioeconomic and Ethno-Political Research  
and Training Consultancy (P) Ltd. (SEEPOR)**

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**International Centre for Integrated  
Mountain Development  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
2000**

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# Preface

The Mountain Farming Systems' Division of ICIMOD, with support from the Global Mountain Programme, initiated a comparative study on the effect of land policies on land management and degradation in six regional countries; Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan; sharing the Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain range. One study was commissioned in each country. The exception to this was India where two studies, one in the North-west and one in the Northeast, were conducted to capture the diversity and size of the Indian Himalayas. Each of the country studies was carried out by a team of experts from biological as well as socioeconomic disciplines.

The study was based on a concept paper developed by Professor Piers Blaikie in association with ICIMOD staff. The Team Leaders of the country studies came to ICIMOD in May 1997 to discuss the concept paper and agree on the methodology and operational aspects of the project. Each of the studies was to investigate four sectoral policies, e.g., Agriculture, Forestry, Wildlife and National Parks, and Tenure and Property Rights. Additionally, each study looked at the national and or provincial environmental policy and its implementation. The idea was to investigate thoroughly all the sectoral policies and their impact on land management. Each of the studies also chose one particular issue of interest for the country or area that had a significant impact on land management. The study period was between June-October 1997 and final reports were presented in a workshop at ICIMOD in early November. Subsequently, the reports were revised for publication.

We believe that, by publishing these studies, ICIMOD will facilitate an important contribution for a wider audience, in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region and beyond, who would benefit from the detailed information and analysis of this very important topic.

ICIMOD would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Piers M. Blaikie, of the University of East Anglia, U.K., in the design and implementation of this study. From within the Centre, Professor Blaikie was assisted by Dr. Syed Zahir Sadeque, Social Scientist, ICIMOD, and Dr. Tej Partap, Head, Mountain Farming Systems and Coordinator of the Global Mountain Programme at ICIMOD. In addition, a multidisciplinary advisory team of ICIMOD professionals, namely, Dr M.Banskota, Dr N.S.Jodha, and Dr T.S.Papola, provided valuable inputs during the study.

Tej Partap

Syed Zahir Sadeque

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We appreciate greatly the excellent cooperation received from Mr. P. Regmi, Soil Conservation Officer, Kaski District, and his staff during field visits. The local communities and VDC officials from the villages visited by the team were equally helpful, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

# Abstract

This is a study about government land policies and their impact on land utilisation and management and on land degradation. Land policies in Nepal were, in general, found to have a negative impact on the majority of the population and cause land degradation. It is a mutually reinforcing process in which degradation has aggravated poverty and poverty has further exacerbated degradation. A review is first made of the overall national framework for guiding development efforts with due regard given to sustainability and maintenance of the environment. The various perspectives on land degradation are discussed and five key areas of concern selected for this study (agriculture, property and entitlement, forestry, national parks and wildlife, and decentralization are analysed). Performance in the country's leading economic sector, agriculture, is found to be unsatisfactory, while achievements in forestry and protected area management are mixed. Land ownership and tenure entitlements are unfavourable from both equity and efficiency perspectives. Finally, while there has been considerable rhetoric regarding participatory and bottom-up processes of resource management and decision-making, empowerment of local bodies through decentralization remains inadequate.

# Acronyms

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ADB     | Agricultural Development Bank  |
| AIDAB   | Australian International Development Assistance Bureau                               |
| APP     | Agricultural Perspective Plan  |
| APROSC  | Agricultural Projects Services Centre  |
| AsDB    | Asian Development Bank   |
| CDO     | Chief District Officer   |
| CIDA    | Canadian International Development Association                                       |
| CPFD    | Community and Private Forest Division  |
| CFDP    | Community Forestry Development Project   |
| CITES   | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora      |
| CFUG    | Community Forest User Group  |
| DDC     | District Development Committee   |
| DFID    | Department for International Development   |
| DFO     | District Forest Officer  |
| DFO     | District Forest Office   |
| DLS     | Department of Livestock  |
| DNPWC   | Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation                                |
| DOA     | Department of Agriculture  |
| DOB, TU | Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University   |
| DOF     | Department of Forests  |
| DOT     | Department of Tourism  |
| DSC     | Department of Soil Conservation  |
| DSP     | Decentralization Support Programme   |
| DRCFDP  | Dolakha Ramechhap Community Forestry Development Project                             |
| EIA     | Environmental Impact Assessment  |
| EU      | European Union   |
| FAO     | Food and Agriculture Organization  |
| FINNIDA | Finnish International Development Agency   |
| FORESC  | Forest Research Survey Centre  |
| FRISP   | Forest Resource Information System Project   |
| FUGs    | Forest User Groups   |
| GDP     | Gross Domestic Product   |
| GTZ     | Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation) |
| GEF     | Global Environmental Facility  |
| HMGN    | His Majesty's Government/ Nepal  |



|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ICIMOD  | International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development             |
| IDA     | International Development Agency                                     |
| IFAD    | International Fund for Agricultural Development                      |
| IHDP    | Integrated Hill Development Project                                  |
| IOF     | Institute of Forestry  |
| IRDP    | Integrated Rural Development Project                                 |
| IUCN    | International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources |
| JT      | Junior Technician  |
| JTAs    | Junior Technical Assistants  |
| KHARDEP | Koshi Hill Area Rural Development Project                            |
| KMTNC   | King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation                          |
| KTWR    | Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve   |
| LAC     | Lumle Agricultural Centre  |
| LDO     | Local Development Officer  |
| LGP     | Local Governance Programme   |
| LRMP    | Land Resource Mapping Project  |
| MAB     | Man and Biosphere Programme, UNESCO                                  |
| MFS     | Mountain Farming Systems' Programme                                  |
| MFSC    | Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation                             |
| MOA     | Ministry of Agriculture  |
| MPFS    | Master Plan for the Forestry Sector                                  |
| MPFSP   | Master Plan for the Forestry Sector Project                          |
| MTCA    | Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation                             |
| MOWR    | Ministry of Water Resources  |
| NACFP   | Nepal Australia Community Forestry Project                           |
| NARC    | Nepal Agricultural Research Council                                  |
| NPC     | National Planning Commission   |
| NUKCFP  | Nepal UK Community Forestry Development Project                      |
| NEPAP   | Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan                           |
| NGO     | Non-Governmental Organization  |
| NEA     | Nepal Electricity Authority  |
| NA      | Not Applicable   |
| NMCP    | Northern Mountains Conservation Project                              |
| OP      | Operational Plan   |
| PDDP    | Participatory District Development Programme                         |
| PDLT    | <i>Panchayat</i> Development and Land Tax                            |
| PF      | <i>Panchayat</i> Forest  |
| PDO     | <i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer                                 |
| PPF     | <i>Panchayat</i> Protected Forest                                    |
| PPP     | Parks and People Project   |
| PWR     | Parsa Wildlife Reserve   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| RBNP   | Royal Bardia National Park                                       |
| RCNP   | Royal Chitwan National Park                                      |
| RSWR   | Royal Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve                             |
| SDC    | Swiss Development Cooperation                                    |
| SIDA   | Swedish International Development Agency                         |
| SMSs   | Specialised Subject Matter Specialists                           |
| T&V    | Training and Visits  |
| TCN    | The Timber Corporation of Nepal                                  |
| TU     | Tribhuvan University   |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                             |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UMN    | United Mission to Nepal  |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development               |
| VDC    | Village Development Committee                                    |
| WECS   | Water and Energy Commission Secretariat                          |

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

This is a study about government policies that bear on how the country's most valuable natural resource, land, is utilised and managed, how those policies have influenced the various land utilisation and management practices, and how such practices have contributed one way or the other to land degradation and the quality and sustainability of this resource.

It is a part of the series of country studies commissioned by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas. This study was coordinated by Dr. Zahir Sadeque and technically guided by Prof. Piers Blaikie.

The report is organized as follows. A brief review of the overall national framework for guiding development efforts with due regard for sustainability and maintenance of the environment is carried out in this section. Before embarking on the analysis of the five key areas of concern selected

for this study (agriculture, property and entitlement, forestry, national parks and wildlife, and decentralization [wild card]), the various perspectives on the very concept of land policy, land management, and land degradation are presented in the next section. Agriculture is discussed in Section 3, followed by property and tenure. Forests and national parks and wildlife are treated in Sections 5 and 6, respectively. Section 7 deals with decentralization, while the main conclusions of the study from all major areas covered are presented in the last section.

### 1.2 National Environmental Policy

The Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan (NEPAP) was prepared by the government in 1993 by engaging a team of specialists and with support from the World Bank. This document analyses the country's environmental issues in a multi-sectoral framework and sets forth a strategy for maintaining the country's natural environment and the health and safety of its population and its cultural heritage as

economic development occurs (EPC 1993, v). Below is a summary of HMGN's environmental policy, and sectoral policies related to agricultural land, forest, and rangelands and biodiversity conservation.

There are five main aims of HMGN's environmental policy (EPC 1993):

- to manage efficiently and sustainably natural and physical resources;
- to balance development efforts and environmental conservation for sustainable fulfillment of the basic needs of the people;
- to safeguard the national heritage;
- to mitigate the adverse environmental impacts of development projects and human action; and
- to integrate environment and development through appropriate institutions,

adequate legislation and economic incentives, and sufficient public resources.

It appears that Nepal's environmental policy incorporates the objective of reversing the land degradation problem, while being aware of the social and economic imperatives to meet the people's basic needs. Land degradation however is a difficult issue to conceptualise and much more so to prove its causes, magnitude, and consequences for various actors. Factors that play a key role in affecting land degradation are more difficult to understand than had conventionally been believed in the past. Before going into the details of Nepal's land policies and their impacts on land degradation, the next section provides an intellectual framework for understanding the issue of land degradation from various perspectives.

## Chapter 2

# Conceptualisation: Understanding Land Degradation

Degradation is not an absolute term, but dependent on use. It is rather a perceptual term with multiple users, and it is open to multiple interpretations (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987). There are about seventy definitions currently in use, which is confusing for everyone (Jones 1995). This has therefore been the subject of research throughout the world (FAO 1991).

Many argue that scientific analysis alone cannot be expected to present a consistent picture of the extent of land degradation. Lal *et al.* (1989), for example, argue that there is no reliable database or precise criteria for assessing land degradation. Similarly, Carpenter (1989) revealed that there is a lack of statistical reliability pervading the studies of field measurements such as soil erosion rates, nutrient transport, and productivity of vegetation. Therefore, rather than exclusively concentrating on presenting more scientific data, which also have only partial views of our world, it is useful that views on the construction of the problem of land degradation by various actors, such

as local people, policy-makers, resource managers, and researchers, are noted.

Nepal has become a paradigmatic experimental ground for forest and land degradation. A number of different studies have also been conducted (see, for example, Eckholm 1975, 1976; McFarlane 1976; Banskota 1979; Wallace 1981, 1988; Bajracharya 1983; Thomson *et al.* 1986; Blaikie 1985, 1988; Mahat *et al.* 1986a, 1986b, 1987a, 1987b; Ives and Messerli 1989; World Bank 1992; Metz 1991; Soussan *et al.* 1995). The findings of these studies show considerable variations in both the extent and severity of the problems that have been subject to much different interpretations. Common to all are factors such as population, poverty, and property regimes, which are often blamed for degradation, but their links with land degradation are difficult to conceptualise, measure, and prove. Natural geomorphic and historical factors as well as inappropriate government forest policies have now been found to play a much more important role in affecting apparent forest

degradation than had been believed previously. Specifically, land degradation is understood and interpreted in different ways by various actors such as land users, foresters, social scientists, policy-makers, and donors. Although at any one time numerous definitions and meanings exist simultaneously, they have never been brought together and documented properly.

## **2.1 Questioning the Conventional Wisdom**

The widely held views of natural science literature on land degradation are based on a positivist assumption of a single, objectively measurable reality and value neutrality, although some variables are inherently immeasurable (Mearns 1991). In fact, how scientists measure the world depends on what the scientific community considers important and real (Pretty 1994). Three types of difficulties are identified in scientific measurement; first, the inaccuracies of data, due to inadequate measurement techniques; secondly, the sampling, extrapolation, and interpretation of data; and thirdly, the inherently indeterminate nature of some phenomena (Jones 1995). Therefore, in recent years positivist assumptions of a single, objectively measurable reality of science are called into question, and, in the development field, a new paradigm is emerging which focusses less on rigorous science and more on local meanings. This draws the attention of researchers to take an account of pluralist assertions of multiple realities so that the views of local people will also be sought.

In soil erosion research, slope gradient and slope length were considered as the most important causes of erosion, and structural measures in the form of terraces were frequently imposed to reduce runoff. These ideas have been exported from the USA to various soil conservation projects in

Nepal, but it has recently been realised that villagers' indigenous agronomic methods that maintain good protective vegetation cover are much more effective than structural methods (e.g., terracing, retaining walls, and check dams). In addition, Ives and Messerli (1989) explain that farmers in Nepal have been blamed for poorly constructed outwardly sloping terraces. Yet they are outwardly sloping to increase drainage which reduces landslides (as the weight of the water increases the risk of slippage), and they are only poorly maintained during the heavy monsoon, presumably due to labour shortages (Blaikie 1989).

Similarly, Benkhe and Scoones (1993) reveal the limited appropriateness and validity of the conventional range management theory of communal rangelands. They noted that the prominent management problem has been concerned with controlling degradation through controlling livestock numbers. Based on the concept of carrying capacity, rangelands were judged to be overstocked and/or inefficiently used. However, physical scientists failed to appreciate the principles upon which pastoralists operate. They are opportunistic, adapting to instability by utilising high but fluctuating stocking rates and migratory patterns of foliage exploitation. These aforementioned examples show that the conventional 'scientific' views of land degradation are incomplete and highlight the importance of understanding plural meanings and definitions of degradation.

## **2.2 Causes of Degradation**

Research on land degradation has often concentrated on identification and quantification of external causal variables without adequate attention being given to specific links between factors and land degradation. Barrow (1991) presents nine categories of factors causing degradation



which include political instability, marginalisation, and economic factors. They are just like a shopping list of causes. Similarly, Tolba *et al.* (1992) note that land degradation is the result of complex interactions between physical, chemical, biological, and socioeconomic and political issues of a local, national, and global nature. They argue that any framework or model to explain degradation, therefore, should be able to cope with these webs of interaction and mutually affecting processes. Almost all studies related to land degradation show that external forces are the key factors. However, they are difficult to measure and prove. Therefore, causes of land degradation are interpreted by various actors in different ways. Long (1992) argues that interpretations of the nature of land degradation are not only socially constructed, but different cultural lenses exist through which 'facts' about the causes of environmental change are interpreted. These are often associated with different groups of people; the classic view, for example, has been held primarily by colonial administrators, the neo-liberal view by free-market economists, and the populist view by grass roots' NGOs and social activists (see Table 2.1). They all view environmental problems in different ways.

The approaches presented in Table 2.1 above are various lenses to see a picture of the *causes of environmental problems* and these approaches are important in order to understand the development of environment paradigms. They serve, in this study, to illustrate the variability and diversity of perspectives on the *causes of land degradation* (see Table 2.2). Malthus, for example, did not explicitly discuss the relationship between population density and environmental degradation, but perspectives that assume a carrying capacity or ceiling to production have been labelled as neo-Malthusian, and they name pressure of population as the main cause of land degradation. The 'classic'

perspective identifies land degradation as an environmental problem, blaming ignorant farmers who are unaware of the effects of their actions and/or without sufficient technical knowledge to solve their problems, thus focusing on lack of knowledge and perception of a problem. The populist philosophy attributes the cause as a lack of access to resources and poverty. It assumes that people have both sufficient knowledge and incentive to prevent land degradation if they are able to, recognising the need to understand the constraints that cause land-use practices that lead to degradation. The economic/neo-classical perspective attributes price and property regimes providing inappropriate incentives as the cause of environmental problems. An actor-oriented approach is grounded in the everyday lives of men and women, be they poor peasants, entrepreneurs, government bureaucrats, or researchers. An exploration of lifeworlds is central to the actor-oriented approach.

These perspectives illustrate the range of ways that 'facts' about the causes of degradation may be interpreted. It is not possible to prove which of these perspectives is correct in any given situation, and thus competing knowledge claims may exist simultaneously.

Various development approaches and perspectives on the causes of degradation discussed earlier have permeated Nepal's forestry and agricultural sector at various points in time. They have had a direct effect on the formulation of land policies, land management, and property rights' arrangements in Nepal. It appears that there is a contradictory mixture of classical, populist, and neo-liberal styles within both agriculture and forestry-related policies.

The 'classic' model, for example, is dominant in the agricultural sector where the promotion of the new seed-fertilizer technology is emphasised. It remained

**Table 2.1: Classic, Populist and Neo-Liberal View to Environmental Problems**

| Variable                                   | Classical                                | Populist   | Neo-liberal  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Peasant behaviour                          | ignorant, irrational, traditional        | virtuous, rational community-minded                  | rational, egocentric   |
| Diagnosis of environmental problem         | environmental solutions                  | socio-political solutions                            | economic solutions   |
| Immediate causes of environmental problems | mis-management by users                  | mis-management by state, capitalists, big businesses | poor government policies and bureaucratic rules and regulations                  |
| Structural causes of degradation           | over-population, backwardness, ignorance | resource distribution, inappropriate technologies    | inappropriate property rights, institutions, prices, and rapid population growth |
| Institutional prescription                 | top-down centralized decision-making     | bottom-up participation                              | market policies, property rights, resource pricing, self-targetting safety nets  |
| Academic discipline; profession            | science; bureaucratic                    | sociology; activist, NGOs                            | economics; development professional  |
| Gender orientation                         | gender blind                             | virtuous but victimised women                        | gender myopia  |
| Research framework                         | systematic empiricism                    | rapid rural appraisal, community as unit of analysis | methodological individualism   |
| Orientation to market                      | not considered                           | exploitation   | Pareto optimality and externalities  |
| Models of peasant society                  | conservative, paternalistic              | egalitarian  | democratic/liberal   |
| Views of collective action                 | deficient                                | essential and unproblematic                          | conditional rationality/political entrepreneurs                                  |
| Technology                                 | soil conservation works                  | agronomic techniques of conservation                 | not specified  |

Source: Biot, *et al.* (1995).

dominant in the forestry sector at various stages of forestry administration. This is evident from the fact that land users were blamed for causing degradation, a typical paternalist/technocratic view. Consequently, during the 1950s and 1960s, the Nepali government relied excessively on the assumption that nationalisation of forest land and the tightening of legal top-down control over the resource by a centralized government bureaucracy would lead to the effective management of forests. During the 1970s, the issue of forest and land

degradation in Nepal was highlighted, the World Bank (1980) document, for example, warned that if the present rate of deforestation continues, all accessible forests in the hills of Nepal would disappear in 15 years, and the Nepalese hill farmers were blamed for forest degradation (Eckholm 1976; Wallace 1981). Technical solutions were sought, several afforestation projects and engineering measures of soil conservation were designed from this type of diagnosis to overcome the so-called forestry problem. A typical technocratic

**Table 2.2: Various Perspectives on the Causes of Land Degradation**

| Perspectives                         | Assumptions about the Causes of Land Degradation  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Neo-Malthusian                       | This perspective views that demographic pressure causing overcultivation and overgrazing leads to degradation as resources are mined to support growing populations. The literature supporting this line of argument includes, for example, Ho (1985), Lele and Stone (1989), Okafor (1991), and Myers (1992).  |
| Classic/Paternalist/<br>Technocratic | The land users are blamed for causing land degradation. This perspective views land users as irrational and inefficient (environmentally unaware, ignorant, apathetic or lazy) and considers that users mismanage the land, which leads to degradation. This view is associated with colonialism (see for example, Jacks and Whyte 1939).   |
| Populist                             | This perspective does not provide a theory of degradation as such. However, the populist perspective runs directly counter to the classic perspective in its defence of indigenous capability. The populist perspective has similar lines of argument as the Neo-Marxist <sup>1</sup> and Faustian <sup>2</sup> perspectives.   |
| Economic/Neo-classical               | Environmental degradation is caused by inappropriate or excessive government intervention (i.e., market or policy failure—which includes price distortions from subsidies, quotas, misvalued exchange rates, inappropriate interest rate policies, and so on) and inability to properly value the resource and imperfect information regarding the resource (see World Bank 1992).  |
| Actor-oriented                       | This perspective views that differences in knowledge, perceptions, motivations, and constraints across gender, class, ethnicity, age, and religion need to be explored for a fuller understanding of social mechanisms affecting degradation, as well as differences between cultures (Long 1992). Knowledge is socially and politically constructed and this requires a differentiated analysis that allows an exploration of multiple constructions of rural peoples' knowledge (Scoones and Thompson 1992), in this case in the degradation debate. Environmental knowledge needs to be seen in its dynamic context, since the environment is constantly in a state of being conceived of, learned about, acted upon, created and recreated, and modified (Blaikie 1994). Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) note that ignorance of the consequences of actions on land, the reckless quest for profit, poverty and deprivation leading to desperate ecocide, pressure of population on resources (on which they remain somewhat ambivalent), and population decline (e.g., reduction in household labour) emerge as the underlying causal agents of degradation. |

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> In the neo-Marxist perspective, deforestation, overcultivation, and overgrazing are seen as symptoms of, or responses to, deeper causes, that stem from the exploitative nature of capitalism. This perspective views that the structure of the international economy is partly responsible for the worsening condition of local environments in many parts of the South (see Redclift 1987).

<sup>2</sup> The Faustian perspective holds that inappropriate Western technology and its careless use is a key factor in environmental degradation in the South (see Meyer and Turner 1992). Barrow (1991) adds that not only technology transfer but also the promotion of inappropriate agricultural strategies and trade and aid relationships cause environmental degradation.

Source: Adapted from Jones (1995)

perspective was adopted. For instance, in the initial years of the community forestry programme, more emphasis was given to a large programme of reforestation with browse-resistant species. It was the trees that were paramount and the local people and their organizations were still not considered very important. The programmes were implemented in top-down, prescriptive, and target-driven fashion. These projects were operationalised through the Integrated Rural Development Projects mainly funded by donor agencies such as the USAID, CIDA, and ODA. Although the classic/technocratic approach was predominant up until the mid-1970s, it passed through many stages of struggles, adjustments, and compromises. The underlying theme in these changes was the realisation of a strategy to allow local groups to protect their environments; their livelihood interests.

During the late 1970s, at the international level, the failure of the classic approach to arrest declining agricultural productivity and halt the loss and degradation of forests was acknowledged (FAO 1978). This led to the search for an alternative approach, and soon the populist approach permeated the agriculture and forestry sector policies. The solution was seen in the local people's own understandings and interests, and their control and collective action as a viable alternative for resource management (Chapagain 1984).

Populist elements, such as active participation of local communities in resource management, reorientation, and training of technical staff, building local-level institutions, participatory micro-planning, equitable benefit-sharing, and gender-sensitive programming were proposed in all the major master plans, sector strategy documents, and periodic development plans (see, for example, MPFS, APP, and the Ninth Plan). The

NGOs were suddenly given a key role in supplementing the efforts of the public sector and, in many instances, bypassing the latter. This approach is germane to almost all the development programmes implemented with bilateral and multilateral assistance. Thus, during this period there was a shift in approach from the classic to the populist, at least in rhetoric. In reality, however, the classic elements were distinctly in place.

The neo-liberal approach has recently penetrated the policy debate. This approach has its genesis in the loan conditionalities imposed by the World Bank on the national government. It requires that countries strictly implement the 'structural adjustment programme', which, among others, requires a cutting down of the size of the bureaucracy, withdrawal of all kinds of subsidies, and increased dependence on the free market. This approach combines an anti-state position of the populist with the neo-classical economic model. In Nepal's case, for example, this approach dictates removal of subsidies on fertilizer and agricultural equipment and on activities that could potentially lead to overexploitation of environmental resources. The basic flaw in this approach lies in the utter disregard for the survival needs of the vast majority of the rural masses who have not yet made an entry to the market and whose survival depends on the provisions made by the state.

This becomes quite clear from the analysis of successive policy pronouncements that give a semblance of the populist theme on the surface, classical in content, and neo-liberal in practice. Viewed this way, Nepal's contemporary policy mix represents a *hybrid approach* that creates problems for implementation because of its various contradictory elements that are not easy to accommodate. The *hybrid*

*approach* creates new practical dilemmas about how to integrate top-down and bottom-up organizational approaches on

the ground. This also creates the potential for new and unknown political alignments and alliances.

