

## THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY

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*...what I would prefer to call 'social forestry' ... [is] primarily concerned with people whose needs are not able to express themselves as effective economic or political demands. In fact, history is replete with examples of conventional forestry extinguishing whatever rights such people might have had or subordinating them to the welfare of the forest. Forestry which is aimed at reversing these priorities is clearly different and certainly new, and to call it social forestry is not a bad way of making the distinction. The danger, of course, is that quite other practices can masquerade under the same slogan.*

Alf J. Leslie

*The Purpose of the Forests: Follies of Development, 1987:ix*

### Introduction

The inability of industrial forestry to benefit the rural poor or address the increasing rate of deforestation in the tropics contributed to a major shift in the direction of forest management in these areas in favour of a 'people-oriented' approach. Generally termed 'community forestry', this approach has lately been regarded as a new forestry paradigm (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations defined community forestry "as any situation which intimately involves local people in forestry activities" (FAO 1978:1). It has been claimed to influence the nature of forestry activities more profoundly than any other development in the forestry profession (Arnold, 1991).

Community forestry, as currently practised in most developing countries, has been shaped by international development thinking and by the specific political and historical contexts in these areas. It has incorporated many of the ideas from mainstream development thinking; the most recent of which is the concept of sustainable development. In the Philippines, community forestry has been regarded as a "new approach to forest management" (DENR, 1989a:172) with three avowed core objectives: democratising forest resource access; poverty alleviation; and the sustainability of the forest resources. These core objectives closely parallel the political, economic and resource sustainability intentions inherent in the concept of ESD.

In this Chapter, I explore the evolution of the concept and policy of community forestry in the Philippines. First, I examine major shifts in international development thinking

and their influence in shaping the concept of community forestry. I then review the Philippines case historically, considering three major periods: the colonial period; the logging years from 1946 to the early 1970s; and the emergence of community forestry which began in the mid-1970s. Finally, I relate the central objectives of community forestry in the Philippines to the broader issues of ESD.

### **The International Context**

The evolution of the concept of community forestry in Third World countries like the Philippines largely follows the major shifts in development thinking, particularly during the post-World War II period. Of direct relevance is the shift in emphasis from a top-down, pro-industrialisation approach to a basic needs approach and, more recently, to the concept of sustainable development.

### **Industrialisation of the Forestry Sector**

In the early post-war period, the development process was almost exclusively perceived as an economic phenomenon. Economic growth was taken as a synonym for development while industrialisation was regarded as the major engine for growth (Arndt, 1981). The drive to industrialise in the Less Developed Countries was steered along the road of Western experience by the growth-oriented paradigm that became popular after 1945 (Rostow, 1975). In this context, the industrialisation of the forestry sector was regarded as an effective catalyst for economic development.

Prior to the 1950s, debates in international forestry were mostly confined to 'traditional' forestry themes. A literature review, conducted by Kengen (1987), on the role of forestry in development showed that major themes in the first three World Forestry Congresses (WFC) — held in 1926, 1936, and 1949 — revolved around 'traditional' forestry issues. These included silviculture, forest surveys, forest policy, management and regeneration, and related issues. Scant attention was given to the role of forestry in economic development.

During the Fourth WFC, held in India in 1954, development debates of the post-war period penetrated the forestry sector. Concerns about the contribution of the forestry sector to the process of economic development were expressed. This was reflected in the Congress' general theme: ***The Role and Place of Forested Areas in the General Land Economy and Economic Development of a Country***. The ideas that emerged during this forum on the role of forestry in economic development were further developed in the three succeeding congresses held in 1960, 1966, and 1972.<sup>i</sup> In general, these congresses reinforced positive thinking about the potential role of forest industries in promoting socio-economic development in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) like the Philippines.<sup>ii</sup>

The blueprint for the industrialisation of the forestry sector was written in its most complete form by Jack Westoby's ***The Role of Forest Industries in the Attack on Economic Underdevelopment*** (Westoby, 1962). Here, he elaborated how the forest could serve as the dynamo for economic development, particularly in the LDCs. Westoby (1962:168) summarised the central idea as follows:

Forests are a most important asset of a country's wealth - an asset that every poor country possesses or could possess - for they provide a renewable raw material for a whole range of industries which have acquired great importance in many industrially advanced countries. This asset is very often neglected in less developed economies, or exploited only as raw material for export.

Westoby's earlier advocacy of the industrialisation of the forestry sector was supported by a series of studies on timber trends and prospects: first, in Europe, and later in Asia, Latin America and Africa. His major propositions were supported on technical and economic grounds (Westoby, 1962:168):

- 1) Forest industries provide a very wide range of products, both consumption goods and intermediate goods, flowing into many sectors of the economy. In other words, forest industries have strong forward and backward linkages with the rest of the economy.
- 2) The demand for these products is income elastic. In other words, demand rises sharply with economic growth.
- 3) The industries vary considerably in their raw material and other factor requirements, and in most of them alternative technologies can be successfully employed.
- 4) They are based on renewable resource and this resource is intimately linked to agriculture.

Seen in the broader context, Westoby's blueprint for the industrialisation of the forestry sector was influenced by the prevailing development paradigm of the time. The theory was that Western countries set the pattern for development, and that developing countries have to pass through a number of stages of economic growth following the former's development process (Rostow, 1960). Since the more 'advanced' countries attained their developed state through industrialisation, industrialisation was considered as both a necessary and a sufficient condition for development to take place.

The industrialisation model, which Westoby advocated for the forestry sector, was associated with the 'top-down approach' or 'development from above' (Stöhr and Fraser Taylor, 1981). Central to this approach was the assumption that economic benefits would diffuse through a society following capital investment in industrialisation. Westoby assumed that an increase in economic activity following

the industrialisation of the forestry sector would readily diffuse and multiply to other sectors

of the economy. This would, in turn, make everyone in the society better off, including the poor.

In the ‘top-down approach’, the emphasis was on large scale, capital intensive projects and the use of the most advanced technology available (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). At the international level, ideas and technology had to travel from the more advanced to the less developed countries. The approach therefore involved the use of large scale, private and public organisations to ‘transmit’ development. In forestry, this role was largely played by the FAO of the United Nations (UN), where Westoby was employed. FAO translated the international policies for the **First United Nations Development Decade** of the 1960s and the succeeding decades into forestry terms (Dargavel, Hobley and Kengen, 1985).<sup>iii</sup>

Westoby’s blueprint for the industrialisation of the forestry sector established the important link between forestry and its associated forest industries to the national economy. It also opened new avenues for international cooperation in the forestry trade between the developed and the less developed countries. In the case of the latter, a new symbiotic relationship was expected between the two parties involved. The LDCs which abounded in forest resources during that time could mobilise these for development, assured of markets with their more advanced trade partners. On the other hand, the more developed countries would benefit from the relationship through the steady supply of forest products, particularly timber, to fuel and sustain their quest for further economic development.

By the late 1960s, however, the effectiveness of the ‘development from above’ approach was being questioned. The trickle-down effect had not materialised and poverty had not been alleviated in many developing countries (Bartelmus, 1994). A number of developing countries attained significant growth rates based on the UN target for the decade of six percent growth rate in terms of Gross National Product (Kengen, 1987).<sup>iv</sup> Yet economic growth was highly localised and often poorly related to people’s actual needs (Arnold, 1991). In general, the standard of living in most developing countries remained unchanged or even deteriorated. Only a small segment of society benefited in the process (Streeten and Burki, 1978).

A parallel lesson was being learned in the forestry sector. Industrialisation of the sector over almost two decades failed to address the socio-economic problems in many developing countries. This lesson was described by Westoby (1983:242):

Already, at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies it was becoming apparent to me that the hoped-for benefits for forest-based development were not being realised. More money was going into forestry; fortunes were being made; some forests were being ruthlessly exploited. But

nearly all the developments were enclave developments; multiplier effects were absent; welfare was not being spread; the rural poor were getting poorer, and their numbers were increasing.

Critics of the industrial forestry model offered various explanations for its failure. For instance, Nautiyal (1967), contrary to Westoby's first proposition as described earlier, demonstrated empirically that forestry and timber-based industries have quite weak backward linkages. Further, in *A Re-Appraisal of Forestry Development in Developing Countries*, Douglas (1983)<sup>v</sup> argued that economic and social conditions in the LDCs were entirely different from developed countries and, therefore, predictions based on the latter's experience were unreliable. For Dargavel, Hobley and Kengen (1985:16), the limitations of the industrial forestry model were to be found in the theory on which it was anchored:

We argue that poor applications only exacerbated the ineffectiveness of policies that were theoretically inadequate. ... By recognising only the positive social and economic effects of industrialization, the diffusionist theory, on which industrial forestry rested, has proved to be theoretically inadequate to explain many negative realities.

As far as Westoby was concerned, the failure of the industrial forestry model was mainly due to political factors. He saw the issue as one of exploitation by the more developed countries and their allied development financial institutions of the forest resources of underdeveloped countries in their pursuit of economic advancement (Westoby, 1987:247-249). At the national level, he saw it as a small ruling elite reaping the benefits of the forest resources at the expense and deprivation of the disinherited masses. Westoby contended that addressing the socio-economic problems of the less developed countries transcends the economic and technical boundaries of forest development.

The failure of the forest industries development model to promote socio-economic development, together with the increasing rate of deforestation in most developing countries, contributed to the emergence of a new approach in forestry. However, many of the general ideas in Westoby's earlier work are still being followed, particularly in resource-rich developing countries. This is despite the fact that Westoby himself later forcefully challenged his original assumptions and, by extension, the industrial forestry model itself.<sup>vi</sup>

### **Forestry for Local Community Development**

In the 1970s, the emphasis in development thinking shifted to alternative approaches focusing on the needs of the poor. A 1974 report entitled *Redistribution with Growth*<sup>vii</sup> became the basis for international development strategy, particularly by lending institutions like the World Bank. The report advanced the idea that poverty problems in developing countries could be alleviated not by "abandonment of growth as an objective" but through the "redistribution of the benefits of growth" (Chenery *et al.*, 1974:xviii). This was to be attained by giving priority to the poorer groups in

terms of development investments. In the rural sector, development projects had to focus on

increasing the productivity of small farmers and the self-employed through better access to land, water, credit, markets, and other facilities.

In almost the same period, the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation (ILO) promoted the idea of 'basic needs' as a central approach to development (Ghai *et al.*, 1977).<sup>viii</sup> Basic needs were defined to include, "first, certain minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food, shelter and clothing, as well as certain household equipment and furniture; and second, essential services provided for and by the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport and health, educational and cultural facilities" (Béguin, 1977:ii). It was claimed that as a development strategy, the basic needs approach would incorporate and expand on the 'new development strategies' in the 1970s, including the idea of redistribution with growth.<sup>ix</sup> An ILO team enumerated this expansion to include: 1) the broadening of the concept of development including so-called non-material needs; 2) the concrete specification of poverty in terms of some core basic needs (as defined above); 3) the overwhelming priority given to meeting the basic needs of all families in the shortest time possible; 4) the emphasis on redistribution of income and wealth and the creation of egalitarian societies; 5) the key role accorded to public service in combating poverty; and 6) at least some rudimentary analysis of power structures in society (Ghai *et al.*, 1977:3-4).

A parallel approach emerged in the forestry sector. The growing attention to rural development in the 1970s drew attention to the dependence of rural people on forests and trees. Apparent implications of this dependence were meeting basic requirements from the forest — food, fuelwood, fodder, grazing, building materials, raw materials and saleable products. It also involved maintaining tree cover to promote environmental stability (Arnold, 1991). The local people's dependence on the forests for fuelwood and other forest amenities was highlighted by the world-wide energy crisis and the prolonged Sahelian drought in the early part of the decade. These incidents, together with the disastrous flooding in the plains of Southeast Asia in 1977, also underlined the impacts of deforestation and the degradation of forest cover (Arnold, 1991). Consequently, the new approach emphasised three major roles of forestry in rural development in addition to the industrial role.

- 1) The social equity role — to provide trees and other forest products to rural people who no longer had access to them (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:6).
- 2) The poverty alleviation role — to find ways of increasing forest benefits to the local people who lived within or adjacent to the forests (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:6).
- 3) The resource sustainability role — to address the perceived fuelwood crisis (Eckholm, 1975) and the increasing rate of deforestation and land degradation in developing countries (Myers, 1980).

As will be discussed later in this chapter, these three major roles paralleled the political, economic, and resource sustainability intentions of the ESD. They are also prototypical of the three central objectives of community forestry which emerged in the Philippines.

Since FAO, in its pioneering publication *Forestry for Local Community Development* (1978), defined the new approach to forestry development and dubbed it ‘community forestry’,<sup>x</sup> a myriad of definitions has been published, including related terms such as, social forestry, forestry for local community development, and forestry for rural communities.<sup>xi</sup> As noted by Dargavel (1988:10), a common thread in such schemes is the notion of ‘participation’ by villagers in ‘community’ decisions, work and benefits.

The legitimization of the concept of community forestry was boosted by the adoption of *Forestry for People* as the theme for the Eighth World Forestry Congress in Jakarta in 1978 (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991). It was also reinforced by the release of the World Bank’s influential *Forestry Sector Policy Paper* in 1978, which indicated its commitment to reformulating its lending program in favour of environmental protection and people-oriented projects, as opposed to industry-oriented forestry projects. A related initiative by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) led to the creation of the International Center for Research in Agroforestry, an international organisation to promote research in agroforestry (Bene, Beall and Cote, 1977).

Similar to the industrial forestry model, the concept of community forestry spread rapidly and gained easy acceptance. As mentioned above, this was partly due to the realisation that policies promoting industrialisation were not effectively attacking the problems of rural poverty and forest degradation (Kirchoffer and Mercer, 1984). Thus, for policy makers, the community forestry model appeared to be just the ‘right’ alternative to industrial forestry. Community forestry also fitted with political considerations of the time. It matched almost perfectly with the political rhetoric about redistributive justice and poverty alleviation being advanced by development institutions like the World Bank. Moreover, community forestry supported the people-centred or community-centred ideologies that became fashionable in developing countries in the 1980s.<sup>xii</sup> Community forestry was, therefore, seen not only as an operational strategy in forestry but also a development philosophy promotive of people-centred development (Cernea, 1992).

The promising and significant potential of community forestry resulted in considerable efforts and resources to support its implementation.<sup>xiii</sup> Describing the speed with which the idea of community forestry spread, as well as the World Bank’s contribution to its implementation, Gregersen *et al.* (1989:8) wrote:

From the late 1970s until the early 1980s new programs were launched at an accelerated rate, accompanied by the tremendous growth in economic development activity related to farm and community forestry...Courses were developed, institutions were established or modified to deal with agroforestry research, significant programs were initiated and funded by multilateral and bilateral development organisations, and large sums of money were invested

in community forestry projects in many countries. For example, during the decade 1977 to 1986, some 60 percent of the World Bank lending in forestry

(US\$1,300 million) was for social forestry and related fuelwood and watershed protection projects. This compares to a mere 5 percent in the previous decade.

The popularity of people-centred development<sup>xiv</sup> contributed to further refinements of the community forestry approach. The notion was advanced of community forestry as an approach that “puts community at the centre” rather than forests (Gilmour and Fisher, 1991:68).<sup>xv</sup> Two key issues were clarified in the process: *which* people the forest should serve; and *how* the forest should serve these people. The first issue was addressed by Leslie (1987:ix) in his exposition of the social forestry concept. According to him, social forestry is “primarily, concerned with people whose needs are not able to express themselves as effective economic or political demands”.<sup>xvi</sup> An FAO report published in 1983 clarified the second issue:

Community forestry departed radically from all previous conceptions of what forestry was about in that it centred on the idea of people’s participation — getting local populations to plan and execute their own projects on a self help basis. This meant providing them with the advice and inputs needed to grow seedlings, to plant, manage and protect their own forest resources, and to extract the maximum benefit from the resources. Community forestry is dedicated to the idea of increasing the direct benefits of the forest to the rural people (FAO, 1983:8).

Despite the refinements and considerable efforts in support, the good intentions of community forestry remain far from reality in many developing countries. This was revealed by the FAO’s review of the decade of experience in community forestry (Arnold, 1991). The verdict of the review was that many early community forestry projects were based on the wrong assumption that there was a strong, positive relationship between the perceived fuelwood shortage in the mid 1970s and the most urgent needs of local communities.<sup>xvii</sup> As a result, a large portion of the initial investment in community forestry was allocated to afforestation projects to increase fuelwood supply at the expense of addressing the real needs of the local people. Apparently, despite the claim of people’s participation, these projects were designed on the basis of the perceptions of the ‘experts’ and the priorities of funding agencies, rather than on the felt needs of local communities. Part of the failure, as elaborated by Arnold (1991:5), was that:

...even projects which have sought to identify local needs, aspirations and possibilities have in practice done so more on the basis of the views of the planners and others from outside than on the local people themselves. Dialogue to achieve local participation has all too often started only after the project design has been finalised and is in place. Though the concept of

participation took root quickly, in practice, it has been, and still is, more frequently preached than practised.

To rectify the situation, the FAO report reinforced the recommendations in the earlier assessments of community forestry — that the practice of community forestry should be

improved (Foley and Barnard, 1984; FAO/SIDA, 1989). One major recommendation of the report was to promote the use of “participatory approaches to problem identification and project design” like RRA and other “applicable approaches and methods” (Arnold, 1991:26). Chapter Three discusses these approaches and methods (or techniques of practice as termed in this thesis) while Chapters Five, Six and Seven demonstrate through case studies their inherent tendencies to produce paradoxical effects.

### **Forestry in Sustainable Development**

The most recent shift in development thinking that has influenced the forestry sector is the concept of ‘sustainable development’. The concern with sustainable development is a recent phenomenon, although most of the issues involved relate to earlier development debates. The “environmental doomsday literature”<sup>xviii</sup> (Bartelmus, 1994:5) in the 1960s and the early 1970s, warned that some form of socio-economic collapse would result from the continuation of then current levels of economic growth. The much publicised and widely circulated report of the Club of Rome, **Limits to Growth** (Meadows *et al.*, 1972) — in a slightly more optimistic view — provoked widespread attention to the physical limits of the world’s finite resources in sustaining exponential growth rates.<sup>xix</sup> However, it was believed that the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm in 1972, first brought the issue of sustainable development onto the agenda of international politics (Stokke, 1991:1). Since then, the term ‘sustainable development’ has come into widespread use (Tolba, 1987:97).

The publication of the influential report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), **Our Common Future**, led to the emergence of sustainable development as a priority theme on the international agenda (Stokke, 1991:1). Referred to as the **Brundtland Report**, it defined sustainable development as a “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (WCED, 1987:43). “Implicit in this definition are three dimensions of development: social justice, economic efficiency, and environmental sustainability” (Rietbergen, 1993:4).

There are certain aspects of the above three dimensions of sustainable development that closely parallel, if not converge with, the three major roles of forestry in rural development as mentioned earlier:

- 1) Social justice: WCED's concept of sustainable development also prioritises the smallholders in the allocation of resources: "Smallholders, including — indeed especially — women, must be given preference when allocating scarce resources, staff and credit". It also recommends "decentralising the management of resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources" (WCED, 1987:65,143).
- 2) Economic efficiency: WCED's concept of economic efficiency is linked to satisfying the basic needs of the poor which corresponds to community forestry's concern on

poverty alleviation.<sup>xx</sup> WCED (1991:87-88) notes: "A world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises". It therefore advances "the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given".

- 3) Environmental or resource sustainability: WCED, like the advocates of community forestry, recognises the physical limits associated with the use of the resource base

and the need to conserve and enhance these resources. As emphasised: "The conservation of agricultural resources is an urgent task because in many parts of the world cultivation has already been extended to marginal lands, and fishery and forestry resources have been overexploited. These resources must be conserved and enhanced to meet the needs of the growing populations" (WCED, 1991:101).

The last dimension of resource sustainability brought forestry to the forefront of the sustainable development debate. Indeed, the **Brundtland Report** devoted considerable space to discussing forestry, including its alarming situation. The report also emphasised that while forest destruction has occurred worldwide, the greatest challenge is in the tropical forests of the developing countries. It also stressed the important role of community forestry in sustaining the forest resources:

Programmes to preserve the forest resources must start with the local people who are both victims and agents of destruction, and who will bear the burden of any new management scheme. They should be at the center of integrated forest management ... (WCED, 1991:180-181).

In development practice, sustainable development appears to be simply an addition of the environmental variable into the earlier development equation. The first two dimensions of economic efficiency and social justice are simply carried over from the first two decades of development promoted by the UN. Concerns about the 'limits to growth' (Meadows *et al.*, 1972) in the early 1970s led to the incorporation of the sustainability variable in the late 1980s, making ESD a three-variable equation.

A parallel observation can be made in examining the role of forestry in development. The earlier growth-oriented forest industry model was geared towards promoting

economic efficiency. The limitations of this approach in promoting socio-economic development in developing countries led to the emergence of community forestry. Aside from economic considerations (increasing local people's direct benefits from forest resources), the equity variable (promoting access and equitable benefit to forest resources) is added to the community forestry equation. Lately, with the popularity of the concept of sustainability, sustaining forest resources through local people has become a major aim of community forestry projects. The case of the Philippines demonstrates this shift in development thinking in forestry and its influence in the evolution of the concept and policy of community forestry.

### **The Case of the Philippines**

The evolution of the concept and policy of community forestry in the Philippines was shaped both by the international fashions in development thinking and the national economic, political, and environmental contexts. Three major periods in the history of forest management in the country are relevant: the colonial period; the logging years from 1946 to the early 1970s; and the emergence of community forestry, which began in the mid 1970s. In this section, I analyse the major policies and events and their implications within each period.

#### **Forestry in the Colonial Period**

Forest policy was influenced by the Philippines' long history of colonisation. Prior to colonisation by Spain, land ownership was generally communal. Forests were accessible to all and 'ownership' was vested in whoever cleared and cultivated them first (Fernandez, 1976). Land was never owned in the same way as the present concept of land ownership implies. People possessed 'access' rights to occupy the land and to harvest the fruits of their labour while respecting their territorial boundary (Lynch, 1984).

With the arrival of the Spanish, land ownership was legalised through the institution of land titling, and the system of communal ownership and the traditional method of acquiring land through actual occupation and cultivation was superseded (Makil, 1982:6). From it evolved the myth of the Regalian Doctrine which vested the ownership of all land in the country in the Spanish crown (Lynch, 1984).<sup>xxi</sup> A major implication of this was the marginalisation of the indigenous Filipinos. As far as the colonial power was concerned, the indigenous occupants of the unexplored archipelago became squatters on their own land (Lynch, 1986).

The creation of the *Inspeccion General de Montes* or Forest Service in 1863 placed the control, ownership and administration of forest resources under the colonial government. The Forest Service strictly regulated forest use and prohibited unauthorised encroachment into forest lands and illegal cutting of timber (Boado, 1985). A series of Royal Decrees were issued from Spain to this effect from 1866 to 1887, including a ban on *kaingin* making or shifting cultivation, which was the main

source of livelihood of most indigenous people (Makil, 1982:7).<sup>xxii</sup> This prohibition of their main source of livelihood was the second form of marginalisation of the indigenous people during this period.

The United States adopted the concept of **Regalian Doctrine** to maintain the state-controlled management of forest resources initiated by the Spanish. About three years after the American occupation, **Inspeccion General de Montes** was turned into a Forestry Bureau through General Order No. 50, dated 14 April 1900 (Makil, 1982). This was followed by the legislation of the **Forest Act of 1904**, and later, the **Forest**

**Law of 1917**. Under these laws, the Forestry Bureau retained the power to classify land into private and public domains and to issue forest licences for exploitation.

The United States' "voracious demand for wood" became its prime motivation for formulating forest policies during its colonial administration (Bello, 1992:52). These policies benefited the privileged few and resulted in massive destruction of the country's forest resources. As described by a respected forestry historian, Richard Tucker (1988:223):

From the Forest law of 1904 onwards, U.S. colonial policy set about to modernise the logging industry as rapidly as possible, through close cooperation between the Bureau of Forestry and the large-scale timber corporations, both foreign and domestic. Philippine logging came to be dominated by a capital-intensive, technologically modern sector. Great profits accrued to the major investors, but the rainforests of the islands were depleted at an increasing rate by the allure of the international market.

The colonial effort to promote industrialisation in the Philippine forestry sector was designed to benefit the colonisers and their allied local elite. The American political agenda is aptly expressed in the Bureau of Forestry promotional booklet, which states that "When you buy Philippine lumber, you are helping not only the Filipinos, but also the American lumberman in the Philippines and the American machine manufacturers in the United States" (Quoted in Tucker 1988:228). Towards the end of the colonial period in 1940, American firms accounted for 41 percent of investment in the nation's sawmill industry, while the Filipino elite accounted for 34 percent (de la Cruz, 1941:147). The Philippines had been transformed from a timber importer to Southeast Asia's largest timber exporter (Tucker, 1988:223-228).

Americans also reinforced the introduction of 'scientific forestry' earlier started by the Spanish. American foresters were recruited to train local people in the Western concept of forest management (Roth, 1983).<sup>xxiii</sup> Research facilities were also established in 1910 with the colonial Bureau of Science and the new College of Agriculture at Los Banos, about 65 kilometres south of Manila. The research's primary emphasis then was to determine the properties and uses of selected tree species considered useful for the newborn wood industry (Tucker, 1992).

The introduction of colonial ‘scientific forestry’ resulted in timber being perceived as the major forest resource. All the other forest benefits from which indigenous Filipinos subsisted for centuries, not to mention cultural values, were lumped together as ‘minor forest products’. In the process, indigenous people’s uses of the forests were relegated to the periphery of forest management (Tucker, 1992).<sup>xxiv</sup> The approach also co-opted indigenous forest management systems that were appreciated during this period. The American-appointed Philippine Secretary of Interior, Dean Worcester, impressed by what he saw in Bontoc Lepanto, wrote in 1914:

When I first visited their country, I noted that all the trees in certain pine forests were carefully trimmed of their lower branches, and on inquiry found that the trees might not be felled until they reach a certain size although branches might be cut for firewood. The prevention of fires, which were very destructive in the pine forest, and the care of young trees were also adequately provided for (Worcester, 1914:860).

In general, however, there was a lack of appreciation and understanding of the indigenous forest management systems among both the Spanish and the Americans.<sup>xxv</sup> This led them to blame the indigenous people and their method of shifting cultivation (*kaingin*) as the major culprit in forest destruction.<sup>xxvi</sup> The belief was perpetuated in the forestry sector and led to the formulation of forest policies which denied indigenous people access to and benefits from the forest resource.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### **From 1946 to the 1970s: Logging the Way to Underdevelopment**

After World War II, the forestry sector supported the country’s macro-economic policy geared towards the enhancement of industrialisation to repair the war-ravaged economy.<sup>xxviii</sup> The sector started to liquidate the country’s forest resources into solid capital to spur economic development. Forest industries were rehabilitated within a few years and the exportation of logs and some processed products was resumed (Boado, 1985; Quintos, 1989).

State ownership and control of forest lands was perpetuated by the first Constitution of the Independent Philippine Republic on July 4, 1946. It stipulated in Section 1, article 13 that all timber lands “belong to the state”. This situation facilitated the massive timber exportation earlier established by the Americans. By the 1950s, logging had grown so profitable that timber licences proliferated. Towards the end of the decade (1959), the country was the major exporter of tropical timber accounting for almost one third of the world’s market in logs (Quintos, 1989).

Table 2.1 Licensees number and area, forest cover, and deforestation in the Philippines, 1959-1992

| YEAR    | LICENSEES<br>NUMBER | LICENSED<br>AREA (000<br>HA.) | FOREST<br>COVER<br>(000 HA.) | AREA<br>DEFORESTED<br>(000 HA.) |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1959-60 |                     | 4,485                         | 13,000                       | 225                             |
| 1961-62 |                     | 6,554                         | 12,500                       | 245                             |
| 1963-64 |                     | 7,928                         | 12,000                       | 265                             |
| 1965-66 |                     | 6,745                         | 11,450                       | 284                             |
| 1967-68 |                     | 8,302                         | 10,850                       | 296                             |
| 1969-70 | 412                 | 9,357                         | 10,250                       | 300                             |
| 1971-72 | 461                 | 10,598                        | 9,650                        | 298                             |
| 1973-74 | 422                 | 10,290                        | 9,050                        | 297                             |
| 1975-76 | 471                 | 10,137                        | 8,500                        | 280                             |
| 1977    | 376                 | 10,211                        | 8,100                        | 264                             |
| 1978    | 315                 | 8,769                         | 7,800                        | 248                             |
| 1979    | 284                 | 8,310                         | 7,600                        | 230                             |
| 1980    | 261                 | 7,939                         | 7,400                        | 210                             |
| 1981    | 257                 | 7,754                         | 7,200                        | 190                             |
| 1982    | 217                 | 7,539                         | 7,000                        | 170                             |
| 1983    | 133                 | 5,779                         | 6,900                        | 152                             |
| 1984    | 157                 | 6,347                         | 6,800                        | 136                             |
| 1985    | 165                 | 6,594                         | 6,600                        | 122                             |
| 1986    | 159                 | 5,847                         | 6,500                        | 110                             |
| 1987    | 154                 | 5,579                         | 6,400                        | 100                             |
| 1988    | 120                 | 4,737                         | 6,300                        | 94                              |
| 1989    | 113                 | 4,634                         | 6,200                        | 90                              |
| 1990    | 96                  | 3,760                         | 6,100                        | 88                              |
| 1991    | 81                  | 2,917                         | 6,015                        | 87                              |
| 1992    | 71                  | 2,311                         | 5,900                        | 85                              |

Sources: Boado (1988); FMB (1988-1992); DENR (1990a).

The timber boom which started in the late 1950s lasted for around twenty-five years (Boado, 1988). The desire to hasten industrialisation led to the licensing of more and more forest lands for exploitation during this period. From 4.48 million hectares in 1959, the licensed area more than doubled to 10.59 million hectares in 1971, constituting one third of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares (Table 2.1). The timber licensees' control of the one third of the country's land area was sustained from 1971 to 1977, after which it gradually decreased to 2.31 million hectares in 1992 (Figure 2.1).

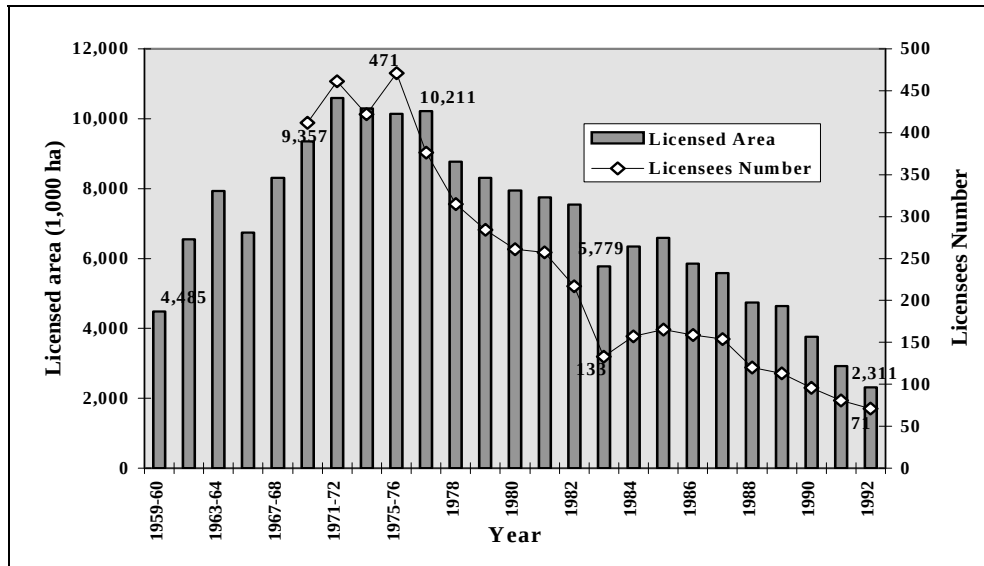


Figure 2.1 Number of licensees and licensed area in the Philippines, 1959-1992.  
Sources: Boado (1988); FMB (1988-1992); DENR (1990a).

Even before the publication of Westoby's seminal article on the industrialisation of the forestry sector in 1962, the Philippines had already entered the industrialisation era. Initial efforts to build a forest products industry started as early as the mid-1950s through a directive issued by the Secretary of the then Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), limiting the awarding of timber concessions to applicants capable of establishing appropriate and efficient sawmills and/or processing plants (Quintos, 1989). The initiative was given greater substance, more than a decade after, through a Presidential Directive issued in 1967 with the intention of boosting the local wood industry (Cortes, 1976). Under the directive, timber licensees were required to establish processing plants within four years from the issuance or renewal of their licences and to reduce their log exports by 10 per cent every year until 1971. By then they would be required to process at least 60 per cent of their allowable cut and export only 40 per cent in logs.

Table 2.2 *Average annual log production and export, value of export, and extent of underreported exports, 1955-1990.*

| Period    | Average Annual Production <sup>a</sup><br>(1,000 m <sup>3</sup> ) | Average Annual Export <sup>a</sup><br>(1,000 m <sup>3</sup> ) | Share of Export (%) | Average Value of Annual Export <sup>a</sup><br>(US\$ FOB) | Rate of Under-reporting <sup>b</sup><br>(%) |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1955-1960 | 5,105                                                             | 2,393                                                         | 46.9                |                                                           | 38.9                                        |
| 1961-1965 | 6,749                                                             | 3,892                                                         | 57.7                | 84,446                                                    | 65.4                                        |
| 1966-1970 | 9,918                                                             | 7,392                                                         | 74.5                | 181,254                                                   | —                                           |
| 1971-1975 | 10,177                                                            | 6,940                                                         | 68.2                | 385,940                                                   | 63.2                                        |
| 1976-1980 | 7,330                                                             | 1,719                                                         | 23.4                | 130,103                                                   | 30.1                                        |
| 1981-1985 | 4,883                                                             | 813                                                           | 16.6                | 75,076                                                    | 59.1                                        |
| 1986-1990 | 3,432                                                             | 190                                                           | 5.5                 | 11,525                                                    | —                                           |

Sources: <sup>a</sup> Based on FMB (1992).<sup>b</sup> Based on the ratio of Philippine export volume of logs and Japanese import data. The latter was obtained from Ministry of Finance, *Annual Return of the Foreign Trade of Japan* as compiled by Bautista (1990).

However, the initial effort to boost the local industry, and thereby industrialise the forestry sector, never materialised. The policy resulted only in the establishment of uneconomic and poorly located mills. Many licensees were noted to have built processing plants simply to comply with the regulations, while concentrating continuously on log exportation (Boado, 1988). Official statistics show that from 1971 to 1975, an average of 68 per cent of the annual log production were exported, with only 22 per cent processed locally (Table 2.2). These statistics exclude the unreported logs exported to the Japanese market. Information on the actual log export gathered by Bautista (1990) reveals that the rate of underreporting during this period was as high as 63 per cent.<sup>xxix</sup> With the attraction of lucrative foreign markets for high quality logs, only those of low quality were left for domestic processing. Minimum capital outlay and faster cash turnover made the exportation of logs more profitable for the licensees compared to wood processing, encouraging them to export more.

Even the later attempt to implement a wood rationalisation program, primarily through a log export ban, had a hard time taking off. The government policy to totally ban log exportation,<sup>xxx</sup> scheduled for January 1976, was never pursued. Instead, a series of amendments of the earlier policies were undertaken, resulting in the implementation of partial and selective log exports. The government argued that the amendments were necessary to prevent the adverse effects of a ban on the country's balance of payments, employment and the stability of the wood industry (Quintos, 1989). Some believed,

however, that the amendments were designed to accommodate the strong opposition

from timber licensees in the guise of protecting the general socio-economic welfare of the country.<sup>xxxi</sup> A complete log export ban was implemented only in 1989, three years after the famous EDSA Revolution which resulted in a change in the national leadership.

The effects of industrialisation in the Philippine forestry sector were, at best, economically limited and, at worst, socio-politically and environmentally damaging. Its only significant contribution was to generate foreign exchange earnings, but this was a short-lived gain, for log harvests began to decline from the mid-1970s (Figure 2.2). Because of the extremely low forest charges imposed by the government on forest exploitation, generated government revenues were not even sufficient to finance forest management and renewal. Low forest charges could have also promoted the alleged corruption and massive bribery in the forestry sector. Licensees were left with high profit margins which enabled them to bribe forest officers or meet the penalties for violations of forest rules and regulations (Revilla, 1990).

The industrialisation era facilitated the inequitable access to and benefits from the forest resources in favour of the local elite. In the guise of economic development, the issuance of timber licences was used as a mechanism to maintain political power and control. During the martial law period from 1972 to 1984, President Marcos centralised control over economic resources in the hands of the fraction of the traditional elite most closely aligned with him and his family (Porter and Ganapin, 1988). This period recorded the greatest number of licences issued in the history of Philippine forestry and the largest area made available for exploitation (Table 2.1). The same period recorded the greatest decline in the country's forest cover and the highest rate of forest destruction which ranged from 136,000 to 298,000 hectares per year.

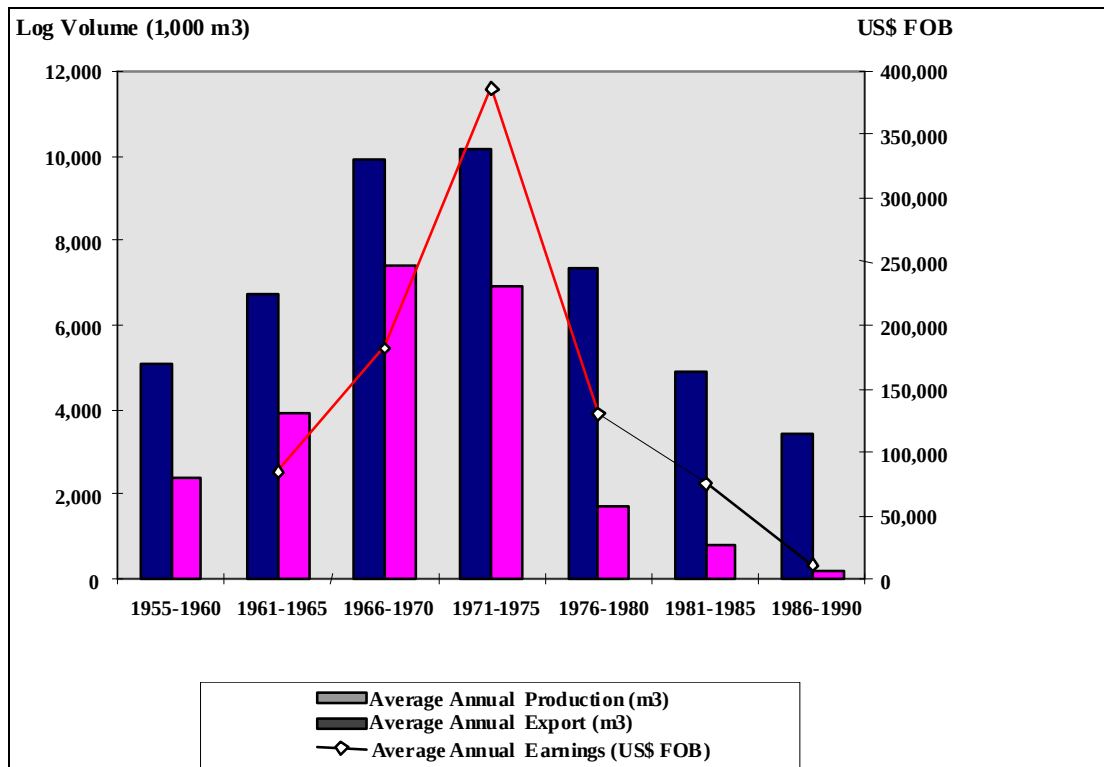


Figure 2.2 Average annual log production and export, 1955-1990.

Source: Bautista (1990); FMB (1992)

Backed up with sufficient capital and the necessary political clout, timber licensees were easily able to enter into logging businesses and amass profits by concentrating on log exports. Minimal domestic processing limited the trickle-down of socio-economic benefits to other sectors of society, particularly the rural poor. At best, local communities were employed as labourers in logging operations, making them fully dependent on the latter, and hence their security rested on the fortunes of the usually short-lived logging companies. At worst, they were barred from entering forest lands to practise shifting cultivation to augment their meagre income. Occupants of public domains, including indigenous communities, were continuously treated as squatters and threatened with eviction or imprisonment if found engaging in the clearing of public land.

The logging concessions' encroachment into ancestral lands had far more damaging effects (FDC, 1987). Not only were their productive resources exploited, but their burial grounds and sacred places were also desecrated. Moreover, with the opening of logging roads came the penetration of the lowland Westernised culture into the remotest parts of the countryside, resulting in the cultural disintegration of the tribal minorities.<sup>xxxii</sup> These negative effects generated pockets of both armed and non-violent forms of resistance in the countryside which contributed to the country's political instability (Contreras, 1991; Porter and Ganapin, 1988:30-31; Bagadion, 1990).

Due to the fact that most licensees simply wanted to cut and get out, forests were likewise ruthlessly exploited beyond their sustainable limits. From 11 million hectares of old growth forests in 1934, the country is currently left with less than 1 million hectares, a large portion of which was cut during the timber boom period (Agaloos, 1990; cf. Map 2.1). Loggers, however, would always point to the forest occupants as the culprits in forest destruction.

The physical manifestations of the adverse effects of poorly managed industrialisation in the Philippine forestry sector are apparent. The once booming (from the 1960s to the 1970s) logging towns in Negros province and many parts of Mindanao are now close to becoming ghost towns due to the cancellation of timber licences and the depletion of the forest resources. Formerly lush mountains stocked with high volume, prime timber species, which were once controlled by logging operators, are now mostly abandoned and denuded. Catastrophic floods, the siltation of rivers and lakes, prolonged droughts, the destruction of biodiversity, and related environmental consequences not evident 30 years ago, have likewise become common phenomena.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Meanwhile, forest occupants, currently estimated at about 10-11 million, struggle to eke out a living in the increasingly fragile forest environment.

*Map 2.1*

It should be mentioned, however, that the Philippines had sufficient policies to promote the sustainable use of the country's forest resources. As early as 1954, Forestry Administrative Order No. 23 prescribed that logging operations in all areas declared as permanent forest should be under sustained-yield management (Uebelhör, Lagundino and Abalus, 1990). This was to be implemented through the application of a selective logging system to the Philippine dipterocarp forest. Since then, a series of administrative orders, directives, memoranda, and circulars, has been issued to support the implementation of selective logging and promote sustainable forestry (DENR, 1989). A ***Handbook on Selective Logging*** was also published by the BFD in 1965 (Siapno, 1970). Referred to as the 'bible of Philippine forestry', the handbook contained the rules and regulations for the implementation of selective logging as well as other related memoranda and circulars.

Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 331 (entitled *Sustained Yield*) issued on 8 November 1973, explicitly prescribed sustained-yield as the basis for sound forestry principles and practices in the country. Sustained-yield was reiterated as the appropriate forest management approach in P.D. No. 705 (*Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines*), and its amending decree P.D. No. 1559, issued in 1975 and 1978, respectively (Republic of the Philippines, 1975, 1978). Similar to the earlier directives, both decrees prescribed selective logging as the silvicultural and harvesting systems for the dipterocarp forest to promote sustained-yield.

Most of the evaluations conducted by local specialists on the Philippine Selective Logging System or PSLS (Utleg, 1973; Revilla, 1978; Tomboc, 1978,1987; and Reyes, 1983) arrived at an almost similar conclusion. They generally pointed out that the primary deficiency of the system was the apparent failure in its implementation. Maintaining that PSLS has some technical merits, Tomboc (1978) claimed that it is still the best until a better alternative can be developed. On the other hand, a recent comprehensive appraisal conducted by the RP-German Dipterocarp Forest Management Project on PSLS claimed that the problem was not simply technical. The appraisal emphasised that even if a more appropriate silvicultural system had been developed, the sustainable management of the dipterocarp forest was still bound to fail. This was considering the prevailing political situation and the economic orientation of the concessionaires from early 1960 to the 1980s when the system was widely promoted. Uebelhör, Lagundino and Abalos (1990:36) elaborate:

During the time (1960-1980s) which saw the largest conversion of virgin into logged-over forest (approximately 4 million ha) the legal and political climate was not conducive to sustainable resource management. The government lacked the political will and the administration did not show the necessary determination to control and to enforce the rules and regulations which they had given themselves. Concessionaires entrusted with the management of the country's forest were not induced to comply with the existing rules and regulations because of the doubtful security of tenure of their operations, the absence or unlikeliness of control and the easiness with which an increasing

number of indifferent officials could be “convinced” to ignore violations (emphasis original).

It should be noted that the Philippine case typifies the experience of most tropical countries in pursuing the seemingly elusive goal of sustained-yield forestry. A 1988 study on tropical forestry<sup>xxxiv</sup> carried out for the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) concluded that “the extent of tropical moist forest which is being deliberately managed at an operational scale for the sustainable production of timber is, on a world scale, negligible” (Poore, 1989:207). The study found that less than one-eighth of 1 per cent of tropical forests, where timber extraction is occurring on a commercial basis, were being logged sustainably. Similar to the Philippine case, the study also established that the success of sustainable natural-forest management goes beyond the technical aspect. Although technical constraints exist, they “are much less important than those that are political, economic and social” (Poore, 1989:8).

### **The Emergence of Community Forestry**

By the 1970s, two major problems had become apparent in the forestry sector: massive forest denudation and increasing poverty among the upland occupants. During this period, there was also a growing acceptance that the punitive stance adopted by the government for almost a century was ineffective in containing the upland communities. The issuance of Presidential Decree 705 in 1975, otherwise known as the ***Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines***, led to the formulation of various government programs relating to forest land occupancy (Pulhin, 1987:12). The most popular of these programs were Forest Occupancy and Management (FOM) in 1975, Communal Tree Farming (CTF) in 1978, and Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR) in 1979.

In 1982, the above programs were consolidated through Letter of Instruction No. 1260 which launched the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP).<sup>xxxv</sup> Its launching signalled the official adoption of social forestry as a forest management and development strategy in the Philippine uplands (Payuan, 1983). The program has three major aims: to stem the tide of forest destruction by shifting cultivation; to help fight poverty among the forest occupants; and to help rehabilitate the degraded forest environment (Agaloos, 1990:6).

The growing local and international concern towards ‘people-oriented forestry’ provided the momentum for the establishment of related programs and projects in the country under the banner of social or community forestry. A few months before the ISFP was launched, an inventory conducted by Bernales and de la Vega (1982) showed that there were already 255 upland projects in the country which may be generally categorised as ‘social forestry projects’. These projects were implemented by the government and the private sectors including Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

However, the emergence of community forestry as a development intervention should be understood within the Philippines' broader political context during the 1970s and 1980s. Community forestry emerged not solely in response to the worsening poverty and forest degradation in the Philippine uplands, although these were major contributory factors (Pulhin, 1985a; Pulhin, 1985b; FDC, 1987). Neither was its emergence merely an international import, although this was also instrumental (Aquino, del Castillo and Payuan, 1987:10). Community forestry also arose primarily as a state strategy to control and stabilise the intense political unrest in the countryside in the 1970s and the 1980s. In other words, social forestry was part of the overall rural development counterinsurgency strategy during this period of the Marcos administration (Bello, Kinley and Elinson).<sup>xxxvi</sup>

At least two important observations support the counterinsurgency explanation. First, early social forestry projects were concentrated in parts of the country with high insurgency problems. In the Southern Tagalog (Region 4), for instance, early social forestry projects were located in the insurgent areas of Mindoro and Quezon provinces.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In the same manner, the 1984 World Bank-supported social forestry project under the Central Visayas Regional Project (CVRP-1) was established in Negros Oriental where the New People's Army (NPA) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) were most prominent in the mid 1980s (Kerkvliet, 1995:25). Secondly, it was quite ironic that the idea of social forestry emerged at the time Marcos himself was allowing his cronies to plunder the country's forest resources through indiscriminate issuance of timber permits (Vitug, 1993a). As mentioned earlier, from 1972 to 1984 the martial law regime recorded the greatest number of timber licences issued in the history of Philippine forestry; the largest area made available for exploitation; and the highest rate of forest destruction.

The logic behind using social forestry for counterinsurgency is obvious. If people are mobilised in government development projects they are less available for revolution (Bryant and White, 1982). Indeed, by 1980, it was claimed that the NPA had created 26 battle fronts in the countryside and operated in 41 of the country's 71 provinces (Bello, Kinley and Bielski, 1982:92). A National Democratic Front (NDF) spokesman described this situation as approaching that which existed in Vietnam in the early 1960s (NDF, n.d:203). Social forestry, together with other rural development projects, therefore constituted a force to pacify the then highly explosive political situation in most upland communities. Yet there appeared to be another logic in using social forestry for counterinsurgency. This was to deviate the attention of the general public — especially the upland communities — from the rapid "onslaught of the forests" (Potter, 1993:103) by the Marcos cronies.

Despite the emphasis on people's involvement in forestry activities, the first generation of government social forestry did not depart from conventional practice sufficiently. These projects mostly aimed to "get trees in the ground rather than to get

the household economies of the rural poor off the ground” (Peluso, 1992:242). The primary rationale

was forest resource creation and protection to support the national agenda in forest management. Any benefits to local people were just a bonus and intended mainly to win their support and involvement in forestry activities.

For instance, a study by the Forestry Development Center (FDC) in 1985 revealed the limited economic contribution of ISFP and its precursors to the income and livelihood of upland communities. In 1984, the BFD reported that ISFP participants had already generated considerable economic benefits through their harvested trees and agricultural crops. BFD claimed that the total income generated by more than 44,000 farmer participants was already close to 121 million pesos in just one and a half years of operation. This conclusion, however, was challenged by the FDC study which deduced that ISFP participants had only an average net income of 465 pesos in its one and a half years of operation. According to the study this was very low, considering the fact that some ISFP projects actually started in 1975 under FOM, in 1978 under CTF, and in 1979 under FAR and therefore should have already attained or be approaching their economic maturity by that time (FDC, 1985).

Even the intention behind the issuance of 25-year stewardship certificates was met with suspicion or rejection by some upland farmers. They believed that it was simply a means of getting them to plant trees and that the BFD would reclaim the land once the trees had grown (Porter and Ganapin, 1988:29). In Cordillera, the Tinggian tribe, invoking ancestral claims to forest lands, rejected the concept of a stewardship certificate asserting that the land belonged to them and, therefore, should not be ‘lent’ to them by the government.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

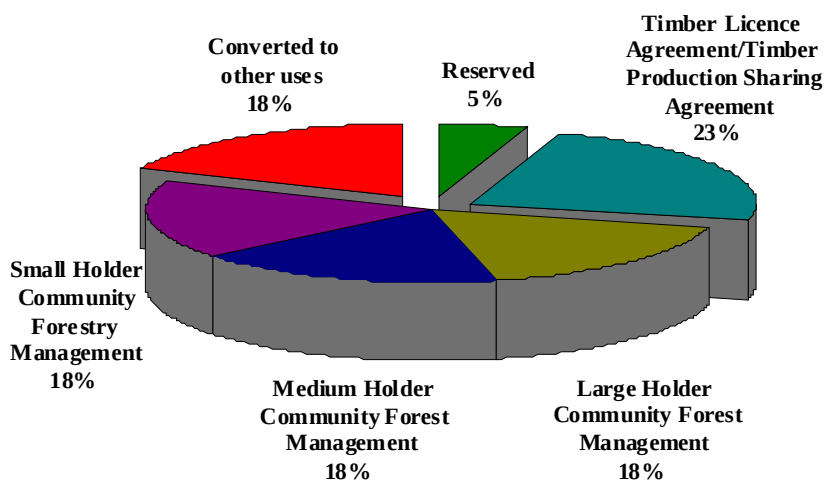
The limited coverage of social forestry projects also reduced their impact. The projects were mostly confined to occupied public lands devoid of forest vegetation and excluded timber licence areas, national parks and other forest reservations (Rebugio *et al.*, 1987).<sup>xxxix</sup> Commercial extraction of timber was not included under the ISFP and therefore the benefits of logging remained solely in the hands of the favoured timber licensees.

There were also indications that social forestry temporarily strengthened the hegemony and control of the Marcos administration (Contreras, 1991:65). In 1984, the ruling party, **Kilusang Bagong Lipunan** or New Society Movement counted social forestry as one of its major accomplishments and used it as a campaign promise during the **Batasan** parliamentary election. The then Minister of Natural Resources was also said to distribute stewardship agreements to upland cultivators in his home province in Palawan as part of his campaign to get votes.<sup>xl</sup> These were in addition to the role of social forestry in promoting political stability in insurgent upland areas.

The restoration of the Philippine democratic government, starting in 1986, placed the issue of social equity at the centre of the country's forest policy agenda (DENR Policy Advisory Group, 1987). To guard against the inequities of the past monopolistic

allocation, the New Constitution contains provisions mandating equitable access and distribution of benefits from the country's natural resources. Policy reforms were installed to bring about radical transformation in the forestry sector (Ramos, 1993). These policies envisioned dismantling of the quasi-monopolistic forest industry controlled by a select few, and installation of a community-based forest management system. Policies were also said to be based on the pragmatic realisation that the ultimate survival of the Philippine forests lies in the hands of millions of smallholders (Ramos, 1993:121).

The Philippine Master Plan for Forestry Development (DENR, 1990a) provides the blueprint to operationalise the concept of social equity through democratising forest resource access. The plan stipulates that 1.5 million hectares or 54 per cent of the remaining 2 million hectares of secondary growth forest below 50 per cent in slope will be placed under community forest management in the next 15 years. Moreover, large scale operations like Timber License Agreements (TLAs) and Timber Production Sharing Agreements (TPSAs) will be confined to 682,000 hectares or 23 percent of the country's total commercial forest (Figure 2.3).



*Figure 2.3 Allocation of the 2.8 million ha second-growth forest among the different management models.*

Source: DENR (1990a)

The renewed focus on community forestry after 1986 also reinforced the poverty alleviation objective of the earlier projects. The scope of community forestry projects also expanded to include supplementary livelihood activities, farm-to-market roads, access to credit, and provision of water supply. These are in addition to the provision of tenure or resource access instruments like the Certificate of Stewardship Contract (Agaloos, 1993). More significantly, with the expansion of community forestry coverage to the natural forest, the sustainability variable was added to the equity and poverty aims of community forestry. The recent DENR administrative policies refer to community forestry as “a new approach to forest resource management” ... “which is geared towards developing organised communities that have the capability to sustainably manage natural resources” (DENR, 1989a:172; 1993:2).<sup>xli</sup> Based on these official documents, community forestry has three avowed core objectives:

- 1) to promote social equity by democratising forest resource access;
- 2) to alleviate poverty by providing forest-based and other alternative sources of livelihood; and
- 3) to promote the sustainability of the forest resources for the present and future generations.

As discussed earlier, these central aims have their direct parallel in the three broader issues of ESD. It has political intentions (democratising resource access); it has socio-economic intentions (poverty alleviation); and resource sustainability intentions (the sustainability of the forest resource).

### **Community Forestry and Sustainable Development**

In 1987, the same year that WCED published its influential report, ***Our Common Future***, DENR initiated the process of formulating a ***Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD)***. The PSSD provides the Philippines’ framework and action program for environment and development issues. It was formally approved on 29 November 1989 through Cabinet Resolution No. 37 and has, since then, been treated as an integral part of the country’s national development plan (DENR, 1990b). It aims to “achieve, maintain and disperse economic growth without depleting the stock of the natural resources and degrading environmental quality” (DENR, 1991:xi).

The PSSD built on WCED’s central idea of sustainable development and applied it in the Philippine situation. Its ten operational principles (DENR, 1990b:5) can be categorised under the three general intentions of ecologically sustainable development as advanced by WCED:<sup>xlii</sup>

- 1) Under political or social justice and equity intention: a) a concern for meeting the needs of future generations, otherwise termed as inter-generational equity; b) a concern for equity of people’s access to natural resources; and c) promotion of citizen’s participation and decentralisation in implementing programs.

- 2) Under economic efficiency or poverty alleviation intention: a) a recognition that poverty is both a cause and consequence of environmental degradation.
- 3) Under resource sustainability intention: a) a concern not to exceed the carrying capacity of ecosystems; b) living on the interest rather than on the capital or stock of natural resources; c) a concern on resource use efficiency; and d) promotion of research substitutes, recycling, exploration, etc. from revenues derived from the utilisation of non-renewable resources.

The concept of community forestry, and specifically its three core objectives, was founded on the PSSD. These central aims directly advanced three of the ten PSSD general strategies. These include:

- 1) the reform of property rights as advanced by democratising resource access;
- 2) the induction of growth in rural areas, by poverty alleviation; and
- 3) the rehabilitation of the ecosystem, by sustainable forestry.

Community forestry was the forestry sector's major strategy for promoting sustainable development as contained in the 1989 **DENR Action Plan** (for sustainable development) and in the country report presented during the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.<sup>xliii</sup>

It should also be noted that there seems to be convergence between the central concerns of community forestry and some of the principles for an alternative vision of sustainable development currently being promoted by a growing number of NGOs and people's organisations (POs) in the country. These groups advocate that "the goals of development should be recentred on four principles: ecological sustainability, equity, participation, and improvements in the lives of the poor majority" (Broad and Cavanagh, 1993:144). These principles are at the very heart of the concept of community forestry.

Some professional observers have claimed that the Philippines has some of the most progressive community forestry policies in Asia which can be learned from by other countries experiencing similar conditions (Walpole *et al.*, 1993). Support for community forestry is also growing and is no longer confined to the government sector. Political critiques of the old logging system, such as Marites Vitug of the National Center for Investigative Journalism, and Maximo Kalaw, President of the Haribon Society, placed high hopes in the concept of community forest management.<sup>xliiv</sup> Influential environmental coalitions, like the Green Forum, have also recommended community forestry to be the central thrust of the USAID Natural Resource Management Program (Green Forum, 1991). Indeed, there is now an agreement that community forestry is a potential vehicle to help promote the goals of PSSD.

However, whether the core objectives of community forestry can, in fact, be realised on the ground remains to be demonstrated. This may be determined by examining some

theoretical and practical issues concerning the implementation of different community forestry projects. The remainder of the thesis is devoted to this task.

## **Summary**

The evolution of the concept and policy of community forestry in the Philippines has been influenced both by the international trends in development thinking and the national socio-economic, political and environmental contexts. From the early 1900s until the mid 1970s, Philippine forest policies were geared towards the industrialisation of the forestry sector. The benefits of industrialisation were confined to the privileged few and were later seen as having contributed to upland poverty and forest depletion. By the 1980s, the government had introduced a new approach in forest management generally termed ‘people-oriented forestry’ or ‘community forestry’. Regarded by the government as a development strategy for the Philippine uplands, community forestry currently has the avowed central objectives of democratising forest resource access, alleviating rural poverty, and the sustainable use of forest resources. These objectives have their direct parallel in the broader issues of ecologically sustainable development.

Despite the high expectations of the potential benefits of community forestry on the part of both the government and non-government sectors, its practicability on the ground is unclear. This will be the focus of discussion from Chapters Five to Seven. Before beginning this discussion, the next chapter examines the theoretical issues relating to the instruments of practice in community forestry, and discusses the research propositions which are being put forward in this study.

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<sup>i</sup> For details about these congresses, please refer to: Proceedings of the 5th World Forestry Congress held in USA in 1960; Proceedings of the 6th World Forestry Congress held in Spain in 1966, and proceedings of the 7th World Forestry Congress held in Argentina in 1972.

<sup>ii</sup> For a short description of the major implications of the 5th, 6th and 7th World Forestry Congresses in promoting the role of forest industry in economic development, please refer to Kengen (1987:10-17).

<sup>iii</sup> Aside from Westoby’s seminal paper itself, an example of this translation was a background document presented by FAO during the 6th World Forestry Congress held in Spain in 1966. The document, *Wood: World Trends and Prospects*, described the potential of the large tracts of forest resources in the underdeveloped countries in supporting the expanding timber industries in all regions of the world. The document also emphasised the role of the developed countries and the international agencies in facilitating the exploitation of the forest resources in the less developed countries to promote economic growth in these areas and, consequently, development.

<sup>iv</sup> The UN General Assembly declared the decade of 1960-1970 to be the “First Development Decade”. The Assembly established that underdeveloped countries should formulate policies aimed at attaining a 6 per cent or more growth rate measured through Gross National Product. This would have to be achieved through massive industrialisation. The assumption was that those countries that reached this

target would be well on their way to development, and economic growth would trickle-down to the entire population.

<sup>v</sup> For an exposition of this critique, please refer to Douglas (1983): *A Reappraisal of Forestry Development in Developing Countries*.

<sup>vi</sup> Westoby's shift in perspective on the role of forestry in development is best conveyed in his excellent article, *Forest Industries for Socio-economic Development*, delivered during the Eighth World Forestry Congress in Jakarta in 1978.

<sup>vii</sup> This report — written by Hollis Chenery, Montek S. Ahluwalia, C.L.G. Bell, John H. Doloy and Richard Dolly — is based on a joint study conducted by the World Bank's Development Research Center and the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

<sup>viii</sup> The basic needs approach was taken up and widely publicised by the Program of Action of the 1976 World Employment Conference (Bartelmus, 1994:6). The clarification of basic needs issues and formulation action program was done by ILO which led to several publications the more popular ones of which are *The Basic Needs Approach to Development* (Gai *et al.*, 1977); and *Growth and Basic Needs: A One-World Problem*, both published in 1977.

<sup>ix</sup> Discussion of these new development strategies is outside the scope of this study. For some discussion about these strategies and the basic needs approach, please refer to: Ghai *et al.* (1987); ILO (1977); Srinivasan (1977); Streeten and Burki (1978); Streeten (1979).

<sup>x</sup> For detailed discussion on the factors contributing to the emergence of community forestry, please refer to: FAO (1978); Gregersen and McGaughey (1987); Foley and Barnard (1984); Eckholm (1979); Gregersen, Draper and Elz (1989); Gilmour and Fisher (1991); Rebugio *et al.* (1987); Kirchhofer and Mercer (1986); and Arnold (1991).

<sup>xi</sup> For a collection of definitions of community forestry and related concepts refer to DSF (1985).

<sup>xii</sup> Some of the more prominent advocates of these ideologies are David Korten of the People-Centered Development Forum and Robert Chambers of the University of Sussex, Brighton, England.

<sup>xiii</sup> For discussion on the potentials of community forestry, please refer to: FAO (1978, 1983 and 1984); Proceedings of the Eighth World Forestry Congress (1978); Eckholm (1979); Kirchhofer and Mercer (1984); Wiersum (n.d.); Pulhin (1985a,b); Griffin (1988); Ohlsson and Byron (1988); Gregersen and McGaughey (1987); Gregersen *et al.* (1989); Gilmour and Fisher (1991); and Foley and Barnard (1984).

<sup>xiv</sup> The most influential contributions in this regard include: Korten (1981); Chambers (1983); Korten and Alfonso (1983); Korten and Klauss (1984); Korten (1986); and Cernea (1991a).

<sup>xv</sup> Gilmour and Fisher (1991) termed this approach the 'community forestry paradigm'. Similar approaches seem to be advocated by a number of authors: Leslie (1987); Poffenberger (1990); Cernea (1991a, 1992); and Colchester (1994).

<sup>xvi</sup> For a detailed exposition by Leslie, please refer to the introductory quotation of this Chapter.

<sup>xvii</sup> For detailed discussion on the relationship of fuelwood shortage and the potential of community forestry to meet this shortage, please refer to the influential works of Eckholm (1975, 1979); and the relevant works of Arnold and Jongma (1978) and FAO (1978).

<sup>xviii</sup> Some of this literature includes: Carson, 1965); (Loraine, 1972); and (Mesarovic and Pestel, 1974).

<sup>xix</sup> After the first presentation of the book at a Smithsonian Institute press gathering in 1972, 9 million copies have been published in 29 languages, hundreds of reviews and a decade of citations (Porter, 1993). The use

of a seemingly objective computerised global model by Meadows and colleagues must have provoked the widespread attention to their report compared to the other relevant literature during the period. The report posed a challenge towards a socially equitable, economically stable, and ecologically sustainable future through technocratic envisioning and management (Porter, 1993). Management of the global future was to be done through “global equilibrium” policies (Meadows *et al.*, 1972:24) — stabilising population and industry, increasing resource efficiency, controlling population growth, diverting capital to food production and allocating agricultural capital to make soil enrichment and preservation a high priority, and increasing the average lifetime of industrial capital through better design and less obsolescence. For an excellent review of *Limits to Growth* (Meadows *et al.* 1972) and its sequel, *Beyond the Limits* (Meadows *et al.* 1992) please refer to Porter (1993).

<sup>xx</sup> I am aware that WCED’s concept of economic efficiency also relates to a “new era of economic growth” (WCED, 1987:xiii) which has been widely criticised as purely “conventional developmentalism” (Ekins, 1992:81). This aspect of economic efficiency has been the subject of other investigation (see for instance de la Court, 1990; and Ekins, 1992) and is outside the boundaries of this study.

<sup>xxi</sup> Regalian Doctrine is a legal myth which had its colonial roots when Ferdinand Magellan “discovered” the Philippines in 1521 and planted the Spanish flag in Mactan Island. It presumed that all land belong to the Spanish Crown unless a royal grant described in official documentation recognised contrary property rights. Through the Regalian Doctrine, the indigenous occupants of the unexplored archipelago were converted into squatters. despite the Philippine independence from the Spaniards and the Americans, it remained the ‘theoretical bedrock’ upon which the Philippine national laws were based. For detailed exposition of the Regalian Doctrine, please refer to the pathbreaking works of Lynch, (1984, 1986).

<sup>xxii</sup> *Kaingin* making is a traditional form of upland farming system which involves the clearing of forests area through slashing and burning, then cultivating it for one to three cropping terms. The soil is then left to rest, for several years, which is called the fallow period. During this time, the farmer shift to another area repeating the process. The old farm is again cultivated after the fallow period. However, with reduced are available, for cultivation along with population growth, there is a corresponding deduction in the length of the fallow period rendering *kaingin* making less sustainable.

<sup>xxiii</sup> According to Tucker (1983), this recruitment of American foresters to train the local people was done despite the fact that the former had virtually no knowledge or experience of tropical forest management.

<sup>xxiv</sup> In an insightful analysis on the effects of scientific forestry, Tucker (1992: 105) noted:

Under the colonial “scientific” forestry, non-timber forest products were usually relegated to the periphery management systems. Most products of tropical and subtropical forests, which had been harvested and consumed for centuries before the advent of colonial forestry, came to be called “minor forest products” from the time colonial forestry began to evolve in Asia in the mid-nineteenth century. But they were minor only in reference to timber markets and monetisation of the forest. They were vitally important to both the biological character of the forest ecosystems and the cultures of the forest peoples. Indeed, the forests and their cultures were inseparable; their inexorable disruption was a single, double-faceted phenomenon.

<sup>xxv</sup> Worcester (1914:860) himself believed that the practice of indigenous systems was confined only to the Igorots of Lipanto and Bontocs.

<sup>xxvi</sup> A useful historical perspective on this issue is provided by Pflueger, (1930) and Tucker, (1992).

<sup>xxvii</sup> For a complete list of these policies starting with the Spanish time to mid 1970s, please refer to Aquino, del Castillo and Payuan (1987:7-9).

<sup>xxviii</sup> For detailed discussion on the link between the forestry sector and the macro-economic policy of the Philippines, please refer to Quintos (1989).

<sup>xxix</sup> Please refer to the last column of table 2.2 for detailed information about the rate of under-reporting.

<sup>xxx</sup> This policy was stipulated in Section 32 of Presidential Decree No. 705 otherwise known as the *Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines* which states that “the entire production of logs by all timber licensees shall, beginning January 1, 1976, be processed locally. PD 705 was issued on 19 May 1975

<sup>xxxi</sup> See for instance, Boado (1988); Bautista (1990).

<sup>xxxii</sup> An example of this cultural disintegration is the increasing materialistic tendency of the tribal groups upon exposure to the life of the lowlanders. In some parts of Mindoro Island, for instance, some members of the Mangyan tribes worked for illegal loggers to earn money for drinking and gambling, something which was alien to the Mangyan culture.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> For instance, Porter and Ganapin (1988:24) cited a study of watershed management by UN organisations in 1982 which reported that flooding in the typhoon belt (from Northern Luzon to Southern Samar) had “increased greatly” due to watershed degradation.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> The study was conducted by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) for the International Tropical Timber Organisation, the purpose of which was to examine the management of natural forest for the sustainable production of timber within the producer countries of ITTO. The study resulted in the publication of the book, *No Timber Without Trees: Sustainability in the Tropical Forest* authored by Poore *et al.* (1989).

<sup>xxxv</sup> For detailed description of ISFP and the three major programs it consolidated, please refer to: FDC (1985); and Pulhin (1987); Agaloos (1990); and Payuan (1983). Please also refer to Makil (1982) and Aquino, del Castillo and Payuan (1987); for comprehensive and excellent historical analyses on the evolution of ISFP starting the Spanish period.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Chapters 2 and 3 of *Development Debacle* by Bello, Kinley and Bielski (1982:12-39; 67-99) and the concluding chapter of David Wurfel’s *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay* (1988: 325-346) provides an excellent background and analysis about the Philippines rural development as a counterinsurgency strategy during the Marcos administration. Kerkvliet (1995) also provides an interesting discussion on the highly volatile political condition in the Philippine countryside from 1970s to the 1980s.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> In 1978, when I conducted fieldwork for my Master’s thesis on social forestry in Mindoro and Quezon, I had to request clearance from the local military officials before I could enter the project sites since most of these areas were ‘NPA infested’. Some of the project areas were also abandoned by the local residents because of insurgency problems.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Personal interview with Father Balweg in 1986 in Cordillera, Philippines.

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<sup>xxxix</sup> An exemption of these are those tribal areas issued with Community Forest Stewardship Agreement (CFSA) which could include a considerable portion of forest vegetation. However, CFSA prohibit timber extraction in these areas.

<sup>xi</sup> Based on personal interview with Palawan upland communities in 1987.

<sup>xli</sup> These administrative policies are: Department of Environment and Natural Resources Administrative Order No. 123, Series of 1989; and No. 22, Series of 1993.

<sup>xlii</sup> One of the ten principles — a systems-oriented and integrated approach in the analysis and solution of development problems — can be categorised under all the three intentions, hence is not included in the list.

<sup>xliii</sup> This report, prepared by a National Technical Committee is titled: A Report on Philippine Environment and Development: Issues and Strategy, published in December, 1991 by the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines.

<sup>xliv</sup> See for instance, Vitug (1993a).