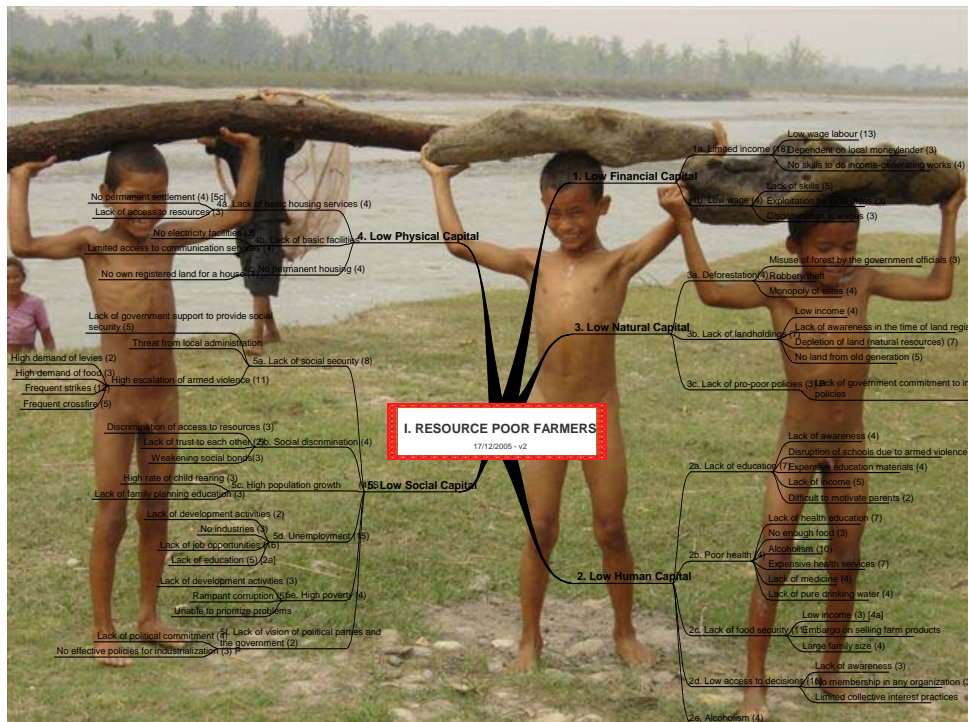


# A survey of the priority problems of the forest and tree-dependent poor people in Nepal during a time of conflict

## Caught in the cross-fire

### An Update Report 2005



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## **GLOSSARY**

Aaphno manchhe	relatives
Bandha	general strike
Chakka jam	strike
Dalit	so-called low caste people who are looked upon by others as untouchables
Ek mana chamal	half a kilo of rice
Maobadi	Maoist
Niguro	a kind of edible NTFP
Panchayat	a party-less system of rule that was in place for 30 years between 1960 and 1990 in Nepal where political freedom, freedom of speech, assembly and expression were not allowed
Terai	low plain land
Thulo manchhe	powerful person who can influence and make decisions in the community

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

CFUG	Community Forestry User Group
CBO	Community Based Organization
FECOFUN	Federation of Community Forestry Users' Nepal
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NLSS	National Living Standard Survey
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSCFP	Nepal Swiss Community Forestry Project
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
SAAPE	South Asia Alliance on Poverty Eradication
VDC	Village Development Committee

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey is an update of a previous survey carried out by ForestAction in 2003<sup>1</sup>. This new survey seeks to focus on understanding how the escalating violent conflict in Nepal has affected livelihoods and reconfigured the structure of livelihood problems. The survey captures the perceived priority problems of the forest and tree-dependent poor by service providers and the poor themselves in the context of armed political conflict.

This study uses the same approach as the earlier study, which was based on the methodology developed by the DFID Forestry Research Programme's poverty surveys conducted in Southern Africa, the Caribbean and Central America<sup>2</sup>. Although the methodology, method of data collection and the checklist remained the same as in the previous survey, the questionnaires for individual interviewees were slightly modified to suit the research question in the present context.

The survey was conducted in four districts in Nepal incorporating the views of 52 poor people. Interviews with NGO/CBO representatives, both at district and national level, and high-level government officials in Kathmandu were also taken to learn their current views on what they see as the main causes of poverty and how they felt about the poor in the context of conflict. An extensive review of literature, particularly of the armed insurgency in Nepal and its implications, and the national policy and action plan to address poverty reduction, was also carried out. Due to the stronghold of insurgency in the rural areas, the respondents were not as open as in the earlier survey in 2002.

The survey identified the prioritized problems of poor people in this conflict situation. Poor people have a number of problems to surpass through. For example, all the respondents interviewed suffered from the unfavourable policies and support services relevant to their livelihoods. More severe than this, they have suffered badly as a result of the armed insurgency which has hijacked their mental peace and social security. In addition to this lack of peace and security, regular *Bandha* and strikes, declining basic health care, and lack of employment opportunities were other priority problems mentioned during the interviews.

Traditional rural livelihood opportunities such as the collection and marketing of non-timber forest products have been seriously disrupted. After the insurgency escalated and the Maoists began to use the forest as their shelter and training centres, access to these areas by non-combatants was denied. As a result, in some areas the poor have been deprived of forest products for both subsistence use and trade. Elsewhere, reduced patrolling by forestry staff in government forest has increased access for the poor to collect forest products. In addition, both the Maoists and the government have exerted increased pressure on Community Forestry Users Groups (CFUGs). In areas under Maoist control, the taxing of CFUGs has reduced funds available for pro-poor enterprises.

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<sup>1</sup>A report on 'A survey of the priority problems of the forest and tree-dependent poor people in Nepal' was prepared by Krishna P. Paudel, Harisharan Luintel, Basundhara Bhattarai and Hermant Ojha, **ForestAction Nepal** in collaboration with Hannah Jaenicke, **DFID/Forest Research Programme (FRP) UK** in July 2003.

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.frp.uk.com/sub\\_page.cfm/title/Poverty%20focus/section/about\\_frp/editID/62](http://www.frp.uk.com/sub_page.cfm/title/Poverty%20focus/section/about_frp/editID/62)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

This study is an update of the previous survey of the **Priority Problems of Forest and Tree-Dependent Poor People in Nepal** conducted by ForestAction, Nepal, in collaboration with the Forestry Research Programme of DFID, UK in 2002. Box 1 summarises the finding of the first report.

#### Box 1. The first survey

The aim of the survey was to list the underlying causes of poverty, as perceived by poor people who rely on forest and tree resources, as well as different categories of institutions representing government, non-governmental organisations, bilateral agencies, research institutions and the private sector, which seek to reduce poverty. The survey documented existing problems and their underlying causes, which can help in the development of meaningful and targeted action both through research and development projects.

The survey was conducted in seven districts in Nepal between April and October 2002, incorporating the views of 79 poor people. Interviews with Kathmandu based heads and officers of government, non-government and donor projects were also carried out.

The survey identified prioritized problems and their underlying causes for four FRP focus groups (resource-poor farmers, poor small-scale artisans, the landless and the urban poor) who have varying degrees of dependencies on forest and tree resources. The findings are cross-referenced to published national strategies, action plans or priority-setting documents and participatory poverty analyses. In addition to a short description of the 16 prioritized constraints, the problems and their underlying causes are displayed in the form of poverty maps. Priority problems of the four focus groups are briefly discussed in four broad thematic clusters: global issues and strategic concerns (policies), land-use and forest decision making (technologies), institutional change and reform (social structures), and sustainable livelihoods (employment and income).

The findings indicate that all four focus groups suffer from a lack of favourable policies and support services relevant to their livelihoods. They also suffer from lack of food security and low wages, in addition to problems of exploitation, food security, and large family sizes.

*Resource poor farmers* suffer mainly from limited access to land resources, deteriorating productivity and limited ability to purchase agricultural inputs, often caused by underemployment.

*Poor small-scale artisans* suffer from limited access to raw materials, from shrinking marketing opportunities, lack of financial capital and alternative employment opportunities.

*Landless and urban poor* generally share the same problems, including no or limited land and knowledge/awareness on livelihood options and strategies. The *landless poor* also suffer from forced child labour, unemployment and lack of financial capital, and the *urban poor* from lack of employment and low wages.

Source: Paudel et al 2003

While the previous survey focused on the problems of the forest-dependent poor without looking explicitly at the linkages between conflict and livelihoods, this report seeks to focus on understanding how the escalating violent conflict in Nepal has affected livelihoods and reconfigured the structure of the livelihood problems of the poor.

## 1.2 Objective of the study

The objective of the present study was to update the perceived priority problems of tree and forest-dependent poor people within a conflict situation in Nepal. Specifically, this study explored the influence of the Maoist insurgency on the day-to-day activities of the tree and forest-dependent poor and their service providers.

Specific objectives of the survey were to:

- identify and report on priority national / regional problems and their underlying causes in the management of forest and tree resources for the four FRP focus groups, cross-referenced to published national strategies, action plans or priority setting documents and poverty analyses through the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS I and II);
- identify and display the logical chain between key issues and their underlying problems in the form of poverty maps;
- rationalize priorities according to transparent criteria for the remaining problems for which the national capability is inadequate and which are not addressed with support of donors or international agencies;
- finally, to share the survey findings with key stakeholders through reports and publications.

## 1.3 Forestry in Nepal

Forests resources in Nepal continue to form a critical livelihood base for poor and marginalized groups, primarily through their contributions in sustaining farming systems, providing a cheap source of household energy, and creating a source of income through a wide range of commercial timber and non-timber resources (including medicinal plants) (Gilmour and Fisher 1991; Malla 2000). Because of this importance to the large mass of people, the forests of Nepal have always been a matter of great political concern, and have been subjected to different policy arrangements and contestations. Prior to 1957 (when the Forest Nationalization Act was enforced), the forests were largely under the control of local elites (as in the *terai* and eastern hills) or in some cases more egalitarian forms of traditional village forest institutions (Chhetri and Pandey 1992). The subsequent efforts of government focussed on creating centralized structures of forest governance, which viewed local people as the agents of forest destruction and therefore sought to exclude them. A change in forest policy occurred in the late 1970's only when government realized that, despite huge efforts, government alone could not protect the remaining forests. This led to the formulation of a community forestry strategy, which was comprehensively spelled out in the 1989 Master Plan for the Forestry Sector, and subsequently backed by legislation and regulations in 1995. Today, community forestry stands as the largest programme in the forest sector in Nepal, through which one-third of the total population have an opportunity to participate directly in the governance and management of forest resources. Over 14,000 CFUGs have been given rights and responsibilities to manage and utilize over 900,000 hectares of forest resources (Kanel and Kandel 2004).

Community forestry is not the only regime of forest governance in Nepal. Most parts of the *terai* forest are either in Protected Areas or are still under central government control through the Department of Forests. There is a continuing conflict between proponents of community forestry and the government agencies, who emphasize



government-led management of *terai* forests (Ojha 2005). These regimes of forest governance vary in the nature and extent of decentralization, and provide different levels of opportunity in the management of forest resources for local people in general and the poorest in particular. But when seen in the context of the current conflict, it is not necessarily the case that centralized policy is restricting more than the decentralized arrangement, as the conflict situation affects the entire way both such programmes are actually put into practice. For instance, our survey indicates that the presence of government forest guards has diminished in the conflict situation, and as a result the poor have better access in government-controlled forest areas.

The nature of the poor's access to these diverse types of forest governance regimes varies considerably. While within community forestry the issues are for the most part related to community level processes of decision making, in the context of Protected Areas or government-controlled forestry, the direct involvement of state agencies further complicates the regime of access. In non-community forestry areas, the poor tend to resort to processes that are considered illegal, while community forestry provides a dynamic platform for the negotiation of the poor's access to forest resources. Our survey does not explicitly analyze the problems by forest programme categories, but seeks to describe the effect of Maoist conflict on actual access by the poor under the different regimes that are found in the surveyed districts. The surveyed districts roughly cover these programmes areas – Nawalparasi (National Park and Community Forestry), Palpa (Community Forestry), Kabhre (Community Forestry), Sarlahi (Government forestry and a situation of tension between community and government forestry).

## CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Respondent Categories

This study has followed a similar approach to the earlier study (ForestAction 2003). In addition, the researchers observed the life condition of the poor people and extracted some significant insights that further consolidated the research findings. The two main categories of respondents interviewed included the poor themselves and their support institutions. Among the poor, responses of four groups of poor people, as categorized by FRP, were solicited:

- i) Resource poor farmers
- ii) The landless
- iii) Small-scale traders, artisans and entrepreneurs
- iv) The urban and peri-urban poor

Similarly the respondents from support institutions were identified and categorized as:

- a) State-level government departments
- b) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

For details about the respondents, please refer to Annex I.

**Table 1 Number of respondents by category**

Name of the institutions/respondent category	Number of respondents
<b>A) Four focus group</b>	<b>52</b>
i) Resource poor farmers	14
ii) Landless	14
iii) Artisans	13
iv) Urban and Peri-urban poor	11
<b>B) Support institutions</b>	<b>35</b>
a) State-level natural resource and forestry government departments	15
b) Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	20
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>87</b>

### 2.2 Brief Introduction of the poor

Resource poor farmers represent the majority of Nepali farmers, whose livelihood is based on agricultural activities. Such farmers hold very small plots of marginal land, lack food security from their own farm and therefore seek agricultural and other labour work. These farmers are highly dependent on the forest and forest products, such as grass for feeding livestock, fuelwood, and wood for agriculture implements and other inputs. Most of the interviewees of this category in this survey were from

rural areas residing near forest areas. They represent most of the caste categories and ethnic groups.

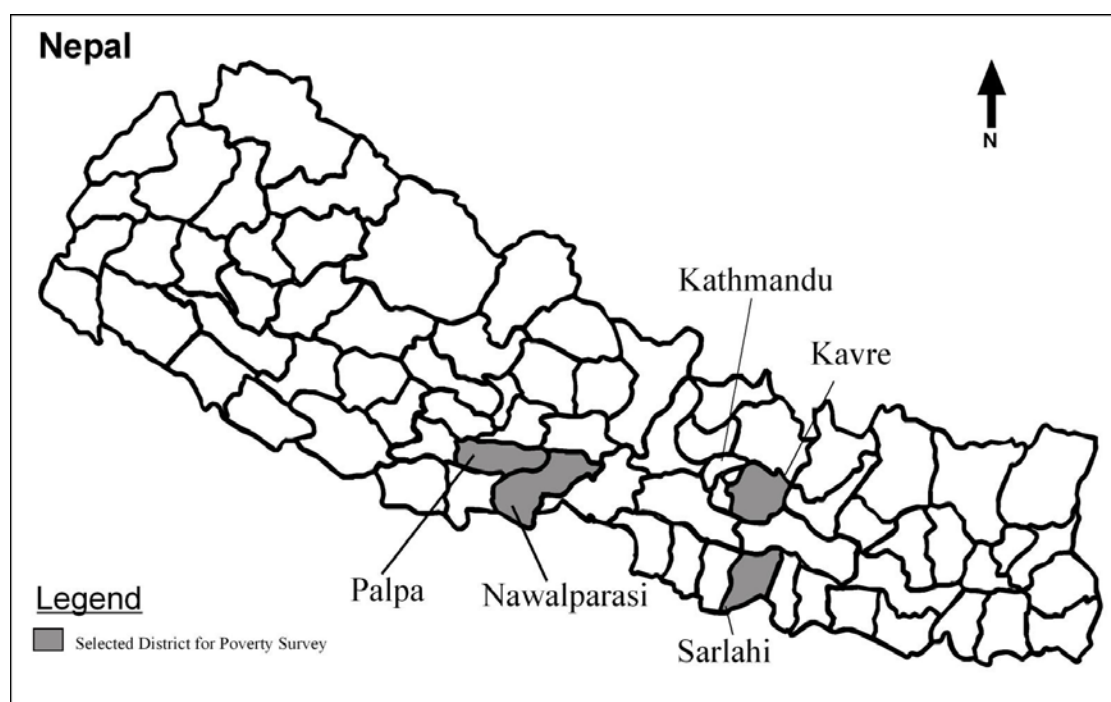
Members of the second group consist of the traditional occupational castes (e.g. blacksmiths, tailors, and members of fishing communities), small traders and small-scale entrepreneurs such as teashop operators, fruit and vegetable sellers and carpenters. The livelihood of this group of people is based on a cash income.

Most of the landless people belong to traditional occupational castes and forest-dependent tribes such as the Mushahar, Bote and Tharu. One key characteristic of this group of people is that they are transitional migrants to the *terai* and urban areas, displaced as a result of natural calamities such as floods and landslides, and their livelihood is based on agricultural wage labour paid in cash or in kind.

The urban and peri-urban poor are families residing in urban and peri-urban areas who have very small or no land holdings. The livelihood of this group of people is based primarily on cash income earned through daily wages. This group is dependent on the forest in terms of collection and selling of fuelwood and NTFPs. Their dependency on the forest is generally lower than that of the other focus groups.

## 2.3 Selection of sites, respondents and collection of data

### 2.3.1 Sites



Two districts, Nawalparasi and Kabhre, were selected from the previously enumerated sites, whilst two others, Palpa and Sarlahi, were new to the survey. The selection of sites, combining both previously surveyed and new districts, was intended to capture the changing perspective on priority problems of the forest dependent poor. One hill district (Palpa) and one *terai* (Nawalparasi) district were selected to add new perspectives from people living in conflict-prone districts. Within each district, the survey team located the area for survey and a village for focus

group discussion. Locally-based support institutions, such as forestry officials and other government officials, NGOs, project and academic institutions were consulted to understand the service providers' perspective on the issue.

**Table 2. Survey sites by development regions and ecological zones**

Survey Sites (Districts)	Development region	Altitudinal zone	Summary description	Previously surveyed
Nawalparasi	Western	Terai	Indigenous people with a history of conflict with National Park management	Yes
Palpa	Western	Hill	The hilly area of western Nepal where people have limited options for livelihoods.	No
Kabhre	Central	Mid-hill	Close to urban centre (Kathmandu) with diversified livelihood strategies, including off-farm employment. Pioneer district for community forestry	Yes
Sarlahi	Central	Terai	One of the conflict prone areas where the Maoists claim their strongholds and the people in this area are obliged to obey the Maoists rather than the State.	No

### 2.3.2 Questionnaire

A sample questionnaire was developed and used to interview respondents in the survey area. Since the questionnaires were unstructured and open-ended, additional questions were also asked to provoke ideas from the respondents relating to the conflict situation. The guide questionnaire is found in Annex II.

### 2.3.3 Time and Duration of the Survey

This survey was carried out in the four districts in Nepal between May and June 2005. Out of 87 individual interviewed 52 were poor people whilst the remaining interviewees were from support institutions. The sample size of the poor was constrained by the resources available for this study and the unstable social conditions brought about by the civil conflict.

### 2.3.4 Observation

For this study, observing the prevailing situation of the poor and their struggle for a livelihood in the selected survey sites was the priority task. The physical presence of the researchers enabled them to observe the life situation and coping strategy of the poor. During the field survey, the researchers had an opportunity to observe informally and interview a poorer section of people living in their respective societies. In this way, and by acting as participant observers, the researchers were able to build an understanding of the social context in an interactive way.

The same sample village and respondent size were selected for the earlier surveyed districts (Kabhre and Nawalparasai). Key informants (mainly the service providers) were consulted in selecting the sample villages within the two new districts (Sarlahi and Palpa). Within each sample village, interviewees were classified according to FRP's four groups of the forest and tree-dependent poor. Interviewees were randomly selected from the households, however, additional informants were

interviewed purposively, based on the suggestions of interviewees themselves as to who in the village had good knowledge and could best explain their problems.

## 2.4 Data analysis

The following steps were taken to analyze the data.

1. **Preparation of individual problem trees<sup>3</sup> for each respondent.** This was done either as part of interview data recording or as a way of organizing data immediately after an interview.

2. **Preparation of master list of problems and coding.** A comprehensive list of problems was prepared (and coded) by compiling, and in some cases classifying, the problems captured in the individual problem trees. The problems of each focus group were then arranged into the five livelihood capital asset categories of the sustainable livelihood analysis (SLA) framework. These capital assets are categorised as economic, social, physical, natural and human.

3. **Frequency counting.** Frequencies of each of the listed problems in the master list were then counted from the problem trees in Microsoft Excel format. This was done separately for each of the four poor groups. In addition, frequencies of problems from the perspective of the poor themselves and support institutions were counted separately.

4. **Screening of problems.** A total of 15 priority problems were selected from the perspective of both support institutions and the four focus groups on the basis of the frequency counts made in the step three.

5. **Selection of priority constraints.** The five most frequently mentioned problems of each of the four focus groups were then drawn together with their total frequency (i.e. sums of ranking by concerned poor groups as well as support institutions as per step three). From this problem pool, 15 prioritized problems were selected primarily using the frequency as a basis. While selecting, attention was also paid to the researchers' impression on the importance of the problem during interviews. In the process, the distribution of problems across the four FRP strategic clusters was also considered (but no adjustment was made exclusively based on this criterion as the selected problems were naturally found to occur in all categories, though with different frequencies).

6. **Preparation of standardized problem tree for each focus group.** For each of the four focus groups, a problem tree was then prepared using the logical sequence developed in the individual problem trees as well as the frequencies, using Mind Jet ® software. While preparing the problem trees, all problems were - as far as possible - categorized according to the five livelihood capital assets.

## 2.5 Literature review

Relevant documents were collected on an on-going basis through the survey period and reviewed in the light of findings that came from the interviews. Of particular importance were the national strategy documents ((HMG/N 1988; HMG/N and ADB 1995; HMG/N 1998; HMG/N 2002; HMG/N 2002a) of both government and donor

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<sup>3</sup> See annex 3 for a description of the 'problem tree' and its functions

institutions, and the review and assessment reports (Seddon and Adhikari 2003, DFID 2005, KIRDARC 2005, CHRI 2001) of projects related to poverty alleviation in Nepal.

## 2.6 Constraints and Challenges

A number of problems were reported by the respondents. Some are more severe than reported in the previous survey (Paudel et al., 2003), because of the ongoing conflict (the *Maobadi* problem in the respondents' words). In chapter 4 seven selected problems are described based on the findings of the interviews, cross-referenced with national strategy documents, where available. This present analysis has focused on the priority problems related to the insurgency. Though other problems are important - affecting the lives of the forest and tree-dependent poor - there are not many changes in these compared to the earlier study.

Despite constant efforts, many key informants who participated in the 2002 poverty survey were not available for this follow-up survey. Most of those who worked in the support institutions were found to have either left their previous location or had changed their job. This made it difficult to compare the priority in the work of these organisations then and now. Frequent changes of key staff with responsibility for poverty issues have delayed implementation programmes and result in much loss in time.

Since the landless poor and the squatters have no permanent settlements, they move from one place to another for work or to find a settlement. The survey team could not find *any of those* previously interviewed. The poor had moved on in search of a livelihood.

Due to the escalation of armed conflict, poverty is more pervasive in rural households. Many of the active members of households have either taken up arms to become combatants "for the emancipation from poverty and to restore justice" or have fled the country. Only the elders and the young who are unable to work remain at home. "How can we survive when the resource person of a household leaves us helplessly and flees?" respondents asked.

### CHAPTER THREE: CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT CONFLICT IN NEPAL

In 1990, following a popular movement against the *Panchayat* system, a multi-party political system was restored in Nepal. Nepal entered into a period of open politics. People could talk, dialogue and debate on social, political, economic and legal issues. They were free to exercise their rights and fundamental freedoms. People were recognized as the sovereign power of the state.

The major achievement of this movement was the 1990 constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal. For the first time, it was drafted in consultation with the political parties, mainly the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front, the major allies of the popular movement. The constitution crafted a Westminster style democracy, with a two-tiered parliament, the demarcation of a political opposition and a constitutional monarchy. Most of the powers exercised by the King were devolved to the parliament and the elected prime minister. However, despite the constitutional provision of 1990, there is still a limited sense of popular sovereignty in practice and the recent political crisis and resurrection of power by the King has created a dilemma with regard to the nature of democracy and popular sovereignty.

Some political forces, especially the radical left, were dissatisfied with the promulgation of the new constitution and insisted instead on elections for a constituent assembly to determine a democratically legitimate constitution. Despite the critical stance of these forces (which had little influence in the first few years) the 1991 election brought into place the first elected government of the Nepali Congress with a clear majority. The new government was sworn in amidst burgeoning expectations of people after 30 years of frustrations, to which the elected government and multi-party political system could not respond. In fact, developments went contrary to expectations.

The twelve years of democracy (until August 2002, when the present King resurrected power by dismissing the elected government) were crucial in fostering the growth of civil society activities, private sector involvement, and local-global linkages. However, the political culture and practices of parties and leaders appeared less productive, effective and mature than was expected and Nepal's political parties increasingly lost people's faith through:

- Dissolution of parliament three times in less than a decade (none of the elected parliaments ran their full term);
- Lack of accountability by party leaders to party members and citizens;
- Lack of basic understanding on the 'rules of the game' between the ruling party and the opposition;
- Unchecked corruption and leaders' allegiance to such practices;
- Failure to address the fundamental issues of regional, ethnic, caste, and class disparities;
- Excessive politicization and polarization disrupting social capital.

As a result, the democratic political system could not bring the desired changes in the power equation of caste, class, and ethnicity. Although the constitution recognizes cultural pluralism, it still emphasized patronage of the Hindu religion and considered non-Hindus as second class citizens in practice. Regional disparities, especially between the Kathmandu valley and the outside continued to widen. The creation of new employment opportunities could not keep pace with the rising levels of education and number of people coming into the labour market. This situation of frustration created a breeding ground for the Maoist movement.

A radical faction of the Communist Party of Nepal, which was one among over a dozen communist factions in the country, had strong reservations on the 1990 constitution and the subsequent political practices. Guided by the ideology of Maoism, which emphasizes revolution through armed struggle, it began to prepare to rebel. Capitalizing on the growing dissatisfaction of Nepalese over the practices of the democratic government and parliamentary parties, the radical communist faction decided to launch a "people's war" against the multi-party system, which it claimed was unable to address the problems of farmers, workers and the proletariat. The Maoist's claimed that armed struggle was a necessity in light of the limited opportunity available for social transformation (Bhattarai 2003), as corroborated by external observers of Nepali politics (Millard 2002: 298).

Since 1996, the country has moved towards escalating conflict in which more than 12,500 people have lost their lives. Many thousands have sustained permanent injuries and much infrastructure has been destroyed. In 2004 alone, 1,288 people were injured. As many as 70 private houses, 73 government offices, 148 VDC buildings, 9 post offices, 10 schools, 9 banks and 15 municipality building were also destroyed.

This insurgency has engulfed the whole country, but the countryside has been hit hardest. The fear of being caught in the crossfire between Maoist guerrillas and security forces has forced rural people to abandon rural villages and their belongings. While it is difficult to put an exact number on those displaced due to the conflict, evidence suggests that the number is on the rise. Between 2002 and 2004, just over 38,000 people were displaced throughout the country (INSEC 2005).

The insurgency has had an adverse effect on the overall socio-economic life of the country. Tourism, the main sources of income, has collapsed. The destruction of infrastructure has posed a serious impediment to economic development. Rural areas are short of food and medicines because of government-imposed restrictions in fear that the items will reach the hands of rebels. The displacement of able-bodied workers has had a serious impact on agricultural growth. All of this draws dangerously near to a crisis resulting in famine and hunger.

The conflict situation in Nepal is unstable. The country has been running without a parliament and elected government since mid-2002. Two attempts at peace talks - one under the Deuba government and the other under the Chand government, appointed by the King - have failed. Since the beginning of the war in 1996, a state of emergency, suspending basic human rights, and the civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution, has been imposed three times. A special ordinance was enacted in 2002 to combat terrorism more effectively by suspending provisions of human rights. Table 3 summarises the causes, consequences and possible solutions which have featured in the contemporary discourse.

Today most of the rural areas are under Maoist military control. The Maoist themselves claim that 80% of the country is under their control. Non-Maoist political activities are at a standstill. There is a near consensus that the military solution alone will not be sufficient to resolve the current crisis (Millard 2002). The capacity of the State to mobilize its apparatus to address the crisis politically and militarily is limited.

Both Maoists and government have been severely criticized for human rights abuses (INSEC 2005). Women and children have been affected the most and there are now over 200,000 displaced people in Kathmandu alone.



**Table 3. Summary of causes, consequences and solutions to violent political conflict due to the Maoist insurgency in Nepal**

<b>Dimensions of Maoist conflicts analysed in literature</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Factors causing and sustaining conflict (Millard 2002; Thapa 2002; Karki 2003; Katel 2003; Nepal 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maoist agendas considered legitimate – socioeconomic equalities, unequal political opportunities, border regulations, regional and local autonomy, promotion of national industries</li> <li>▪ Violent movements are part of Nepali political history long before the Maoist</li> <li>▪ Failure of political parties and their leaders after 1990 to create good and accountable governance</li> <li>▪ Failure of parliamentary democracy to address social and economic problems, failure of state to develop administrative response and gain popular support</li> <li>▪ Exclusion of ethnic groups in the national policy and development failures</li> <li>▪ Membership in Maoist groups reconfigures the individual's perception against the consumerist world</li> <li>▪ "Brutality by the security forces has played an important role in increasing support for the Maoist"</li> </ul>
Consequences of conflicts (de Sales 2002; Pettigrew 2002; Katel 2003; Shakya 2003; Seddon 2004)	<p><b>Negative consequences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Human rights abuses. "The villagers are harassed at night by Maoists who have to be fed and during the day by policemen looking for suspects"</li> <li>▪ Killings of ordinary people, political leaders, Maoists and security personnel</li> <li>▪ Destruction of infrastructure and properties</li> <li>▪ Disruption of local collective action, including community forestry</li> <li>▪ "With the arrival of Maoists, affiliations are becoming less clear and previous understandings based on kinship, age, and gender can no longer be relied to guide social interaction"</li> </ul> <p><b>Positive consequences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Empowerment of women: who have started to take over roles of household decision making</li> <li>▪ Informal land reform</li> <li>▪ Social reform, such as the anti-alcohol movement</li> </ul>
<b>Undefined</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The term "communist" becoming more ambiguous in everyday usage</li> </ul>
Possible solutions to conflicts (Karki 2003; Katel 2003; Shakya 2003; Whelpton 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structural transformation of agrarian relations, educational system, justice delivery, caste systems, gender relations</li> <li>▪ Increased participation of women in politics, equal rights in property, campaign against women trafficking</li> <li>▪ Governance reform – decentralization, strengthening of constitutional bodies, political inclusion, reform in local administration,</li> <li>▪ Role of the international community – positive conditionality that builds the capacity of local institutions, strengthens pressure groups from within civil society, critical opinion makers, media and academia, and encourages civil society</li> </ul>

- 
- to make people's voices heard
  - Amendment of 1990 constitution towards more inclusive governance
  - "initiative which combine social and economic development with dialogues with the insurgents"
- 

**Source: Adapted from Pokharel et al (2005)**

Already hit hard by poverty, the Nepali State faces a new challenge to rebuild the destruction that the insurgency has caused. The direct loss of property caused by the insurgency surpasses millions of rupees; the long-term impact of the loss could be trillions. However, the loss of human capital is beyond anyone's calculation (SAAPE 2003).

## **CHAPTER FOUR: MAPPING & ANALYSIS OF PRIORITISED PROBLEMS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the overall analysis of priority problems of the four focus groups in the context of the current conflict in Nepal. The explanation is basically an expansion of the interview results and the problem trees, cross-referenced with the published documents where appropriate. Author's interpretations are also added to clarify the context and meanings of the data and responses collected.

It starts with a presentation of the problem tree, which displays causal connections between problems identified through the survey, followed by presentation of priority problems. After that, a brief description of the priority problem mentioned by the four focus groups (i.e. resource poor farmers, landless poor, artisans and small-scale traders, and urban and peri-urban poor) and their service providers is presented.

The problems of the forest and tree-dependent poor are not limited only to those that are conflict-induced. Since various other specific priority problems were covered in the earlier report (ForestAction, 2003) and there are not significant changes in the status of these problems, this report focuses on the new prioritised problems of the respondents that relate to the armed insurgency.

### **4.2 Mapping the problems**

Here the underlying effects of poverty are categorised in the five different capital assets of the sustainable livelihood framework and linked with various causes of poverty for each of the four defined focus groups.

In each map symbols are given as: the frequency of problem referred (1), cross links [1a] and type of poverty constraints<sup>4</sup> (Poverty trap loops= T, fixed states= S, basic lows =L, current development policies= P and researchable constraints = R)

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<sup>4</sup> Following the approach in described in Annex III

## **I RESOURCE POOR FARMERS**

### **1. Low Financial Capital**

- 1a. Limited income (7)
  - Low wage labour (3)
  - Dependent on local moneylender (3)
  - No skills to do income-generating works (4)
- 1b. Low wage (3)
  - Lack of skills (5)
  - Exploitation by local elites (3)
  - Discrimination in wages (3)

### **2. Low Human Capital**

- 2a. Lack of education (8)
  - Lack of awareness (4)
  - Disruption of schools due to armed violence (3)
  - Expensive education materials (4)
  - Lack of income (5)
  - Difficult to motivate parents (2)
- 2b. Poor health (4)
  - Lack of health education (3)
  - No enough food (3)
  - Alcoholism (2)
  - Expensive health services (7)
  - Lack of medicine (4)
  - Lack of pure drinking water (4)
- 2c. Lack of food security (5)
  - Low income (3) [4a]
  - Embargo on selling farm products
  - Large family size (4)
- 2d. Low access to decisions (3)
  - Lack of awareness (3)
  - No membership in any organization (3)
  - Limited interest in collective practices
- 2e. Alcoholism (4)

### **3. Low Natural Capital**

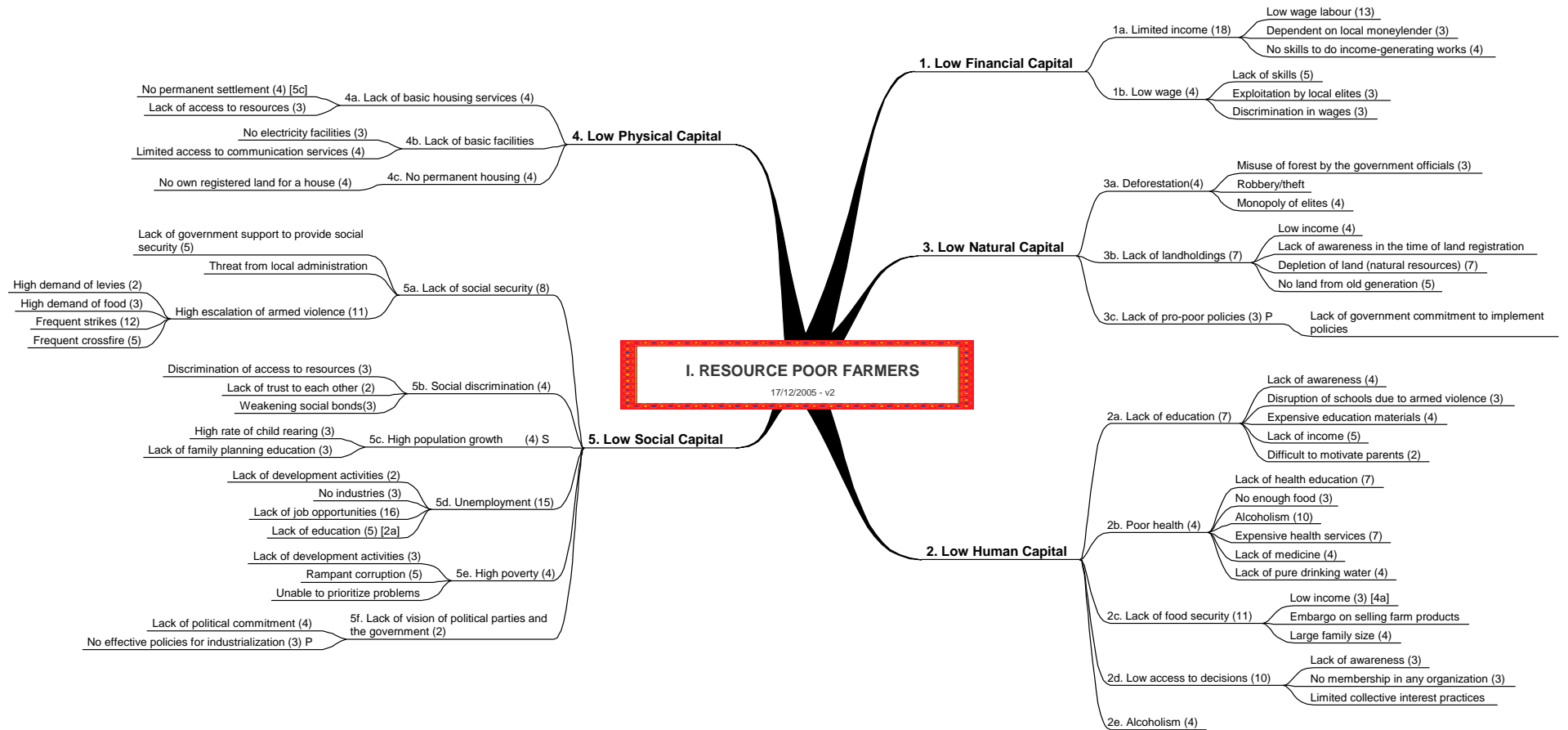
- 3a. Deforestation
  - Misuse of forest by the government officials (3)
  - Robbery/theft of timber and other forest products
  - Monopoly of elites (4)
- 3b. Lack of landholdings (7)
  - Low income (4)
  - Lack of information at the time of land registration
  - Depletion of land (natural resources) (4)
  - No land from old generation (6)
- 3c. Lack of pro-poor policies (3) P
  - Lack of government commitment to implement policies

#### 4. Low Physical Capital

- 4a. Lack of basic housing services (4)
  - No permanent settlement (4) [5c]
  - Lack of access to resources (3)
- 4b. Lack of basic facilities
  - No electricity facilities (3)
  - Limited access to communication services (4)
- 4c. No permanent housing (4)
  - No own registered land for a house (4)

#### 5. Low Social Capital

- 5a. Lack of social security (8)
  - Lack of government support to provide social security (5)
  - Threat from local administration (government)
  - High escalation of armed violence (7)
    - High demand of levies (2)
    - High demand of food (3)
    - Frequent strikes (4)
    - Frequent crossfire (3)
- 5b. Social discrimination (4)
  - Discrimination of access to resources (3)
  - Lack of trust to each other (2)
  - Weakening social bonds (3)
- 5c. High population growth (4) S
  - High rate of child rearing (3)
  - Lack of family planning education (3)
- 5d. Unemployment (7)
  - Lack of development activities (2)
  - No industries (3)
  - Lack of job opportunities (5)
  - Lack of education (5) [2a]
- 5e. High poverty (4)
  - Lack of development activities (3)
  - Rampant corruption (5)
  - Unable to prioritize (to be strategic) problems
- 5f. Lack of vision of political parties and the government (2)
  - Lack of political commitment (4)
  - No effective policies for industrialization (3) P



## II THE LANDLESS POOR

### 1. Low Financial Capital

- 1a. Low income (8)
  - Discriminatory (low) wage rate (7)
  - Lack of job opportunities (5)
    - No education (2)
    - Lack of vocational training
    - No *aaphno manchhe*
    - Lack of access to market
    - Lack of skills to do good jobs (3)
    - Limited or no choices of work (3)
- 1b. Limited loan
  - High interest rates
  - Lack of income resources
- 1c. High indebtedness (4)
  - Poor income (2)
  - Insufficient food for living (5)
  - Expensive health care and treatment (5)
- 1d. Lack of pro-poor policies
  - Centralized opportunities
  - Elite domination in opportunities and decisions
- 1e. Lack of awareness
  - Liquor drinking habits (9)

### 2. Low Human Capital

- 2a. Lack of education (12)
  - No training facilities (4)
  - Lack of skills (5)
  - No financial support for paying fees (8)
  - Poor economic condition (2)
  - Less opportunity for schoolings (5)
  - Misuse of scholarship by the high caste people (4)
- 2b. Poor health (9)
  - Lack of hygienic food (3)
  - Lack of health education (2)
  - No safe drinking water (3)
  - Expensive health facilities (8)
  - Malnutrition (3)
  - Low income (4)
- 2c. Fatalistic belief (5)
- 2d. Limited awareness (5)
  - Lack of education (3) [2a]
  - Lack of exposure (2)
  - Settlement in vulnerable places (3)

### 3. Low Natural Capital

- 3a. Lack of access to forest resources (6)
  - Exploitation of resources by local elites (7) [3a]
  - Misuse of resources by the CFUG members (5)

Depletion of forest (2)  
Discrimination in distribution (7) P  
Lack of good leadership (3)  
Illegal deforestation  
No membership

3b. Limited landholdings (7)  
Lack of income to buy lands (6)  
No land from old generation (6)  
Sale of land for various purposes  
Paying school fees of children  
Buying food and paying debt  
Landslide and flood (4) S

#### **4. Low Physical Capital**

4a. High economic poverty  
Poor housing (3)  
No land for permanent settlement (4)  
Lack of permanent jobs (3)

4b. Lack of government support (3)  
No industries (2)  
No job facilities (3)  
No *aaphno manchhe* (3)

#### **5. Low Social Capital**

5a. Social discrimination (8)  
Lack of social support (4)  
Locals treat as second-class citizens (2)  
Lack of access to decisions (3) [3e]  
Exploitation by local elites (6)  
Social stratification by economic status (3)

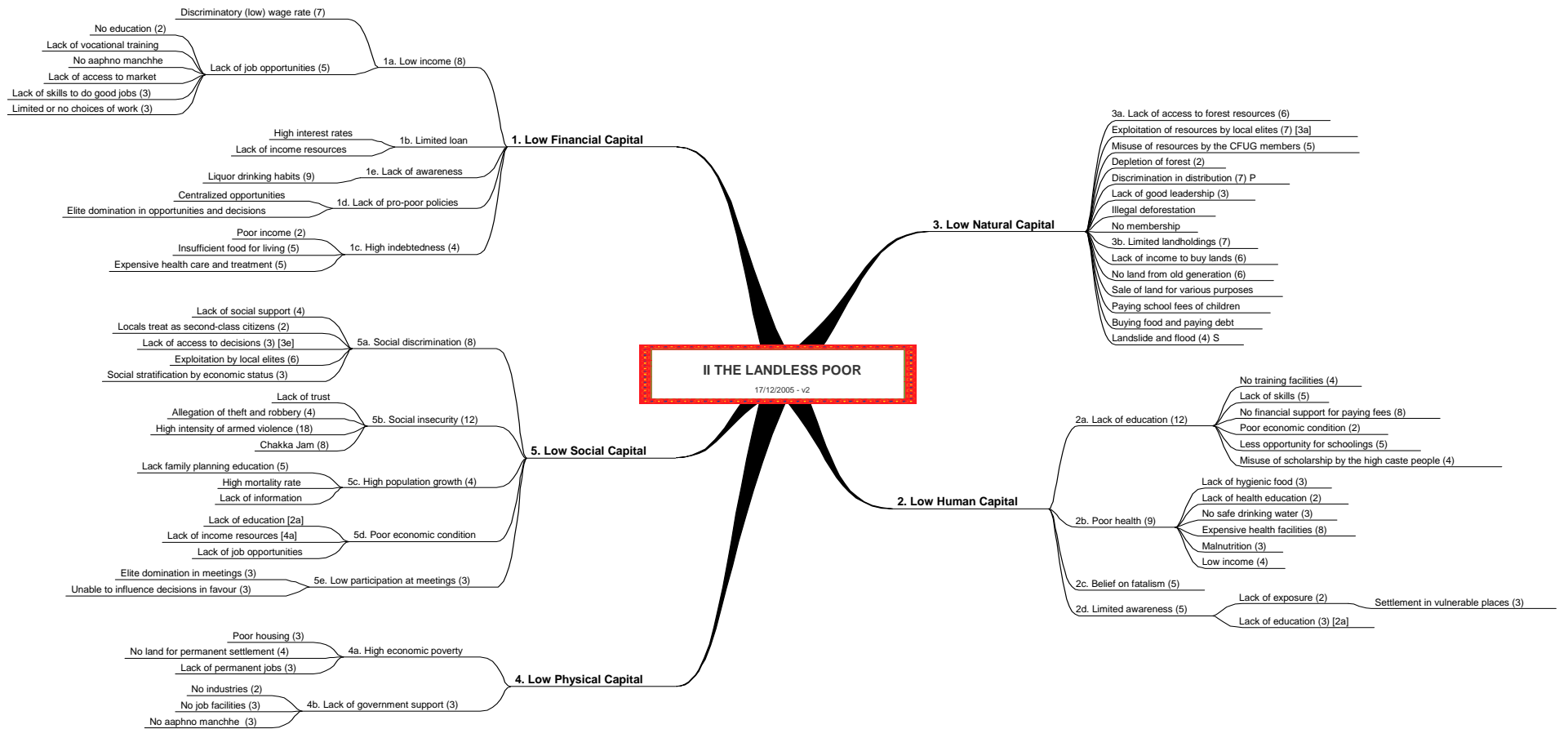
5b. Social insecurity (12)  
Lack of trust  
Allegation of theft and robbery (4)  
High intensity of armed violence (18)  
Chakka Jam (8)

5c. High population growth (4)  
Lack family planning education (5)  
High child mortality rate  
Lack of information

5d. Poor economic condition  
Lack of education [2a]  
Lack of job opportunities  
Lack of income resources [4a]

5e. Low participation at meetings (3)  
Elite domination in meetings (3)  
Unable to influence decisions in favour (3)





### III SMALL-SCALE TRADES, ARTISAN AND ENTREPRENEURS

#### 1. Low Financial Capital

- 1a. No landholdings (5)
  - Land fragmentation (3)
  - Unable to register land in the past (1a)
- 1b. Limited income (8)
  - Vulnerability of traditional skills to displacement (3) P
  - Influence of technology R
  - Unemployment (5)
  - Lack of education (2), [2a]
- 1c. Lack of job opportunities (13)
  - No *aaphno manchhe* (nepotism) (2)
  - Lack of skill development training (5),
  - High intensity of violence (5)
  - Low production (5)
  - Low rate of wage labour (7)
- 1d. Lack of market facilities (4)
  - Lack of scientific skills on traditional production

#### 2. Low Human Capital

- 2a. Lack of education (4)
  - Lack of awareness on the importance of education (2)
  - Expensive education materials (2)
  - No income to pay fees (6)
- 2b. Poor health [5b]
  - Lack of sanitation (2)
  - No safe drinking water (2)
  - No money for medicines/expensive health services (4) P
  - Scarcity of food (let alone the nutritious food) (5)
- 2c. Lack of food (Food security) (11)
  - Low income (11) [4b]
  - Unemployment (9)
  - Expensive food
  - Chakka jam and Nepal *Bandha* (9)
  - High population growth S
- 2d. Lack of access to development
  - Lack of information on development activities

#### 3. Low Natural Capital

- 3a. Landlessness (12)
  - Low income (7)
  - Selling land for marriage and other ritual works T
  - Unable to register land (2)
  - No land from old generation (2) [4a]
  - Distribution of land for generations L
  - Unable to buy land
- 3b. Discrimination on access to forest resources
  - Domination of local elites (3) [3b]
  - Low access to decisions (3) P
  - Restrictive rules of FUGs L
  - Low social status (2)

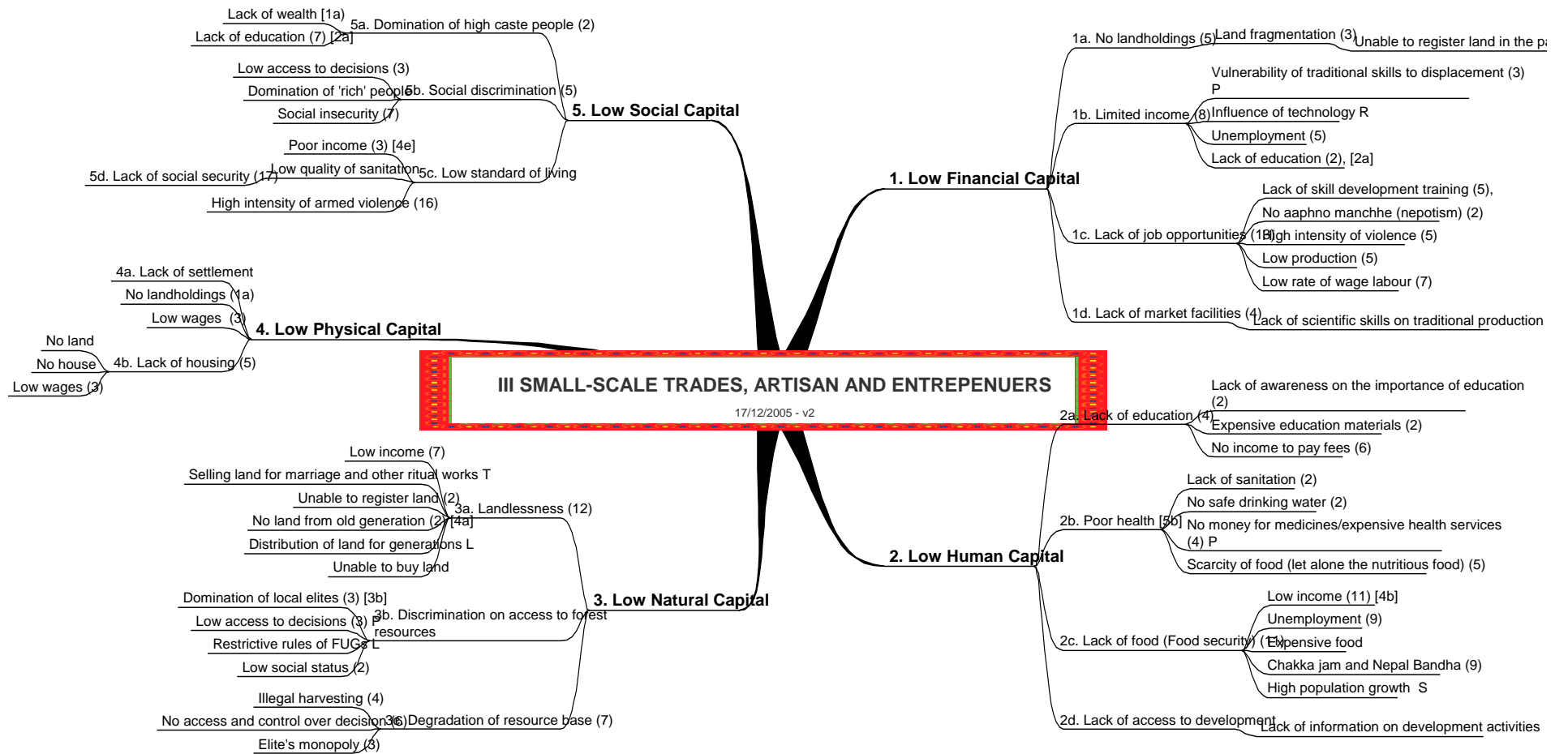
- 3c. Degradation of resource base (7)
  - Illegal harvesting (4)
  - No access and control over decision (6)
  - Elite's monopoly (3)

#### **4. Low Physical Capital**

- 4a. Lack of settlement
  - No landholdings (1a)
  - Low wages (3)
- 4b. Lack of housing (5)
  - No land
  - No house
  - Low wages (3)

#### **5. Low Social Capital**

- 5a. Domination of high caste people (2)
  - Lack of wealth [1a]
  - Lack of education (7) [2a]
- 5b. Social discrimination (5)
  - Low access to decisions (3)
  - Domination of 'rich' people
  - Social insecurity (7)
- 5c. Low standard of living
  - Poor income (3) [4e]
  - Low quality of sanitation
- 5d. Lack of social security (17)
  - High intensity of armed violence (16)



## **IV THE URBAN AND PERI-URBAN POOR**

### **1. Low Financial Capital**

- 1a. Low income (15)
  - Unemployment (4)
  - Chakka jam* (13)
  - Unable to sell productions due to regular road blockade (5)
  - Low attainment on education (3)
- 1b. Limited market facilities (2)
  - Unhealthy competition among peddlers (2)
  - Lack of market places (4)

### **2. Low Human Capital**

- 2a. Poor health (7)
  - Low income (2)
  - Expensive health services (5)
  - High cost of medicines (3)
  - Malnutrition
  - Lack of safe drinking water (3)
  - Drinking alcohol (6)
- 2b. Lack of education (5)
  - Unable to pay fees (6)
  - Limited opportunity for schoolings (2)
  - Expensive education materials (7)
  - Lack of vocational education
  - Lack of scholarship provision (2)
- 2c. Lack of skills (4)
  - No access to skill development training (4)
  - Lack of job opportunities (5) [3b]
- 2d. Lack of food security (2)
  - Low financial income [4a]
  - Lack of job opportunities [3b]
  - Price hike of commodities

### **3. Low Natural Capital**

- 3a. Low/No landholdings (5),
  - No land from old generation (5)
  - Landslide and flood S
  - Improper use of land (4) P
  - No financial support to buy land (2) P
- 3b. Low access to forest resources (5)
  - Low access to decisions (2)
  - No membership (5)
  - Unable to influence people (2)
  - Discrimination on the share of resources (5) [3a]

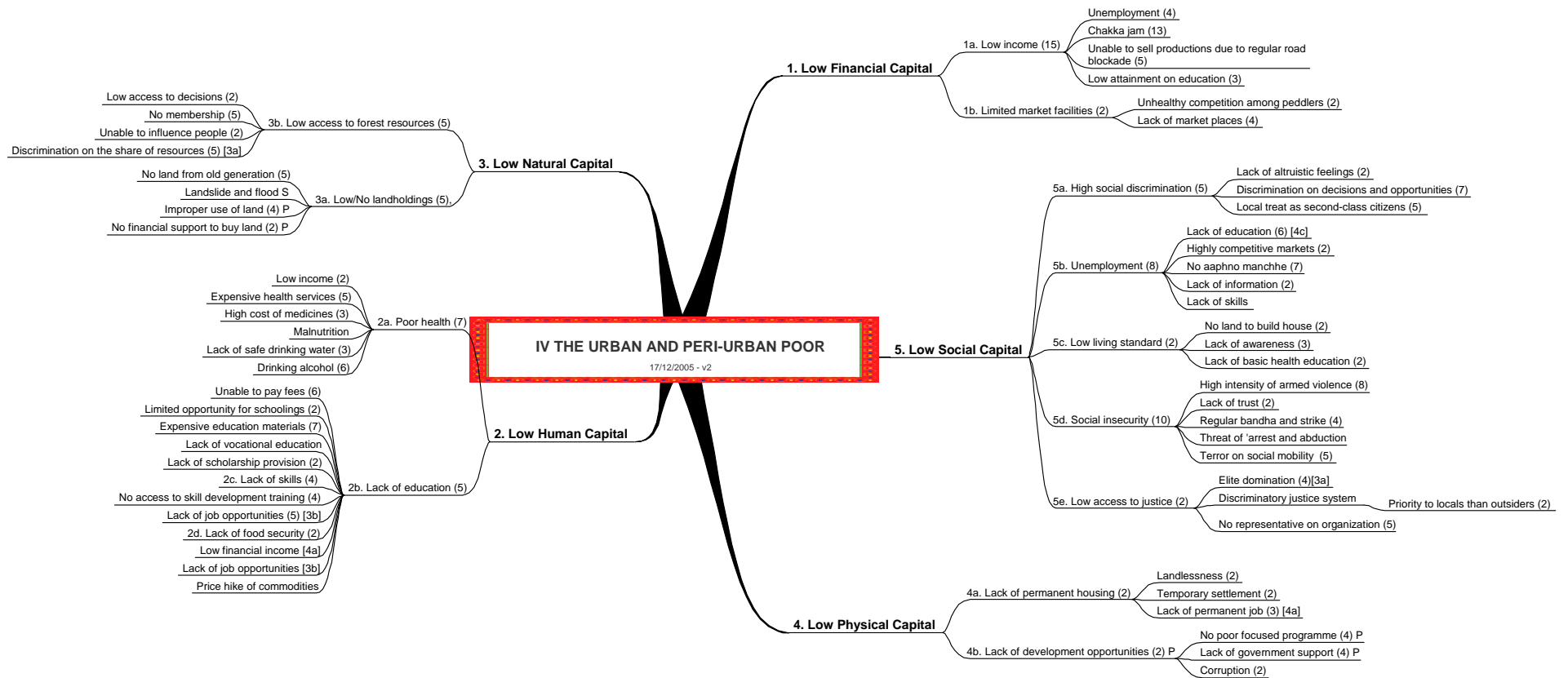
### **4. Low Physical Capital**

- 4a. Lack of permanent housing (2)
  - Landlessness (2)
  - Temporary settlement (2)
  - Lack of permanent job (3) [4a]

- 4b. Lack of development opportunities (2) P
  - No poor focused programme (4) P
  - Lack of government support (4) P
  - Corruption (2)

## 5. Low Social Capital

- 5a. High social discrimination (5)
  - Lack of altruistic feelings (2)
  - Discrimination on decisions and opportunities (7)
  - Local treat as second-class citizens (5)
  
- 5b. Unemployment (8)
  - Lack of education (6) [4c]
  - Highly competitive markets (2)
  - No *aaphno manchhe* (7)
  - Lack of information (2)
  - Lack of skills
  
- 5c. Low living standard (2)
  - No land to build house (2)
  - Lack of awareness (3)
  - Lack of basic health education (2)
  
- 5d. Social insecurity (10)
  - High intensity of armed violence (8)
  - Lack of trust (2)
  - Regular *bandha* and strike (4)
  - Threat of 'arrest and abduction
  - Terror on social mobility (5)
  
- 5e. Low access to justice (2)
  - Elite domination (4) [3a]
  - Discriminatory justice system
    - Priority to locals than outsiders (2)
  - No representative on organization (5)



### 4.3 Priority problems for the poor

As mentioned in the introductory section, a poverty survey was conducted in 2002. At the time of the first survey there was no mention of Maoist insurgency-related problems. This was partly because it had not surfaced as it has now, and partly as it had not been taken up openly in the political discourse because of the fear of actions from both the State and the Maoist side. This situation made it very difficult for ordinary people to speak about their problems publicly.

Within the last three years, there have been various changes in the political ground as well as the effect of insurgency in the wider socio-political context nationally. Now peace and security is the primary concern for all, including the insurgents (Chairman of the Maoists in an interview with BBC, *Nepali sewa*).

This survey has focused on finding out the current status of the forest and tree dependent poor in a conflict situation. The priority problems (in percentage) for each of the four groups and support institutions are given in Table 4. During this survey, the majority of interviewees expressed their immediate problems more frequently than specific forest and tree-related problems.

**Table 4: Priority problems and the frequencies of their mention by interviewees (as a percentage of all interviewees)**

Problems	15 priority problems					
	Poor groups				Support Institutions	
	Resource Poor	Artisans	Landless	Urban Poor	NGO	Govt
Armed violence	93	69	79	73	80	80
lack of awareness and education	79	77	64	64	75	60
Lack of food security	43	54	57	55	35	60
Lack of social security	29	92	50	36	65	47
Unemployment	64	100	79	55	75	53
<i>Chakka Jam and strike</i>	57	38	64	82	45	47
Lack of Job opportunities	79	54	50	64	55	53
No control over decision	36	46	50	45	55	60
Alcoholism	43	38	21	27	35	60
Lack of health services	86	69	79	91	75	60
Low income	93	85	86	73	75	87
Low wage	79	92	86	64	85	47
Lack of land holdings	50	69	64	36	60	53
Social discrimination	21	38	36	27	25	47
Degradation of resources	29	54	50	45	75	60

The poverty survey carried out in 2005 has shown different views compared to the 2002 survey at the researched sites. Insurgency-related problems were mentioned with more emphasis. Out of the 15 priority problems, five (armed violence, strikes, lack of food security, lack of social security and lack of health services) are clearly related with the insurgency, and another two (unemployment, and degradation of resources) are also related with the conflict situation. Social discrimination, no



control over decision making, lack of awareness and education, low income, low wage and lack of land holding are priority problems that are similar to those mentioned in the earlier survey. Alcoholism is of higher concern, indicating increased social violence.

**Table 5: List of most mentioned problems: then and now**

In 2002 (ForestAction, 2003)	In 2005 (this survey)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of favourable policies</li> <li>• Lack of support services</li> <li>• Limited market and marketing infrastructure</li> <li>• Limited agricultural inputs including irrigation</li> <li>• No or limited land holding</li> <li>• Limited access to natural resources</li> <li>• Limited education and awareness</li> <li>• Lack of food security</li> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• Low agricultural production</li> <li>• Lack of employment opportunities</li> <li>• Forced child labour</li> <li>• Exploitation and limited access to decision making</li> <li>• Lack of financial capital</li> <li>• Lack of skills and quality training services</li> <li>• Large family size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed violence</li> <li>• lack of awareness and education</li> <li>• Lack of food security</li> <li>• Lack of social security</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• <i>Chakka Jam</i> (general strike)</li> <li>• Lack of Job opportunities</li> <li>• No control over decision</li> <li>• Alcoholism</li> <li>• Lack of health services</li> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• Low wage</li> <li>• Lack of land holding</li> <li>• Social discrimination</li> <li>• Degradation of resources</li> </ul>

In the sections that follow, a description is made of each of the seven priority problems most strongly related to the insurgency, based on the information shared by interviewees and focus group discussions.

### 4.3.1 Armed Violence

This problem was mentioned by all four focus groups and services providers as a high priority.

Armed insurgency and poverty have, in the main, been treated as separate spheres of academic enquiry and policy. But it is argued here that poverty and armed insurgency are not outside and separate issues. Poverty is one of the underlying causes of insurgency and vice versa.

In Nepal, around 31% of the populations are below the poverty line (HMG, 2003). The armed insurgency has further hit the poor, already marred by stagnation in development and poverty, leaving them with no resources for livelihoods. The insurgency has wreaked havoc and added to the insecurity that poor people face. Forest dependent poor people and their service providers in the four districts in which this study took place stated that the civil conflict destroys the basis for livelihoods and makes it harder for them to build a secure future.

The insurgency has not only robbed the poor of income, it has also restricted their choices in work and livelihoods. They are deprived of opportunity, security and empowerment – cornerstones of poverty reduction and human development.

Stagnation of economic growth and depleted services in the areas where they live has affected them badly, leaving many jobless, hence constraining their income. "Since the insurgency chose a path of brutal acts, all the development activities have been suspended because of the problem of security. Since then we are not getting any labour works we nowadays drink gruel and sleep" said a respondent from Palpa.

Human relations have been badly affected since the insurgency erupted. Trust, an open welcome and hospitality are now overrun by suspicion and doubt. Increasingly, participation in public spheres is limited and those involved are less interested. A respondent in Nawalparasi remarked, "We do not go to public meetings, rallies and any sort of demonstrations. If we go we are in danger. Either the army or the Maoists come to us, ask for the reason of our participation in such activities and torture us. We cannot offer our life for a mere meeting or demonstration."

Frequent crossfire between the conflicting parties, together with bomb blasts in private and public places has caused great loss in resources. Disruption of industries, factories, food depots, schools and health posts have adversely affected the poor barring those seeking even the minimum facilities. The urban poor were afraid for their children. They reported "The industries are either being closed or disrupted and the schools are not freely running due to the insurgency. We somehow manage to send our children to school but as the environment of the school is badly affected we see an opaque future for our children. We are worried how our children will manage themselves if they are uneducated and if there are no factories and industries to provide employment."

After the insurgency escalated and the Maoists began to use the jungle as their shelter and training centres, access of other people into the forest was severely restricted. Referring to this, resource poor farmers mentioned that they had been deprived of forest products. "We have no land for production. So we used to go to jungle for roots, shoots and fruits on which we live. But now we are vulnerable to get these too. We stop going to the jungle fearing to catch crossfire."

Other aspects of the insurgency are more shocking. Unable to pay money to the insurgents, rural families helplessly see their children abducted and recruited into the squads of the insurgents. In Hariwan, a woman responded in a feeble voice saying, "If we were rich we could pay them and recover our children. We have nothing to give them. Poverty drove our children to go to the battle front and die." Another woman added, "Now who feeds us?"

#### **4.3.2 Lack of food security**

Lack of food security is another burgeoning problem of the poor. It is said that the Maoists tend to requisition food supplies from houses of the poor, demanding to be fed. The security forces are also said to be punishing people for supplying or feeding the rebels. As the poor themselves have to rely on other people for their food grains, the demand of food by the Maoists has further impoverished them. Survey respondents stated that they were tired of feeding the combatants. An artisan in Sarlahi mentioned, "If we feed them we will have nothing to eat the next day, if we don't feed them we will not be spared. So we cannot oppose the Maoists. Whatever we have we are compelled to share, no one asks if we have sufficient even for our own needs."

Poor families often depend on minor forest products such as edible fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs which can be sold in near-by markets and in return the poor can

get some food. Conservation policy allows limited opportunity to collect wild edibles, and in conflict zones natural forests areas have become more insecure for the poor.

In Piprahar, Nawalparasi, the poor, mostly the artisans and landless poor, mentioned "We are a fishing community, we do not have lands for agriculture. We survive by selling fish and wild vegetables from the Park. Now the park authority has tightened entry in the name of security and so we now have nowhere to go for our daily meals". "Even if they allow us we cannot go to the forest these days, for if we go to there the army will catch us and send us to jail, blaming us as either a poacher or a Maoist" said a fisherman. Remembering past experience, an old man told that in his youth they used to go to the forest (inside the Park) to collect thatch grass and other forest products to repair thatch roofs. Later they were restricted to a month and then to one week to collect these products. Now the forest has been completely closed in the name of security. They said that many of them shifted their occupation and come to Amarapuri for pebble and sand collection from the nearby river to sell to construction companies. During the interview some of them mentioned "we have gone through nights without food in the time of regular strike because we are unable to sell the pebbles and sand. We cursed our fate and passed the days and nights of scarcity but constantly failed to solace our children who asked for food and water. Every time we tried to keep them asleep so that they would not ask for food, but how can an empty belly sleep! We passed the nights crying with our children."

This priority shift of the nation has stifled economic opportunities, employment and support for income generation activities, particularly for the poor and marginalised section of the society. Disruption of factories, industries and development activities due to the insurgency has severely hit the urban and peri-urban poor who work as wage labours. In the study areas the respondents blamed both the insurgents and the State, the insurgents for "attacking local industries and also for the ruin of agriculture due to the planting of landmines and socket bombs", which constrains them working in the fields and the State for its "inability to restore peace and the absence of protectionist policies."

### **4.3.3 Lack of social security**

In connection with the intensity of armed insurgency, the poor speak of declining safety as an element of increasing insecurity. Escalation of violence is linked to increasing crime and criminal psychology. Degradation of social cohesion, shortage of food, famine, displacement, terror of security forces, increasing incidents of theft and robbery were the major problems recurrently highlighted by the poor in the survey discussions. The poor also recalled the theft of their livestock, crops and vegetables and they mentioned it as the greatest risk to their security. They explained "Those who are well off have more to lose and yet they have opportunities to gain. But it is the poorer who experience the surge of crime and violence and are always the loser."

This massive escalation of violence has left the poor with an overwhelming sense of frustration and led them towards a "do-nothing state." They have sunk into inactivity. As they mentioned, they do not want to plant and keep stock. "If we keep our earning for the next day, that would not be for us, but for the insurgents, who shamelessly enter our house each night and take everything away", they said. An old man in Janagal in Kabhre said in a painful tone, "I am waiting for the day to die. I no longer want to wait the worst and painful day of my life." In his view, the armed insurgency has done nothing other than panic the helpless poor.

Disruption of peace is the pressing problem of the poor. Many respondents reported that they have lost their mental peace, trust and cooperation for each other. Instead of friendship and 'brotherhood', a form of enmity has developed in the community as a result of the insurgency. A respondent in Palpa stated that "arrival of a guest at home would also be a matter of suspicion whether he was a guest or a 'jungle dweller' coming for food. If the house owner did not inform his neighbour that he was a guest, the other would secretly pass a message to the security forces of their arrival and create trouble." He further added that the insurgency has created an opportunity for people to take revenge on each other.

As the insurgency has the country in its grip, the priority of the government has also shifted to quelling the insurgents. National economic expenditure has moved significantly to paying for security measures rather than economic development. This has resulted in the stagnation of development activities, which has had a direct impact on the already slowed-down economic performance of the country. There has been a seven-fold rise in security expenditure from one billion Nepali Rupees in 1990/91 to seven billion in 2002/03. The total expenditure for security is higher than the social sector budget. All this reveals that security concerns now over-ride development concerns.

In Sarlahi, one of the Maoist strongholds in the *terai*, most community members consulted spoke out on how the insurgency has escalated chronic poverty. Defining poverty as "not only economic scarcity, but also the loss of peace and security" an old man in Hariwan, Sarlahi said, "Invasion of insurgents in our house is frequent and pervasive. We work for the whole day for '*ek mana chamal*' to feed our family. But insurgents come, ask for food, eat and go leaving us no grain." Poor people attribute many of their current problems to the insurgency, which has widened the gap of poverty.

#### 4.3.4. Lack of employment opportunity

Lack of employment opportunity is another problem for poor people. The possibility of employment is much less where disruption of infrastructure including industry has been frequent. Closure of schools, industries and stagnation of the development sectors has constrained the poor from getting labour work and

##### Poverty rode family to the sun set

A total of four member of the Chaurasiya family of Nagawa Tol of Birgunj Sub-Metropolis committed suicide on 4 November, being unable to pay the debts they had borrowed from a local money lender three years ago. As the witnesses reported, Paramananda Chaurasiya, 38, the head of the family, had borrowed Rs. 10,000 from local moneylender Satya Narayan Shah Tharu after mortgaging his house for Rs. 30,000. He had borrowed the money three years ago to fund a legal battle over tenancy right for 16 katthas of land with his landlord Gopal Chaurasiya. Unable to overcome the financial crisis caused by a long-drawn-out legal battle over tenancy rights he committed suicide as the police investigated the case. Other members who committed suicide included Parmananda's mother Sitadevi Barai Chaurasiya, 65, wife Urmila Devi, 35, and daughter Satya, 17.

**Source: The Kathmandu Post, 6 November 2003**

subsequently leading them in the state of starvation. The poor said that if they were in a good job, they would have no problems. "Our country would be developed if the war was resolved. The industries, factories, mills and other development activities

would no more be disrupted. But things did not go as we had hoped. It may have etched on our forehead to suffer and we have been suffering."

The poor are low-paid wage-labourers. They do not get good jobs with handsome salaries since they are unskilled and uneducated. So, they have to manage their expenses depending on their meagre income, which is not sufficient even for food. It is therefore impossible for them to get even the basics. The poor themselves mentioned, "Getting good treatment is a dream to us that could hardly be fulfilled throughout our life. We do not have safe drinking water, let alone other things."

In terms of forest-related job opportunities, the *terai* forests are managed under protectionist approaches, which might otherwise generate a lot of employment opportunities for the unskilled labour. Even the community forests have very low levels of prescribed harvests, restricting the opportunities for paid work for the poor.

#### **4.3.5 Regular chakka jam and strike**

Regular *chakka jam* and *bandha* strike are the major protest activities of the political parties and their allies. *Chakka jam* and strikes are taken as the tool to put pressure on government. These activities have an adverse effect on the daily life of the poor and marginalised people.

Threat of arrest, abduction and fear of travel has further disrupted the daily lives of the poor. They reported that the increasing occurrence of *bandha* has badly affected them, constraining them from getting food, labour work and selling their products. The urban poor and resource poor farmers most often prayed not to repeat the day of the general strike or *chakka jam*. They mentioned to the research team that "If there is a strike, we will have nothing to eat or feed our family as we cannot sell anything, even our sweat. God willing, do not there be strike again. But who hears us, our voice disappears in the vacuum."

#### **4.3.6 Lack of basic health services**

Another severe problem of the poor was reported to be the lack of basic health care. Disruption of health centres and the blockade imposed by the conflicting parties in the transport of medicine has left people deprived of this facility. Respondents spoke forcefully of the lack of health treatment and medicine as an acute deprivation. Also, the key respondents from NGO/CBOs made mention of this problem as being acute among the poor people.

In general, the poor never expect to get good health treatment in the hospital or clinics. The insurgency has further developed an adverse environment. At its most extreme, demolishing health posts and health clinics are major 'actions' in rural areas. The health workers cannot go freely to rural areas and provide health facilities. Though there are private health services the poor cannot benefit as they have no money to pay for this. An artisan in Palpa elaborated, "We never think of going to hospital for treatment. It is not that we never catch illness, but because we cannot afford the cost in the hospital." As he reported, healthcare has become less accessible for them. A resource poor farmer in Sarlahi declared "If any member of the family is sick, we fall into debt with the local moneylender, who always charges high interest."

The government's effort to provide primary healthcare, drinking water and sanitation has been the focus of its poverty reduction programme. In primary healthcare, the

government focuses on immunizing children and reducing diarrhoea, acute respiratory disease and improving reproductive health. "Government's effort lies in providing drinking water facilities to all and improving its quality, increasing public awareness of health and sanitation" (UNDP 2002). These programmes are yet to be seen in practice as they are not being implemented. The insurgency has also been a boon to the government line agencies to hide their faults.

Traditional medicinal services including medicinal plants are now being captured by commercial interests. Lack of many types of forest products has meant a declining health service for the poor. A poor boy died of snakes bite as he was sleeping on the ground in Nawalparasi. The household had asked for timber from the local CFUG to construct a bed but no one had listened (Bhandari K 2002).

### 4.3.7 Degradation of resources

"Forests are the main target by both parties. Maoist use these forests to hide themselves and the army personal ask us to stop harvesting and other silvicultural operations in the forests" said a NGO activist from Nawalparasi. He further explained that many of the forest activities have been halted in the district, which is further hitting those who are dependent on the forest for their subsistence.

Forests are reviving under community management but degradation continues in the government forest, forcing the poorest to invest higher amounts of labour in the collection of fuelwood.

The overall scenario of the forest dependent poor is that as they lack adequate alternative sources of forest products (such as from private land). Their dependency on communal resources is high. Yet, as communal forests areas are frequently controlled by elites, the poor have limited say in decision-making. The conflict has made the forest an even more difficult place to work, which has caused a reduction in the frequency of pro-poor service providers visits due to security-related concerns. After the King took over the democratic government in 2004, pro-poor resource allocation has been re-centralized (such as through the instructions of commissioners to CFUGs not to operate funds). Despite the growing number of NGOs activities that replace the receding presence of government, empowerment of the poor is proving less and less effective. Corrupt alliances between local CFUG leaders and government forestry staff in the *terai* have hindered the poor from accessing the potential benefits from high-value community forests.

#### General livelihoods effects

- There is a general slowdown in economic activity, removing livelihood opportunities in sectors such as construction and development.
- Traditional livelihood opportunities such as the collection and marketing of non-timber forest products are being seriously disrupted.
- Women and others left behind suffer increased vulnerability in the war context.

Source: Extracted partially from Seddon and Adhikari 2003

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This research has explored the problems of the four categories of poor whose livelihood is dependent on natural resources, mainly on forests. As this is an update of earlier research (ForestAction 2003), the study has primarily focused on identifying the priority problems that have emerged due to the armed insurgency. Disruption of peace, regular *bandha* and strikes, food insecurity, loss of resources, and lack of basic health care are some of the problems reported by the respondents in connection to the insurgency. Already hit hard by the scarcity of livelihood options, the insurgency has brought further problems for the poor and they have become more vulnerable.

Poor people emphasize access to opportunities, proper waged work and more applicable policies and practices are all urgently needed. They have demanded strong government commitment to restoring peace. They look to government and the change agents to provide services fundamental to their well-being, including the opportunity to earn a regular income, educational opportunities, basic medical care, clothes and a simple house to keep safe from rain and heat and wild beasts, and peace of mind.

The poor are tired of talking to people from outside who assess the intensity of poverty but do nothing to address it. In their view, "the outsiders are selling (them) and swelling in benefit." Since they are usually not listened to, but talked about and talked at, they would not like to lose their voices for the benefit of others. The poor have the perception that those who are talking about them are benefiting from their loss. The poor, who have been structurally excluded from development activities for years, no longer tolerate activities implemented "for" them or plans developed "for" them. They are in the dire need of plans implemented "with" them or "by" them, and accountable to them. They often point out that they want to be involved in each activity of development that is envisioned for them.

The insurgency has been an additional problem for the poor. They are counter victimised and have become more vulnerable. They blame the insurgency for being a boon to the "cheater" who "cheat the donors in the pretext of managing it and fill their belly." A respondent in Rajahar, Nawalparasi shared a heartrending point to the survey team. After the eruption of the insurgency followed by frequent road blocks and general strike, the supply of commodities failed and his job as a daily paid labourer was discontinued. "As we are run out of jobs, our children have not received good food. I am afraid our children have forgotten the taste of meat, milk and sugar."

Poor people perceive that the insurgency is not due to individual shortcomings in personality or morality, nor failures of family and upbringing. The majority of the respondents felt that it is the result of uncaring governments who have ruled for centuries to fulfill the interest of a few and control the resources - leaving nothing for the poor. "Insurgency is not a desire of anyone. It is a compulsion. When people are unable to bear the burden of continuous starvation, unemployment, debt or illness and when their voices - even the genuine ones - go unheard, members of many poor families take up arms to make their voices heard", observed the NGO/CBO respondents, and further added, "frustration built on the negligence of the state has been manifested in the form of violent conflict and this has severely hit the poor again."

The very constitution of poverty is for the most part a result of the capture of land and forest resources by elites and state nobilities under the direct patronage of the State (Upreti 2004). Maoists' justification for their resorting to violence only after all

measures failed (Bhattarai 2003) is gaining greater sympathy in the national political discourse, especially after the King took over the government in February 2005. Even at the local level, Maoist's claims of freeing the poor from historically embedded feudal relations of a land-based economy have been verified independently, although this scenario sits ironically with situations such as in our survey, where poor are under added stress (Seddon 2004).

Poor people demand assistance to restore peace in the country and pave the way to relieve hunger, disease and scarcity. Although they are caught in the struggle to survive, poor people want opportunity, not sympathy nor handouts: "We do not want money given for a day by a visitor or a sympathizer who visits us rarely once in a year, but we desperately want all who work for the poor to employ us. Giving some material to us for a day does not rescue us from this whirlpool of poverty. We need a place to work regularly for a regular income to feed us and family."

The priority of the day is not well-versed plans and policies, nor a tender touch to sympathise with the poor. The problems prioritised by the focus groups and service providers in this survey do not fall easily under the researchable constraints of a forestry programme. They are more fundamental, and relate to power, hierarchy, subordination and exploitation. If the statement that "plans, policies and sympathy works" is true, then the poor should be in much better shape than they were before they first began to receive them some 50 years ago. How the structures of resource access that are historically rooted in class distinctions that distort even well-intentioned policies in practice, can be transformed to provide equity for the poor, is yet to be seen. The community forestry programmes in Nepal have led to some - but not sufficient - reform. Research may usefully be redirected to understanding when and how the poor can take better control of the development and democratization processes in the country.



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## ANNEXES

### Annex I: Names and addresses of Interviewees

#### I. Resource poor farmers

SN	Name	Address
1	Paltu Singh Kusawaha	Hariwan- 6, Sarlahi
2	Bal Bahadur Barahakoti	Hariwan- 6, Sarlahi
3	Jogendra Paswan	Hariwan- 6, Sarlahi
4	Santala Lawik	Hariwan- 6, Sarlahi
5	Meghnath Paswan	Hariwan- 6, Sarlahi
6	Gopal Majhi	Rajahar – 3, Nawalparasi
7	Bhllram Majhi	Rajahar – 3, Nawalparasi
8	Lure Bote	Rajahar – 3, Nawalparasi
9	Bhupal Singh Gandharba	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
10	Narayan Gandharba	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
11	Krishna Prasad Timsina	Kushadevi VDC – 3, Kabhre
12	Netra Bikram Thapa	Kushadevi – 3, Kabhre
13	Sita Thapa	Kushadevi – 3, Kabhre
14	Nangkeshwari Thapa	Kushadevi – 3, Kabhre

#### II. Landless

SN	Name	Address
1	Lakshmi Giri	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
2	Taradevi Ghimire	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
3	Madan Bishwarkarma	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
4	Jamuna Tamang	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
5	Ram Kumari Koiri	Hariwan – 6, Sarlahi
6	Januka BK	Hariwan – 6, Sarlahi
7	Ram Prit Ram	Hariwan – 6, Sarlahi
8	Sansar Maya BK	Hariwan – 6, Sarlahi
9	Badri Bahadur Rana Magar	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
10	Buddha Kumari Uchai	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
11	Dhan Maya Uchai	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
12	Mina Kumari Uchai	Tansen Municipality – 11, Palpa
13	Dal Bahadur Lama	Banepa Municipality – 8, Jananagal, Kabhre
14	Phulmati Lama	Banepa Municipality – 8, Jananagal, Kabhre

#### III. Artisans

SN	Name	Address
1	Ram Bahadur BK	Hariwan-7, Sarlahi
2	Lila Maya BK	Hariwan-7, Sarlahi
3	Chandra Bahadur BK	Hariwan-7, Sarlahi
4	Chandra Maya Pariyar	Amarapuri-1, Gaye Tandi, Nawalparasi
5	Suk Bahadur BK	Amarapuri – 1, Nawalparasi
6	Tika Bahadur BK	Tansen Municipality – 9, Palpa
7	Hem Lal BK	Tansen Municipality – 9, Palpa
8	Dhan Bahadur Rasaili	Tansen Municipality – 9, Palpa
9	Prem Bahadur Sunar	Tansen Municipality – 9, Palpa
10	Raju BK	Bhugudeu VDC – 2, Mahankal, Kabhre
11	Bhakta Bahadur Tolangi	Dhulikhel Municipality – 7, Kabhre
12	Shyam BK	Siundikhola VDC – 9, Kabhre
13	Hasta Bahadur Mijar	Badalgaun – 6, Kabhre

#### IV. Urban and peri-urban poor

SN	Name	Address
1	Dharma Mandal	Hariwan – 6, Sarlahi
2	Kanchan Ghimire	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
3	Krishna Ghimire	Amarapuri – 8, Nawalparasi
4	Lal Chan Madhesiya	Tansen Municipality, Narayansthna, Palpa
5	Jagadamba Madhesiya	Tansen Municipality, Narayansthna, Palpa
6	Panne Lal Madhesiya	Tansen Municipality, Narayansthna, Palpa
7	Sabina KC	Panauti, Kabhre
8	Tara KC	Panauti, Kabhre
9	Dhan Bahadur Bhujel	Panchkhal VDC – 7, Kabhre
10	Kamala Bhujel	Panchkhal VDC – 7, Kabhre
11	Ram Maya Manandhar	Phulbari VDC – 4, Kabhre

#### V. NGOs and CBOs

SN	Name of respondent	Designation	Address
1	Krishna Ghimire	Team Leader, HOCODEF	Kawasoti Nawalparasi
2	Gyan Bahadur Pokhrel	Chairperson, Change Nepal	Amarapuri Nawalparasi
3	Badri Prasad Sapkota	Secretary	Sundari Community Forestry Users' Group, Amarapuri, Nawalparasi
4	Thakur Pandey	Chairperson	FECOFUN, Nawalparasi
5	Narayan Khapangi	Advisor	Dalit Utthan Samaj Hariwan, Sarlahi
6	Durga Hari Subedi	Chairperson	Association for the Upliftment of Disabled and Blind People Hariwan Sarlahi
7	Krishna Prasad Sharma	Headmaster	Janata Primary School Hariwan – 4, Sarlahi
8	Sitaram Pokhrel	Chairperson	FECOFUN, Sarlahi
9	Apsara Chapagain	Vice Chairperson	FECOFUN, Kathmandu
10	Dr. Bharat Kumar Pokhrel		NSCFP, Kathmandu
11	Satya Narayan Basyal	Office Secretary	FECOFUN, Palpa
12	Usha KC	Executive Member	FECOFUN, Palpa
13	Niranjana Bhusal	Facilitator	FECOFUN, Palpa
14	Lila Bahadur Karki	Coordinator	Rural Economic Development Association (REDA), Palpa
15	Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti	Director	Friends for Peace, Kathmandu
16	Samita Pradhan	Executive Director	Centre for Agro-ecology and Development Lokanthali, Bhaktapur
17	Krishna Chandra Acharya	Chairperson	Human Rights and Environment Resource Centre (HUREC), Banepa, Kabhre
18	Gyan Nath Pathak	Executive Member	Forum for Wildlife and Environment Conservation, Banepa, Kabhre
19	Raghunath Baidhya	Executive Member	HUREC, Banepa, Kabhre

#### VI. State-level Organisations

SN	Name	Designation and Organization	Address
1	Ram Chandra Subedi	Officer, Area Forest Office	Kawasoti, Nawalparasi
2	Chitra Bahadur Chhetri	Officer, Area Forest Office	Kawasoti, Nawalparasi
3	Dr. Keshav Raj Kandel	Deputy Director General	Department of Forests, Kathmandu
4	Khadananda Chaulagain	LDO	DDC, Tansen, Palpa
5	Binod Nepal	Programme Officer	DDC, Tansen, Palpa
6	Nir Bahadur Thapa	Government Official	Range Post Office, Tansen, Palpa
7	Bir Bahadur KC	Non Gazetted First Class	District Forest Office, Palpa
8	Jagat Nepali	Non Gazetted Third	District Forest Office, Palpa

		Class	
9	Dr. Shital Babu Shrestha	Veterinary Doctor	District Veterinary Office, Palpa
10	Dr. Damodar Parajuli	Joint Secretary	Ministry of Forest and Social Conservation, Kathmandu
11	Udaya Raj Sharma	Director General	Botany Department, Kathmandu
12	Krishna Prasad Karki	Officer	Small and Cottage Industries, Dhulikhel Kabhre
13	Danda Pani Khanal	Senior Agro-Division Officer	District Agricultural Office, Kabhre, Dhulikhel
14	Binda Adhikari	Ranger	District Forest Office. Kabhre
15	Dilli Bhattarai	Ranger	District Forest office, Kabhre
16	Chandrakala Sharma	Lecturer	Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel Kabhre

## **Annex II: survey questionnaires**

### **A. Question to Poor themselves**

1. General

How are you managing your livelihoods?

2. Problem Exploring Question

i) What are your livelihood problems?

3. Solution Question

i) How can we solve these problems?

ii) Who should do?

iii) How should do?

4. Of the problems, what should be done to solve this particular problem? How should be done?

5. Who do you think can to solve this problem? Could be solved locally or requires outside support?

### **B. Questions to service providers**

1. General

i) Who are the beneficiaries (forest dependent poor people) or who are the people you work with?

ii. How are they managing their livelihoods?

2. Problem Question

i) What are their (forest dependent poor people) priority problems?

3. Solution Question

i) How can we solve these problems?

ii) Who should do?

iii) How should do?

4. Of the problems, what should be done to solve (this) particular problem? How should be done?

5. Who do you think can solve this problem? Could be solved locally or requires outside support?

## **Annex III – Description of the problem tree and its functions**

**Taken from: *A prioritisation tool for sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction* by Duncan Macqueen.**

In: Proceedings of the workshop “Food and fishes, trees and cows: roles of the DFID renewable natural resources programmes in poverty eradication”, 25-26 November 1999 at the University of Manchester Institute for Development Policy and Management. p. 67-81.

### **Visualising poverty**

Considerable attention has been paid to the methodologies for eliciting information on poverty (primarily through participatory approaches). Less attention has been paid to the display of that information. This is in part due to the sheer volume and complexity of information that arises from “poverty surveys” of whatever type.

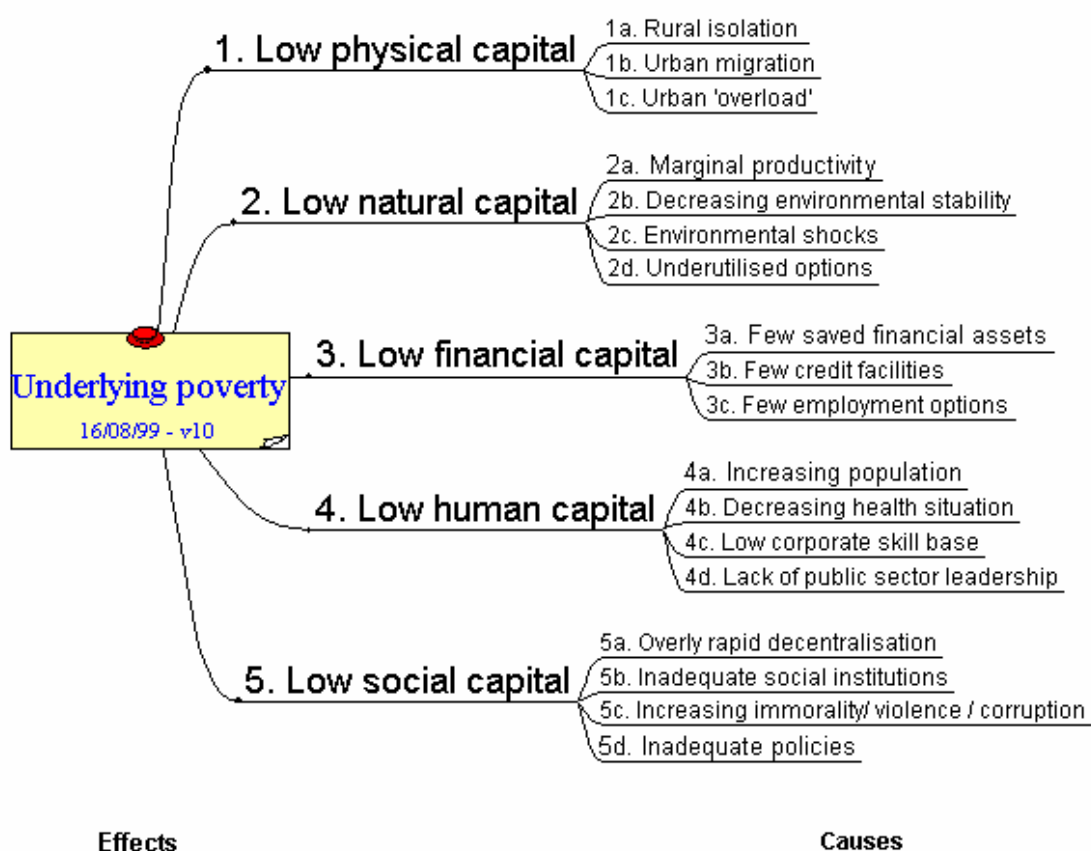
“Problem trees” or “causal diagrams” are perhaps the easiest visual tool for representing the results of poverty surveys. A problem tree or causal diagram is essentially a pictorial device that displays the linkages between a problem and its underlying causes. Recent advances in problem tree software (e.g. MINDMANAGER® 3.5) have resulted in their routine use for displaying complex cause and effect linkages. For example, visual ‘MindMaps’ can display the logical progression from the key problem or “effect” (for example, poverty) to the underlying causes of poverty (represented by tips of branches in the tree structure displayed in the MindMap) by asking the question “Why?”.

FRP poverty surveys have shown the possibility of structuring MindMaps around five causes of poverty (e.g. MindMap branches – figure 1) which equate to low levels of the five capital assets within the Sustainable Livelihoods approach. Within MindMap displays five types of branch tip (or underlying causes of poverty) can be distinguished:

- a. Poverty trap loops: branch tips which refer to other branches, thereby opening up the possibility of infinite loops (E.g. the lack of credit facilities may be a possible underlying cause of continuing marginal productivity, which itself may be a reason why few credit facilities are offered to poor farmers).
- b. Fixed states: physical states which cannot be changed through research (for example, climatic aridity).
- c. Basic laws: principles that cannot be changed by research (for example, free market economics).
- d. Current developmental policies: government positions which mitigate against the resolution of a constraint through research at this time (for example, policies on debt relief).
- e. Researchable or developmental constraints: such factors could be divided into those possibly addressed within a particular research programme and those which could not be addressed under that research programme.



**Figure 1. Mindmap of cause and effect linkages relating to poverty (an example from a FRP forestry-focused poverty survey in the Southern African Development Community [SADC] region).**



Obviously, the accuracy and scope of the information displayed depends on the quality and focus of the 'poverty survey'. However, it is not enough to display the cause and effect linkages of poverty, since we have already seen how multi-faceted and complex these are. We must have a way of prioritising researchable constraints.

### **Prioritising researchable or developmental constraints for poverty eradication**

Problem trees or MindMaps are a particularly useful tool, not only for co-ordinating developmental actions, but also for prioritising them. The most straight-forward means of using problem trees in the prioritisation of researchable or developmental constraints is to weight each of the branches. This may be done through some form of participatory ranking exercise where a score is given to each researchable constraint by a representative sample of key informants. If large numbers of representative key informants are interviewed separately about the cause of poverty, then the number of times a researchable constraint was mentioned without prompting can be used to weight that constraint.

Clearly, the objectivity of such prioritisation depends to a great extent on the composition and breadth of understanding of the interviewer and interviewees. Interviewers and interviewees inevitably focus on, and rate highly, those underlying causes of poverty of which they have experience or which affect them directly. This problem can be called "immediacy". For example, the broader the areas of poverty

which you wish to consider, the harder it is to give a fair rating to issues that are outside the immediate interest of interviewers and interviewees, or which underpin poverty in a way which is indirect or diffuse.

Alternative methods can be used which are more objective. For example, poverty trap loops which refer branch tips back to other branches in the tree structure can be a useful priority setting tool. The number of times a particular branch is referred to by other branch tips gives a measure of the significance/importance of that branch as a cause of poverty. Repetition is a second priority setting tool. Some of the underlying causes of a central problem (MindMap branch tips) occur more than once in MindMaps. This repetition sometimes occurs on a single branch. Occasionally, repetition occurs on several branches. Researchable constraints which occur on several branches are more likely to be significant/important to the eradication of a central problem than researchable constraints relating to only one branch. Similarly, researchable constraints which are highly repeated within one branch are likely to be more significant/important than those that are not.

### **Requirements for the use of “Mindmapping” as a research prioritisation tool**

*Holistic scope:* The participative process which informs the production of a Mindmaps must be truly multi-disciplinary. This will allow the real concerns of poor people to be portrayed without distortion through a single disciplinary lens. Single discipline specialists are unlikely to be able to identify and prioritise the most appropriate poverty eradication interventions. Because participative multi-disciplinary surveys are expensive, this will require either central developmental support, or greater co-ordination of cross-sectoral priority setting.

*Sharp people focus:* This “tool” will be of most use if the participative consultation process on which it is based differentiates between groups of poor people that have different “vulnerability contexts” (e.g. within each group there must be sufficient commonality of problems to allow an accurate portrayal of the cause and effect linkages of poverty). This will require an agreed grouping of poor people, based upon their vulnerability context.

*Co-ordinated action:* It is clear from the Mindmap displays that in order to resolve certain causes of poverty, many different activities must occur in a co-ordinated fashion. It is pointless to solve one particular researchable constraint if the financial, social, human or physical capacity does not exist to implement results. Interventions must be strategically co-ordinated to match technical solutions with an enabling environment. Research must be matched with capacity building in its broadest sense.

*Enabling structure:* In order to achieve the above, there must be some co-ordination in the way that research and developmental activities are identified, prioritised, implemented and assessed. If project cycles or overarching strategies are asynchronous, it is unlikely that the basal causes of poverty will be addressed in a co-ordinated way.

*Dynamic flexibility:* Since the vulnerability contexts of poor people change rapidly with time, participative consultation must be an iterative process, allowing new priorities to emerge. Fossilisation of research priorities within long term strategies is unlikely to best serve poor people. A dynamic research and development structure is needed.

*Comprehensive outputs:* Too often, the outputs from research and development projects are restricted to a single discipline. The co-ordinated approach espoused above could potentially facilitate more comprehensive joint outputs geared towards the multiple livelihood needs of a particular group of poor people. This would require some process of knowledge synthesis across sectors.

*Fair impact assessment:* Since researchable priorities might potentially be prioritised on the basis of a broad understanding of poverty, not solely on financial measures, it is only sensible that impact assessment methodologies keep pace with these developments. Indicators of social, human, physical and natural capital are urgently needed within a framework which does not always bow to the simplicity of cost-benefit analysis.

*Healthy realism:* Because the poverty trap is complex, many independent changes may be needed simultaneously for real progress. Supporting appropriate knowledge generation with an appropriate enabling environment (e.g. policies, institutional capability etc.) will take time. "Mindmapping" is one tool which can assist careful priority setting and co-ordinated action.