

# MACRO DEVELOPMENT AND MICRO SOCIAL PROCESSES: DEVELOPMENT AS DISCOURSE IN NEPAL

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## **Introduction**

This paper points out that to understand development processes, examining aid impacts at local level is as important as studying the impacts of development at the macro level. Studying development at local levels entails understanding the different societal processes triggered off by aid including the undesired and unplanned consequences.

This paper is a part of my ongoing Ph. D. dissertation under the central Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tribhuvan University in which I try to explore the intended and unintended impacts of Finnish aid in the Nepali forestry sector. At the macro level, conventional development equates impact of aid in forestry sector with issues such as how many hectares of forests have been planted, how many nurseries established, fire-lines made, how many community forestry user groups (CFUG) have been formed, what is the involvement of the women and *Dalits* in the CFUGs and so forth. These are the intended outcomes or rather the effects of aid. There may be unanticipated consequences of aid at the local levels which may have affected the social activities and relation of the people, but, which, have not been studied.

I attempt to link the impacts of aid at macro level with processes at the micro level following a genre of thought, known as post-development. I discuss some literature, global (Escobar 1995, Ferguson 1994) as well

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as pertaining to Nepal (Pigg 1992, 1995, 1996; Fujikura 1996, 2001; Sharma 2001; Harper 2002; Hindman 2002), which examine the aid discourses and explore the workings of aid and show their impacts on social activities of the people at the local levels. The literature that is discussed here by showing different aspects of development as to how it works and why it does is expected to be useful to students of sociology/anthropology of development<sup>20</sup>. The literature examined in the paper by pointing out the impacts of aid at local levels can also feed into the process of policy-making.

I proceed by introducing the main concepts and outline two of the groundbreaking post-development writings after which I examine some of the aid discourses in Nepal. I attempt to understand development through the help of two types of writings. In the first group are the writings that try to figure out the reasons for lack of development in Nepal and in the latter group are those studies, based on post-development thought, that take a distance from development paradigm itself and question its premises and workings. The post-development writings reviewed here vary in focus from health to water supply but the underlying thread is that they concentrate on the 'apparatus' of development, explore how aided projects work and show the unintended consequences of the workings of aid.

This paper is an attempt to demonstrate how historically grounded analysis of development and deconstruction of aid discourses can provide better understanding of the impacts of aid at local level and of the development processes.

### **Background**

The post-development writers have largely been influenced by post-modernists who question the Enlightenment narratives and the primacy of scientific knowledge and rationality. The post-modernists argue that as the age of 'modernity', which began with the Enlightenment in the 18th century, has ended, the conditions and categories, which we use to make sense of the social world, too should change. Linking knowledge to time, place and social position from which an individual 'constructs' that knowledge, the post-modernists contend that there is no single truth

but a plurality of options and assert the need to 'deconstruct' the way we look at the social world. Prominent among the post-modernists are Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Michel Foucault.

Michel Foucault's ideas on power, relation of power and knowledge and how these manifest through discourses in a given historical context have had much influence on post-development writers. Foucault was interested in micro-politics of power and saw power emanating from the arrangements of social order. Having knowledge is also a source of power according to him because having power lets one speak of others in an authoritative way. Thus, he views power and knowledge as inseparable. He writes that "...there is no power relation without the correlative construction of field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations..." (Foucault, 1977, cf. Kiely, R. 1999: 33). And discourse is the articulation of power and knowledge. By discourse, Foucault meant 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about and a way of representing the knowledge about- a particular topic at a particular historical moment'. Discourse allows only certain ways of thinking and excludes others. The Foucauldian thought is carried on by the post-development writers who see the idea of development as a particular discourse, a particular way of thinking about the world and a particular form of knowledge, which not only reflects but constructs reality. Development is regarded as the Eurocentric view through which the West continues to exercise power and domination over the subjects of the Third World by excluding alternative forms of thinking. Thus, the post-development writers deconstruct discourses, study social activities and search for options and alternatives to development.

### **The Works of Escobar and Ferguson: Aid Discourses and Knowledge Construction**

Escobar (1995) and Ferguson (1994) are the pioneering theorists with whom the post development writing is usually associated. They view development as an apparatus and question the conceptual and institutional construction of this apparatus. Escobar in *Encountering Development: Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (1995) writes that to understand development it should be studied as a historically singular experience

along three trajectories: "... the forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes into being and is elaborated into objects, concepts, theories, and the like; the system of power that regulates its practice; and the forms of subjectivity fostered by this discourse..." (Escobar, 1995: 10). He writes that 'development' came into being after the Second World War with President Truman's speech in 1949 when Truman described the differences between the countries of the north and the south and envisaged a program of development. The aid regime initiated a new era in the understanding and managing of world affairs, particularly those concerning the less economically accomplished countries. Capital investment, which the poor countries do not have, was regarded as the most important ingredient in economic growth and development. Poor countries were seen to be trapped in a vicious circle of poverty so the needed capital, it was said, should come from the government and the international organizations. The capital would fuel up industrialization and urbanization, gradually leading to development. This aid discourse has resulted in the formations of new organisations; institutions and the technocratic regime leading to 'professionalisation' and 'institutionalisation' of development.

Escobar deconstructs the language used by the development agencies to show how the discourses have helped in securing the power of US and northern countries over the south. The countries of North America have come to be regarded as the appropriate models for development for the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are lumped together into the 'Third World' category in spite of their geographical and socio-economic variations. The language used by development apparatus is such that the culture of the 'Third World' countries is seen to be backward, and which needs to be replaced by modern education and cultural values. Discourses of development have generated a certain type of knowledge about development that has become hegemonic and it has become nearly impossible to conceptualize reality in other terms. It has "... fostered a way of conceiving of social life as a technical problem, as a matter of rational decision to be entrusted to that group of people-the development professionals-whose specialized knowledge allegedly qualified for the task" (Escobar, 1995, 52). In a vein that echoes Foucault, Escobar writes that development discourse and practices have constructed objects and

has proceeded by creating abnormalities such as "illiterate", "underdeveloped", "malnourished", "small farmers" which it would later try to treat and reform.

Ferguson in *'The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho'* (1994) creates development as an apparatus; a strange machine and explores how it works and why. He takes the case of Lesotho where innumerable aid agencies were present and shows how the discourses represent Lesotho. The process through which the World Bank (WB) represent Lesotho (in WB's report on Lesotho in the 1970s) is ahistorical and acultural and can be applied to any of the 'Third World' countries. The WB Country Report discourses represent Lesotho as a traditional subsistence peasant society which was virtually untouched by modern economic development and portrays the picture that labor migration and the cash economy is something new in Lesotho's history. But these representations are not the reality because Lesotho entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a producer of cash crop for the South African market and it was a labor reserve economy. Ferguson argues that development institutions generate their own form of discourse, which constructs an object (in this case, Lesotho) and creates a structure of knowledge around the object.

As these discourses are constructed exterior to the subject, these do not reflect reality but aid agencies based upon this assumption design organizations, form institutions and implement programs. He writes that there are two different worlds: that of the bureaucrats and the social world of the people. The bureaucrats attempt to "develop" Lesotho fail, as these do not reflect the reality. Though it fails to develop it produces certain unintended consequences such as depoliticizing political issues, expanding bureaucracy and the bureaucratic state power. Hence, Ferguson labels development as a strange machine. Grass-root movements, which are "movements for empowerment" according to Ferguson, operate outside the development paradigm and these should be regarded as alternatives to development.

Moving on from post-development literature, I now discuss some common aid discourses on Nepal to show how these have generated a certain type of representation of Nepal and examine how these

representations impact on the Nepali's mind space. Then I move on to discuss some works on aid in Nepal.

### **Aid Discourses in Nepal**

Foreign aid has been the link tying Nepal with development and this link was created in the early decade of the 1950s. Along with aid, development worldviews also entered the Nepali mindscapes. It was at this point of history that the leaders of the new Nepal articulated the demands for schools, roads, electricity etc. which they had seen in neighboring, India but which were present only in name in Rana Nepal. Most of this group of Nepali leaders were educated in India and had carried out their underground activities. Nepal under the Ranas did not have those amenities and the beginning of the international aid era made it possible for that generation of Nepali leaders educated in India, to realize these dreams.

Similar to Ferguson's study on Lesotho, the aid discourses of the donors in the early years in Nepal construct Nepal as a lab where no development had taken place and where the people were eager for changes. The language of the initial development experts as " '...unexposed to the modern world', 'blank state', 'no education facilities'," (cited from Fujikura, 1996:271) shows how Nepal is represented ignoring Nepal's culture and history not least the status of Nepal as a semi-colony of the British during the Rana times. Nepal is portrayed as a poor and traditional country where there was no education, no development but that the people were eager to have these changes. The formal education system in Nepal has also reinforced this idea. This representation has had profound impact on the thoughts and behaviour of the people. But this ideological impact though very pervasive, was ironically not discernable. It has been the work of the post-development writers searching for the unintended consequences of development and its alternatives that have unearthed the processes through which aid has moulded Nepali's own reading of history.

### **Research on Aid**

The topic of aid has been studied by both foreign and Nepali scholars

since the 1960s and these works have from the very beginning questioned the role of aid in Nepal's development. One of the earliest books to study the politics of foreign aid is by Mihaly E. in "*Foreign Aid and Politics in Nepal*" (1965 reprinted in 2002) where the author tries to find out whether or not the US aid has been an effective tool for political change. He writes that aid has not brought about political changes in Nepal because American aid was based on the flawed assumptions that capital and technology would result in the desired socio-economic changes and that Nepali people were eager for the changes. He further writes that aid policies have overlooked the Nepali social structure and subsequently aid has largely been ineffective in achieving its aim of transforming society.

Another work to discuss aid and its workings during the 50s, 60s and 70s is by Yadav and Stiller in *Planning For People* (1979). The authors, similar to Mihaly, argue that aid has not been effective in changing society. The fault, according to them, lies both within the Nepali social structure and with the aid policies of the donors. They write that the Nepali social structure was unable to understand, evaluate and utilize the aid that was being received. Consequently, the burden of development fell on the 'experts' within the development agencies and these 'experts' failed to relate their policies to Nepal's political, social and administrative structure and Nepal slowly started to become dependent on decisions made at Delhi and Washington. The authors write that foreign aid has been a good business for the foreigners involved in aid as well as for the Nepalis who profit from the economy generated by foreign aid.

This thought, that aid has been beneficial only for a certain section of the population is the theme in the papers compiled in the *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal* (1984). One of the seminal papers in the book is "Foreign Aid and Social Structure: Notes on Intra- State Relationships" by Mishra and Sharma. In this paper, the authors analyse the relationship between foreign aid and social structure and argue that foreign aided development has had no significant effect either on agriculture or on the mode of production in the country. The authors explore the effects of aid in different sectors and show that aid has not helped in bringing about significant effect on the 'mode of production'

but only in the 'distribution' system. According to Mishra and Sharma, foreign aid in the country have led to the strengthening of the power of the upper class through which they legitimatise their power and their political rule. Foreign aid has increased the dependence of the lower classes, has increased the incidence of poverty, has led to centralisation and to the growth of westernization of ideology.

Another work that examines the links between foreign policy and aid policy to understand aid is by a Nepali scholar Khadka N. in the "*Foreign Aid and Foreign Policy, Major Powers and Nepal*" (1997). His main argument is that the aid policies of the donors are based on their foreign policies and reflect their strategic, political and economical gains. Consequently, the goal of aid is buying international support for the policy of donor countries rather than humanitarian support to the poor countries. The US aid policy in Nepal reflects the US foreign policy of the cold war considerations and the modernization theory of development. Nepal's adjacent position to China prompted the US to provide funds for some socio-economic sectors in order to make direct impacts on the living standards of the poor and thereby discourage their attraction to communism. Similarly, Indian aid and Chinese aid to Nepal have expanded and contracted according to their relations with each other.

The studies cited above do not include all the works on foreign aid in Nepal but these are only a few sampled ones to show the general trend of the studies on foreign aid. The studies show that the flow of aid into the country has not resulted in the desired changes; consequently, the effectiveness of aid has been questioned from the beginning. These also show that strategic interests of the donors overshadow their humanitarian concerns while giving aid. If one recollects the distinction between aid impacts and aid effects, what these studies have done is to focus on effects. These have also examined aid at the macro levels such as agriculture, education, communication, etc. Despite many published works on aid, those that explore the impacts at local levels is still lacking. Another point is that most of the authors have studied the aid programs of bigger donors such as US, India, China and the Soviet Russia. These have overlooked the assistance of the smaller European donors who since 1990s are slowly emerging as 'partners' of aid in Nepal.



### **Role of Foreign Aid in Nepal**

What has been the macro impact of aid? The standard, as mentioned earlier, is to see the direct impacts in quantifiable indicators and more so at the national level. The variables of development show these accomplishments: from one airport in 1951 to four dozen by 2002; 276 km of roads increased to 328,000 km, 1.1 megawatt of electricity to 527 megawatt; etc<sup>21</sup>. In spite of these accomplishments, it is common knowledge that a vast number of Nepalis eke out a precarious existence. Standard economic and social indicators give a low scoring for Nepal. Despite the continuous flow of aid, why has there not been the desired socio-economic transformation is the question in the minds of aid writers in Nepal. No less insidious, I argue, is the manner in which development ideology has become hegemonic. The ideology of development itself structures the self-images of Nepalis and perpetuates the idea of self as 'backward'. The post development writings, therefore, question the concept of 'development' itself and show how it works (among others on forming categories of self and others) and analyses the impacts at the local levels.

Based upon various studies I will try to explore the impact of development. In the beginning, I will draw from those works that are based on modernization and dependency theory. These works question why there has been no development in Nepal. Then I will review those studies that take a distance from development ideology itself and endeavor to examine how 'development industry' works and what have been the outcomes of its workings on the minds and lives of people.

In 1940s and 50s, development was seen as a modernization process that would bring about structural changes in society. Modernization was a historical product of three events: rise of the US as the superpower, spread of a united world communist movement and disintegration of European colonial empires in Eastern Europe and Asia (Alvin So, 1990:17). 'Extensive division of labour and specialization, self-sustaining economic growth, a well functioning and active state apparatus, a democratic form of government and equality before law' were the main postulates of the modernization theory (Alvin So 1990: 38). The prime argument of the modernization school is that development includes social

and economic transformation and that the industrialized countries are the mentors for the less developed countries. The modernization advocates see development as important and sublime and show a proclivity for understanding the underlying causes for retarding development.

One important sociological/ anthropological work on modernization in the Nepali context, though one that appeared some two decades after the hegemony of modernization theory had ended, is *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernisation* by Dor B. Bista.

In *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle for Modernisation* (1991), Bista attempts to attribute specific cultural values, for the lack of development in Nepal. The author delves into the Nepali social structure and asserts that the culture of fatalism has been the main impediment in Nepal's development. It is because the people have inculcated the culture of fatalism, they believe that they have no personal control over their lives and this, in turn, has far-reaching effects on the work ethic and achievement motivation. Fatalism is connected to different forms of dependency through social institutions such as *afno manche* and *chakari*. And according to Bista, dependency and fatalism combined together impede development. Thus, he claims, in spite the flow of capital and import of technology from donors, Nepal is not developed.

Another such book is Devendra Raj Pandey's *Nepal's Failed Development: Reflections on the Missions and Maladies* (1999). Pandey's work (1999) is similar to Bista's work in that it identifies the Nepali social structure as an obstacle to development. He argues that development is a must but it can be achieved only through proper self-interest of the Nepalese. Corruption, according to him, is the main factor for the lack of development in Nepal.

The modernizers assume that there is something wrong inside the 'Third World' things such as traditional culture, overpopulation, low investment, lack of achievement motivation, etc. In this way, the modernizers account internal factors for lack of development whereas their critics, the neo-Marxists, attribute external factors for lack of development.

In the 1960s and 70s, neo-Marxist theory of development gained

ground. The Neo-Marxist believed that development implied the gaining of real national independence and self-centered economic progress. The dependency theory held the view that the colonial powers and imperialism had actively underdeveloped the Third World. According to these, development should be understood from the historical and structural perspective. Neo-Marxist dependency theorists treat capitalism as inherently exploitative and development as an essentially unequal process. And for genuine development to take place, there was a need to disassociate and de-link from the core rich countries of the first world.

One of the earlier works to study Nepal's development through the neo-Marxists/dependency approach is the *Nepal in Crises Growth and Stagnation at the Periphery*, by Blakie, P et al. (1983, reprinted 2005). The authors contend that development in Nepal has to be examined historically with its dependency with India. The authors take up the case of metalled roads financed by foreign aid in Nepal and depict how these have resulted in changes in the mode of production by contributing to social, economic and spatial inequalities.

Writing under the theoretical framework of the dependency theory, the authors show how Kathmandu is the periphery of the centre, Delhi, and that the west central region of Nepal is a periphery of the periphery (Kathmandu). The relationship between the center and periphery is based on the center appropriating surplus from the periphery largely for its own advantage and maintenance of the structures of domination and dependency with the periphery. They illustrate that the growth in the size of bureaucracy, towns, expansion of commerce, motor transport in the west central region of Nepal are not the product of national economy but of the underdevelopment and enforced stagnation. The authors emphasize the political and economic determinants of stagnation and write that the stagnation is the result of Nepal's partial incorporation into the British India in the past and lately into the political economy of the Indian Republic. The authors in this way try to combine local level analysis with the analysis of change in the wider Nepali economy and society.

Chaitanya Mishra in the *Development and Underdevelopment: A Preliminary Sociological Perspective (1987)* writes that underdevelopment

is a cycle, which is affected by diverse issues as integration to the capitalist and regional system; internal class relationships and form of utilization of political-economic resources. He states that underdevelopment in Nepal has a long history whose roots lie in the continuous and uneven process of peripheralisation. To understand Nepal's present underdevelopment it should be seen historically and with its relation with the capitalist system.

Though not neo-Marxist per se, but a work that depicts the material, spiritual and psychological deteriorations the country is going through is N. R. Shrestha's *In the Name of Development: A Reflection on Nepal* (1998). Shrestha argues that development institutions have been instrumental for the underdevelopment of Nepal. He argues that development in Nepal has cloaked under it the exploitative capitalism that has colonized the minds and bodies of the Nepalese people.

The above-mentioned texts based either on modernization and dependency center on how development should work and seek to identify the reasons why it has not functioned properly. Identifying where it has gone wrong, these positions also try to facilitate development process. The post-development studies, a genre of work that questions the development paradigm itself, make an effort to understand how development works and why it works the way it does. Some post-development writings on Nepal are reviewed in the subsequent section.

### **Development and Narrowing of 'Choices'**

In "*Unintended Consequences: The Ideological Impact of Development in Nepal*" (1993), Pigg reveals how the 'culture of development works within and through local cultures'. She expounds a historically grounded analysis of development and demonstrates how the impact of development is profound at local levels. She counters the argument of Ferguson who had said that there are different worlds: of the development planners/ implementers and the social reality of the people for whom the development interventions are targeted. Pigg declares that there can be no such fixed worlds because development interventions take place in the social sphere where they fuse with the existing social-cultural practices and behaviors. She writes that though in the discourse of international

development planning, development exists as an abstract concept it acquires a distinct meaning through a very specific history. Therefore, development interventions have to be seen in their historical context. For Nepali people, the meaning of *bikas* (development) is firmly rooted in social experience, in what *bikas* has been and has done in Nepali society. This is the reason "... *bikas* for the most part means things: especially commodities that come from elsewhere" (Pigg, 1993, 48). She elucidates how it is the non-local things such as electricity, pipes, trucks, fertilizers, cement, etc; that are termed as *bikas* in every day parlance in Nepal. Echoing Escobar, she states that development has constructed the space, which has regularized human behaviour. Nepali people place themselves and others into different slots either of modern, represented as *bikas* or traditional represented as underdeveloped and this becomes the guiding principles of social interactions and activities.

More detailed exploration is done by Pigg in *Inventing Social Categories Through Place: Social Representation and Development in Nepal* (1992) where she explains how the development discourse has regularized peoples' behaviour and beliefs. She takes the example of a category 'village' to understand how the language used by development institutions has constructed specific images about a Nepali village. She shows that the discourse has changed the meaning of village in Nepali social imagination because it is understood not as a place (as different from a city) but in relation to *bikas* or development. And village "...becomes a space of backwardness-a physical space that imprisons people in what is considered inferior and outmoded way of life..." (Pigg, 1992: 507).

Pigg also shows that the education system in Nepal has also reinforced this type of construction of village and villagers through language and symbols. By placing villages in relation to the kinds of places they are not, schoolbooks have helped to widen the dichotomy between the village and *bikas*.

Yet another work is "*Found in Most Traditional Societies*", *Traditional Medical Practitioners between Culture and Development* (1997) in which Pigg looks at how aid policies in the health sector have contributed to shaping a particular kind of social order. A certain health

program's objective was to include the 'Traditional Birth Attendants' (TBA) and 'Traditional Medical Practitioners' (TMP) in their programs but the language of development program defined these terms as obstacles rather than resource. In this way, Pigg argues, development activities marginalize local practices and augment the belief that existing practices must be replaced.

### **Deconstruction: Opening up of Hidden Avenues**

Fujikura in the paper, ' Technologies of Improvement, Locations of Culture: American Discourses of Democracy and Community Development in Nepal' (1996) takes the example of the US- assisted Village Development Project and tries to find out why this project was not successful by examining the prevalent discourses. As the Village Development Project was based on the concept of community development, Fujikura goes through different documents to understand how community development is represented by the 'experts'. Fujikura argues that the concept of community development is constructed by the experts based on different texts and bureaucratic experience without their prior interaction with the Nepali rural people and locale, so the representations are not a reflection of the reality but constitutive of it. The bureaucratic and the textual mechanism structures, the relation between the 'client' (target) and the 'agent' (expert) so that the results of interaction are presented as fact or as true discourses.

While the experts construct the motif of community development, there is a lack of importance given to the historical experience of the country and the cultural location, which narrows down the meaning of development. Fujikura makes explicit how development experts construct certain methods, motifs and processes about community development to be pursued in Nepal and how this type of construction restricts the activities to be undertaken under community development. Tatsuro Fujikura writes that even after forty years the discourses of development has not changed and at present they based upon the knowledge generated by international agencies as the International Monetary Fund and Structural Adjustment Programs. He says that it is only the rhetorics of aid that has changed from infrastructure and agriculture to institutional strengthening and human resource development, but development

continues to operate in the space created by the discourses of the 1950s. Thus, Fujikura shows how the discourses of development have created a space in which only certain things are said and imagined.

Continuing this line of thought further, Fujikura in 'Discourses of Awareness, Notes for a Criticism of Development in Nepal' (2001) reconstructs the discourses of 'awareness', explicates how development normalizes human acts and behaviour through controlled knowledge. Interestingly, Fujikura ends by stating that there may be social and economic opportunities even within the space allotted by the development discourse.

Taking the case of the education system in Nepal, he deconstructs the discourses of education and shows how these have constructed the people's worldview. These discourses not only influence what we think and imagine as the realities but have also helped in forming ourselves. The formal education in Nepal has the nation as its referent and propagates the idea that the students should make sacrifices for their nation. On the other hand, the non-informal education, prompted by the NGOs, has as their referents the individual themselves and efforts are made to enable the "target" people to become "aware" so they can help themselves. And awareness is '...seen as implying very specific attitudes and conduct, such as financial frugality, use of contraceptives, use of pit latrine, growing cash crops, the ability to sign one's name in paper etc...' and is more about changes in behavior and practices of the people rather than awareness *per se*.

Though the agency and modality of development has changed in the last half a century, development as pursued today, still operates within the space provided by the discourses of community development, argues Fujikura. The NGO activities show how social life is still conceived as a technical problem and how the target people learn to master some technical skills. And development discourse by emphasizing changes in behavior and practices has depoliticized political and social issues.

In this paper, Fujikura's explanations are analogous to Ferguson's and Pigg's studies' on how discourses construct our knowledge about others and even of ourselves. Pigg and Ferguson believe that the development paradigm should be discarded because this leads to the

narrowing of choices. Fujikura, however, argues that even within the conventional development paradigm, there may be spaces, which can result in the broadening of the economic and political opportunities for the people. He provides the example of the social movement for the liberation of the agricultural bonded laborers (Kamaiyas) in Nepal, which originated within the present conventional discourses of development and not as an alternative to development. The movement was supported by different NGOs but it was neither restricted to the project mentality nor to the rhetoric of development and became a social movement. This non-violent movement for the *Kamaiyas* ultimately became the grass-root movement and provided the political and economic venues and possibilities for socio-economic engagements. Ferguson and Pigg believed that the alternatives to development should be sought from social movements that operate outside the development paradigm but Fujikura asserts that even the social movements are an 'addition to those institutions, creating new venues and possibilities for socio-political engagements', within the development paradigm itself.

While the aforementioned works on development discourse do not have as their point of reference a specific program or project, Sharma's 'Procurring Water: Foreign Aid and Rural Water Supply in Nepal' (2001) embarks upon a social analysis of development by taking the case of a Finnish aided rural water supply project in Nepal.

### **Dismantling an Aided Project to See the Actors**

*Procurring Water: Foreign Aid and Rural Water Supply in Nepal* (2001) elucidates how development provides a social space in which different relations are sustained and how different actors manoeuvre within the set of possibilities. This process of contestations, negotiations between different actors and their relation all indicate development as a social form; a resource where different stakeholders have different levels of access to it. Thus Sharma scrutinizes power relations in development to find out what actors do and how aid works.

Sharma begins by examining the international and the national (both official and unofficial) discourses of water supply; how the discourses construct the rural water supply sector as being problematic and proceed



by creating institutional structures for development. He shows how global agendas and donors priorities largely maneuver development activities and role of the state. During the 1970s decade, the Nepali state instituted Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS) for carrying out the task of expanding the coverage area of piped water. Under the DWSS, the task of providing piped water increasingly became a hydrological and technical enterprise. As more aid flowed into water sector, other issues as health and hygiene were sidelined and only issues relating to piped water coverage became prominent. The emphasis on the technical aspect was beneficial to the DWSS and its role in the water sector became more limited to procuring pipes because the commission from this procurement activity was beneficial to the overstaffed but under paid Nepali bureaucracy.

Sharma writes that the knowledge and use of water at local levels has resulted from the amalgamation of local customs and the practices of modernity. At local levels, the global discourses of water lead to a specific configuration of ideas and associated practices, thus highlighting some (practices) and negating others. This is clearly seen in the impacts of the project. The intended impact of the provision of water by the state is improving the conditions of life of the people. Sharma illustrates that in the hills where there was scarcity, installation of drinking water taps led to one group of people consolidating their entitlement to water at the cost of others. In the Tarai where there was no acute shortage of water and where the water supply was delivered through installations of community tube-wells, water supply meant contestations over the ownership of the community tube-wells. Here the people saw the Finnish project opening up social space, which provided opportunities to people to move into leadership through the Water Users Committee formed for drinking water purposes. Sharma's study similar to Pigg shows how development shapes social activities of the people.

Sharma deconstructs the discourses of 'empowerment', 'decentralisation' and 'private sector mobilisation' and shows how these discourses are deployed by donors and the local agents of development. Though these discourses are interpreted as including the lowest tier of government, the way certain partners were selected (eg. instead of VDC, selecting the Water Users Association and Support Organisations as

partners) shows that in practice there was no real devolution of power at local levels. The activities as contestations, negotiations between the donors and the working line agencies all reveal that aid is more than development; it is also a resource and stakeholders have different levels of access to it. Sharma shows how process that entail changing of partners from one ministry to another facilitated the Finnish personnel in having more control of the implementation process and the overall project.

Thus, Sharma's study of discourses and practices concerning water supply in Nepal shows the global level discourses leading to a 'professionalisation of knowledge' and 'institutionalization of practices' and 'enshoring' of power at local levels.

Another work that examines a specific project is Ian Harper's *Capsular Promise as Public Health: a Critique of the Nepal National Vitamin A Programme* (2002).

### **Ethnography of an Aided Project**

Harper in 'Capsular Promise as Public Health: a Critique of the Nepal National Vitamin A Programme' (2002) shows how the discourse in the health sector includes certain types of knowledge and excludes others. He provides an ethnography of the vitamin 'A' program showing how global health discourses have been influential in determining the types of health programs been implemented in Nepal. Harper illustrates how experts, based on certain knowledge construct these programs and also examines the process through which they are operationalized in society. Harper also shows the relationships between fundable research and development industries, which are influencing the discourses of health policies, and practices. As a consequence of this relation, only those researches that are built upon the discourses of the donors are highlighted as appropriate forms of knowledge about the health sector in Nepal. The donors' knowledge suppresses and marginalizes other forms of socio-political knowledge and what are basically political problems of the state such as poverty and malnutrition and which in turn cause most of health problems, are overlooked. This process contributes to maintaining certain relations of domination between the donors and the recipient countries. Harper shows how certain "institutional partnerships, liaisons and linkages

work together, provide potential profits and capital and determine the types of researches in specific area".

The above mentioned texts have looked into aided projects, programs and the social activities of the people to understand the impact of development whereas a work that examines the domestic lives of the development workers and shows how the development discourses constructs the lives and behaviour of the expatriates is by Heather Hindman in 'The Everyday Life Of American Development in Nepal' (2002).

### **Development Ideology and Lifestyles of Expatriates**

Hindman in 'The Everyday Life Of American Development in Nepal' (2002) shows how along with US aid the American discourses of family and work have entered Nepal. She shows how the development workers live their daily lives in Nepal with their families by distancing themselves from the local people and relying on imported goods for domestic use. Fujikura has shown how development discourses normalize human thoughts and behaviour of the people where the project of development is implemented and Hindman shows how development discourses have also normalized the personal and the professional lives of the experts.

Hindman illustrates how President Truman's Point Four Program generated knowledge about the development that emphasized technology; linked technology with modernity and modernity with progress and success. Technology is seen as the solution to all kinds of problems that are to be solved by experts. Experts are those people of the first world who have diverse technical skills and can efficiently 'solve long term problems in a short time'. In Nepal, Hindman shows that aid regime has entrusted development in the hands of experts and these are guided not by local logics but by efficient implementation. And the job of development has been reduced to technical problems and strategies, which in turn are reduced to the lowest bidding multinational corporations.

### **Conclusions**

The above-mentioned post-development writings have shown how different social processes are set off by development at local levels.

Escobar's study shows how development results in a particular types of professionalisation and institutionalisation, Ferguson illuminates how development results in depoliticising political issues, expands bureaucracy and bureaucratic state power. He writes that the social movements, which resist development, should be seen as the alternative to development. Focusing on Nepal, Pigg examines the ideological impact of development, and shows how development normalises thoughts and behavior and marginalises local culture. Fujikura shows how discourses of development have limited the space for undertaking activities under 'development '. Carrying further the argument of Ferguson and Pigg who see social movements as alternatives to development, Fujikura says that social movements are more about getting access to development rather than resisting development. Sharma, taking the case of a particular aided project, identifies different actors within the space provided by development and shows the workings and consequences of development on the state's structure, aid agency and on different people for whom the aided project is implemented. Harper taking the case of an aided health project shows how at the local levels the rituals of development are practiced. Hindman's study shows how the personal and professional lives of development experts are affected by the knowledge generated by the development discourses. The post-development studies through an 'ethnography of aid' have shown the workings of aid at different levels. These studies try to understand development as a historical process of social change and reveal how impact is produced by the interplay of the intervention and the context.

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