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# SOCIETAL CHANGES AND THE FUTURE OF FORESTS AND FORESTRY

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# INTRODUCTION

- The collective impact of the change drivers brings about fundamental changes in societal characteristics.
- However the transition is not uniform, leading to segmentation in society.
- Different segments in society have different uses of forests and this could be an important cause of conflicts, especially in a situation where resources are scarce.
- Understanding the differences in societies and how they change over time become important to understand how policies needs to be crafted to deal with the changing nature of resource use and to address potential conflicts.

# PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

- Identify the different segments in society and their diverging demands on forests.
- Visualise how the composition of society is undergoing changes and to assess the probable situation in the coming decades.
- Assess the implications of societal changes on forests and forestry and how policies are dealing with conflicts between different segments in society.
- Introduce the concept of forest transition and discuss the likelihood of forest transition in South and Southeast Asian countries



# DIFFERING SOCIETAL SEGMENTS



- ❑ Most often we are dealing with highly fragmented societies.
- ❑ How do we make a distinction between different societal segments?
  - ❑ Socio-economic condition and society-natural resource linkage
- ❑ Possible groupings:
  - ❑ Pre-agrarian societies
  - ❑ Agrarian societies
  - ❑ Industrial societies
  - ❑ Post-industrial societies
- ❑ Forests are seen differently by different societal segments.



# NATURE OF DEPENDENCE ON FORESTS

Society	Key features of the economic system	Implications on forests
<b>Forest dependent, pre-agrarian communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost entirely subsistence focused</li> <li>• Communal production and shared consumption.</li> <li>• Most of the consumption is to satisfy basic needs.</li> <li>• Production is primarily dependent on natural factors.</li> <li>• Very little dependence on resources outside the area controlled by the community. Practically no trade of products, except bartering with adjoining communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests are used to meet basic needs such as woodfuel, medicines, food and construction materials; these societies have limited capacity to alter the forest environment drastically.</li> <li>• Forests permeate cultural, social and religious beliefs and perceptions.</li> </ul>
<b>Agrarian societies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant differences within agrarian societies ranging from small scale subsistence farming to large scale farming focused on production of industrial raw materials.</li> <li>• Land and labour are the key factors of production.</li> <li>• Livelihood is primarily derived from the farm land, although some income/ products are obtained from adjoining common land including forests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests are viewed as space to expand agriculture, including livestock; as a source of low-cost inputs for agriculture and as a supply of woodfuel, fodder, medicines and other non-wood forest products.</li> <li>• With settled cultivation, the service functions of forests (e.g. watershed protection, arresting land degradation) become important</li> </ul>



# NATURE OF DEPENDENCE ON FORESTS

Society	Key features of the economic system	Implications on forests
Industrial societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land becomes a less important factor of production. Capital and skilled labour the main factors of production.</li> <li>• Even agriculture becomes industrialised.</li> <li>• A high proportion of goods and services produced is traded. Trade becomes an important engine of the economy.</li> <li>• Large-scale production and trade, dependent on mass markets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests are used as a source of industrial raw material with increasing emphasis on large scale plantations .</li> <li>• Increasing demand for energy, minerals, infrastructure puts enormous pressure on forests</li> </ul>
Post-industrial societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and knowledge become</li> <li>• the most important inputs in production of goods and services.</li> <li>• Trade of services and knowledge becomes the main engine of the economy and most of the products are procured from other countries by creating favourable terms of trade for knowledge services.</li> <li>• Shift from mass production to meeting needs of smaller markets and increased emphasis on customization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forests become less important as a source of products and more important as a source of services – e.g. watershed protection, biodiversity conservation and carbon sequestration.</li> <li>• Aesthetic values gain primacy</li> </ul>



# SOCIETAL CHANGE AND FORESTS

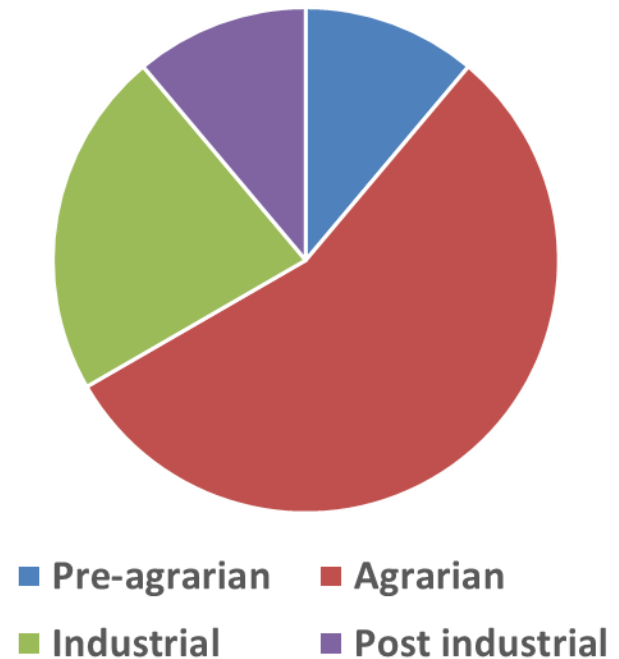
Proportion of different societal segments.

How forest policies are addressing conflicts between different segments in society?

Whose demands are getting priority in forest policies?

How the proportion of different segments in society is changing and its implications on land use and forest policies?

Proportion of different segments of society



# SOCIETAL CHANGE AND FOREST TRANSITION

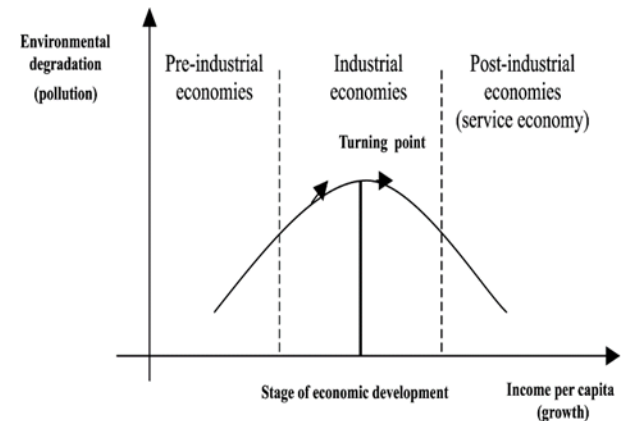
❑ Most of the national forest policies stipulate a target as regards the desired extend of forests.

❑ Obviously this implies reversing deforestation and degradation and thus accomplishing forest transition.

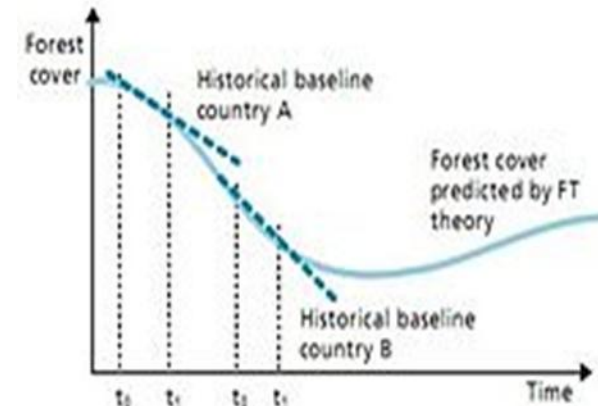
❑ Which are the countries where forest transition have occurred in Asia?

- ❑ Occurred in countries where dependency on land has declined significantly.
- ❑ A shift from dependence on natural capital to human capital

❑ Linkages between the larger societal changes and forest transition.



Source: Panayotou (1993)



Source: Angelsen 2008.



# ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- Are land use/ forest policies giving due consideration for the diverse needs of different segments in society?
- How are conflicts between divergent needs of different segments resolved and how these are addressed in forest policies?
- How the proportion of different segments in society are likely to change and what it means for the state of forests and forestry in the future?
- What are the chances of forest transition taking place in your country? What will really contribute to forest transition?
- How do we fine tune forest policies to facilitate forest transition? How do we make forest policies “society-centric” and not “forest-centric”.



*Thank You*



People, Land Use and Forests in the ASEAN Region: Policy Challenges in the 21st Century  
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