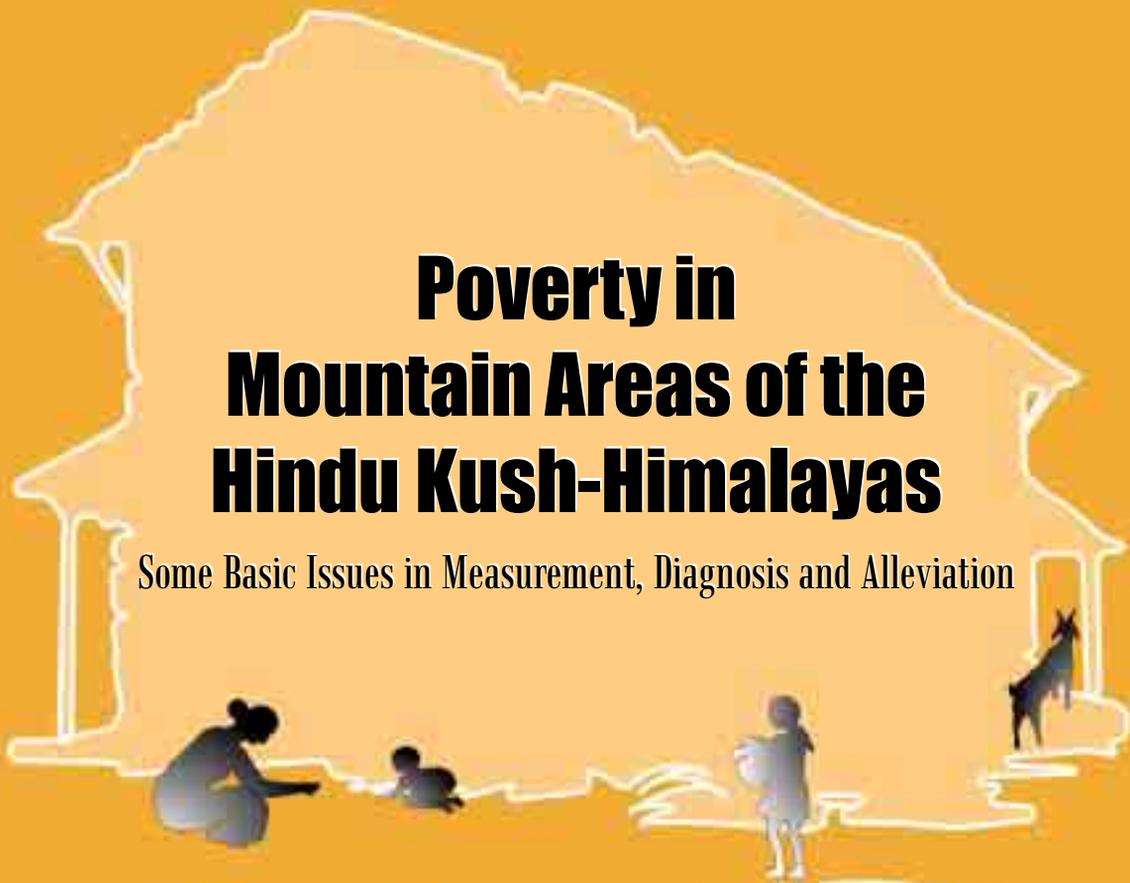


Poverty in Mountain Areas of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

Some Basic Issues in Measurement, Diagnosis and Alleviation



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Poverty in Mountain Areas of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

Some Basic Issues in Measurement, Diagnosis and Alleviation

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Infrastructure Division

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preface

Mountain areas of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region generally not only have a relatively high proportion of people living in poverty, the forms and sources of their poverty also differ from those commonly seen in the plains. This difference arises primarily from the distinctive physical conditions of mountain areas and the socio-economic circumstances conditioned by them. Recognition of specificities of the situation in mountain areas is often lacking in the analyses and policies relating to poverty and its alleviation.

ICIMOD, with its mandate for improving livelihoods and environment in mountain areas of this region, has been engaged in developing approaches, strategies, and programmes suitable for mountain areas in sectors such as farming, forestry, water, energy, enterprises, and tourism. Poverty alleviation has been an explicit or implicit objective of these activities. It has, however, been suggested by different observers, the latest of them being the Quinquennial Review (2001) team, that it would be useful for ICIMOD to evolve a conceptual framework to relate the ongoing and future activities of the Centre with this objective and to help prioritise its programmes.

The present paper is an attempt to address the above two concerns. It basically provides a conceptual background to the nature and sources of poverty and presents elements of a strategy to approach poverty analysis and alleviation in mountain areas of the HKH region. It is hoped that the paper will encourage discussion with a view to improving understanding of causes of poverty and evolving more appropriate strategies and policies to address it. It should also help ICIMOD develop a framework for a focussed and well-prioritised programme of work on poverty alleviation in mountain areas.

Several colleagues at ICIMOD have contributed to developing this paper, especially through their comments on an earlier draft that was discussed in an internal meeting. Suggestions from Dr. J. Gabriel Campbell, Dr. Binayak Bhadra, Dr. N.S. Jodha, Ms. Greta Rana and Dr. Pradeep Tulachan have been particularly helpful in clarifying some of the issues and in incorporating some others. I am grateful to all of them. Responsibility for opinions expressed and shortcomings in the paper are, of course, mine.

T.S. Papola

abstract

An attempt is made in this paper to examine the prevalent concepts, measurement methods of, and approaches to alleviation of poverty in the specific context of mountain areas of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region. On that basis, it points out certain specificities of poverty and its sources and outlines the basic elements of a framework for analysis and alleviation of poverty in mountain areas. The paper is organised into five sections (i) Manifestations of Poverty in Mountain Areas; (ii) Sources of Poverty; (iii) Poverty-Natural Resource Degradation Linkage; (iv) Common Strategies and Interventions; and (v) Towards a Framework for Poverty Alleviation, with a focus on the distinctiveness of the dimensions of poverty in mountain areas.

acronyms & abbreviations

DFID	Department for International Development
GDP	gross domestic product
GIS	geographic information system
HKH	Hindu Kush-Himalayas
HMG	His Majesty's Government
INRs	Indian Rupees
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NPC	National Planning Commission
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
WB	World Bank
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFP	World Food Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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