

Part V

Access, Equity and Linkages

The first paper in this part deals with one of the most vital issues in mountain development, namely, accessibility. It discusses the role of transport networks and urban settlements in improving accessibility on the basis of analysis of the historical experiences in several South Asian mountain areas. It notes the reasons, other than the provision of better transport facilities for mountain people, that have mostly been responsible for developing transport networks in mountain areas of South Asia. However, mountain communities have benefited from such development whether they were the intended beneficiaries or not. The same has been the case with development of urban settlement. The paper emphasises that the impact from introduction of road systems and improved accessibility to mountain areas should not be underestimated and should be seen in the longer run and in a nation-wide perspective.

The paper on mountain women focuses on economic opportunities for them as a major vehicle for their emancipation and poverty alleviation. It describes the status of women, particularly in relation to their participation in control over economic resources and activities, differentiating between the Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman communities; but the paper also brings out a lot of commonalities in terms of gains and losses of women in the wake of commercialisation in the entire HKH region. Finally, it draws a number of implications for policies and programmes, especially in terms of reducing gender discrimination in access to land, capital, and credit as well as provisions and practices in education and health.

The final paper in this part examines the implications of linkages between the mountains and lowlands in the context of globalisation of markets. It points to the adverse terms of trade against the uplands and the one-way drain of resources without compensatory mechanisms. It warns that penetration of markets into mountain areas may accelerate this process unless the capacities of mountain regions and their people are raised to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the global

markets and compensatory mechanisms are developed for the resource flows that cannot be easily taken care of by price and market mechanisms

In all three areas, appropriate government policies play an important role. If government fails to provide the needed investments to develop the basic infrastructure, it is unlikely to come from any other source – at least not until a reasonable level of economic development is achieved. Regarding gender discrimination, there is still a lot of room for changes in legal aspects, awareness generation, and capacity building – areas in which government plays a major role. The introduction of compensatory mechanisms for adverse terms of trade has many important policy implications in terms of both economic as well as environmental aspects. Similarly, important negotiations at the global level to win appropriate recognition of the unique value of mountain products require that not only should national governments play a major role but also that governments work together as a coherent regional body for promoting mountain products.

Chapters

- 18. Improving Accessibility for Mountain Development: Role of Transport Networks and Urban Settlements** — H. Kreutzmann
- 19. Economic Opportunities for Mountain Women of South Asia: the Poverty Context** — M. Acharya
- 20. Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development in Mountain Areas: Role of Highland – Lowland Links in the Context of Rapid Globalisation** — N.S. Jodha