

IMPACT OF OFF-FARM ACTIVITIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND ON RESOURCES

Medicinal plants, other fruit trees, and *moyu* provide off-farm employment based on comparative resource advantages. Some of the positive and negative aspects (or indicators of "success" and "failure") of the major off-farm activities are noted below.

a) Raising Livestock

- Positive Aspects:
- Enhances self-reliance
 - Improves the soil fertility of cultivated land
 - Enhances both forward and backward linkages with cropping
 - Enhances female participation in income generation
- Negative Aspect:
- Reduces farmers' motivation towards new off-farm activities

b) Planting *Shanmuyaochai* and *Moyu*

- Positive Aspects:
- Makes full use of otherwise unused land
 - Enhances the opportunities for the poor
 - Contributes to market growth
 - Enhances the natural resource base
 - Increases diversification
 - Generates considerable net income
- Negative Aspects:
- May lead to decline in soil fertility
 - Involves risks because of uncertain market demands

c) Sideline Activities

- Positive Aspects:
- Generates sizeable seasonal employment
 - Has good opportunities for major activities with substantial labour demand
 - Enhances the opportunities for the poor
 - Based on traditional skills
- Negative Aspect:
- Decreases the production scale of certain operations in a household

d) Building

- Positive Aspects:
- Generates sizeable non-agricultural employment
 - Has improved the access to the outside world
 - Has enhanced skill levels

- Negative Aspects:
- Increases the dependence on outside enterprises
 - Decreases the utility of local resources
 - Limited access for females

e) Tertiary Activities

- Positive Aspects:
- Contributes to growth of market and service centres
 - Enhances backward linkages with the farming system
 - Enhances female participation

- Negative Aspects:
- Discourages rational distribution of population and resources (migration from mountain villages to valley villages).
 - Not easily accessible to the poor