



Mountain Population and Employment

Discussion Paper Series

OFF-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN WEIZHOU TOWNSHIP IN THE HENGDUAN MOUNTAINS OF CHINA

Xiyi Huang and Chen Guojie

MPE Series No. 19

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Foreword

The present discussion paper by Xiyi Huang and Chen Guojie, entitled "Off-farm Employment in Weizhou Township in the Hengduan Mountains of China", constitutes one of the six location-specific case studies of promising potential off-farm activities in mountain regions in the Hindu-Kash Himalayas. These case studies include handicrafts, livestock, and small-scale enterprises in the lowlands of Weichuan County, Sichuan Province (China), tourism and vegetable farming in Mustang and Lhasa districts (Nepal), and forest resource based activities in Shuang-Fu Sub-division, West District (Pakistan).

A major issue in mountain development is to create conditions that would help enhance the carrying capacity of the mountain resources and open opportunities for sustainable improvements in the living standards of mountain communities without degrading or exploiting the sensitive biota. This is where the promotion of off-farm activities is crucial.

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Foreword

The present discussion paper by Xiyi Huang and Chen Guojie, entitled "Off-farm Employment in Weizhou Township in the Hengduan Mountains of China", constitutes one of the six location-specific case studies of prominent/potential off-farm activities in mountain regions in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas. These case studies include horticulture, livestock, and small-scale enterprises in the townships of Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province (China), tourism and vegetable farming in Mustang and Dhading districts (Nepal), and natural resource based activities in Shangla Par Sub-division, Swat District (Pakistan).

A major issue in mountain development is to create conditions that would help enhance the carrying capacity of the mountain resources and open opportunities for sustainable improvements in the living standards of mountain communities without degrading or depleting the resource base. This is where the promotion of off-farm employment based on comparative advantages assumes such crucial significance in strategies for the development of the mountains. The critical issues, interlinkages and options in off-farm employment in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region have, therefore, been given primary importance in ICIMOD's programme on Mountain Population and Employment. As part of the programme ICIMOD collaborated with institutions and professionals from China, Nepal, and Pakistan to undertake the regional overview studies on the current state of off-farm employment. This was followed by area-specific case studies on prominent and potential off-farm activities. The regional overview studies are available as part of the Discussion Paper Series of the Mountain Population and Employment Division (MPE Series 12-14).

The case studies analyse and assess the current state of off-farm employment in the respective socioeconomic and resource contexts; identify factors that have inhibited or enhanced off-farm employment and income opportunities, trace the linkages of off-farm activities with the agricultural and other sectors, and present guidelines for the future development of potential off-farm opportunities.

These studies were made possible by a grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, for which I am extremely grateful. ICIMOD was also fortunate to have working on these studies professionals from national institutions in China, Nepal, and Pakistan. The methodological framework and the structure of the studies were mutually agreed upon by participating researchers. From ICIMOD's side the programme was coordinated and executed by Dr. Pitamber Sharma and Dr. Deepak Bajracharya (now with UNICEF).

Readers might be interested to know that all of the six case studies (including the present one) are published under the Discussion Paper Series of the Mountain Population and Employment Division. Also, the Report of the International Workshop on Mountain Off-farm Employment, held in Kathmandu in February 1992, in which these case studies were presented, discussed, and synthesised, has also been published by ICIMOD. ICIMOD is hopeful that these studies will contribute to a better understanding of the problems and prospects of off-farm employment in the mountains.

E. F. Tacke
Director General

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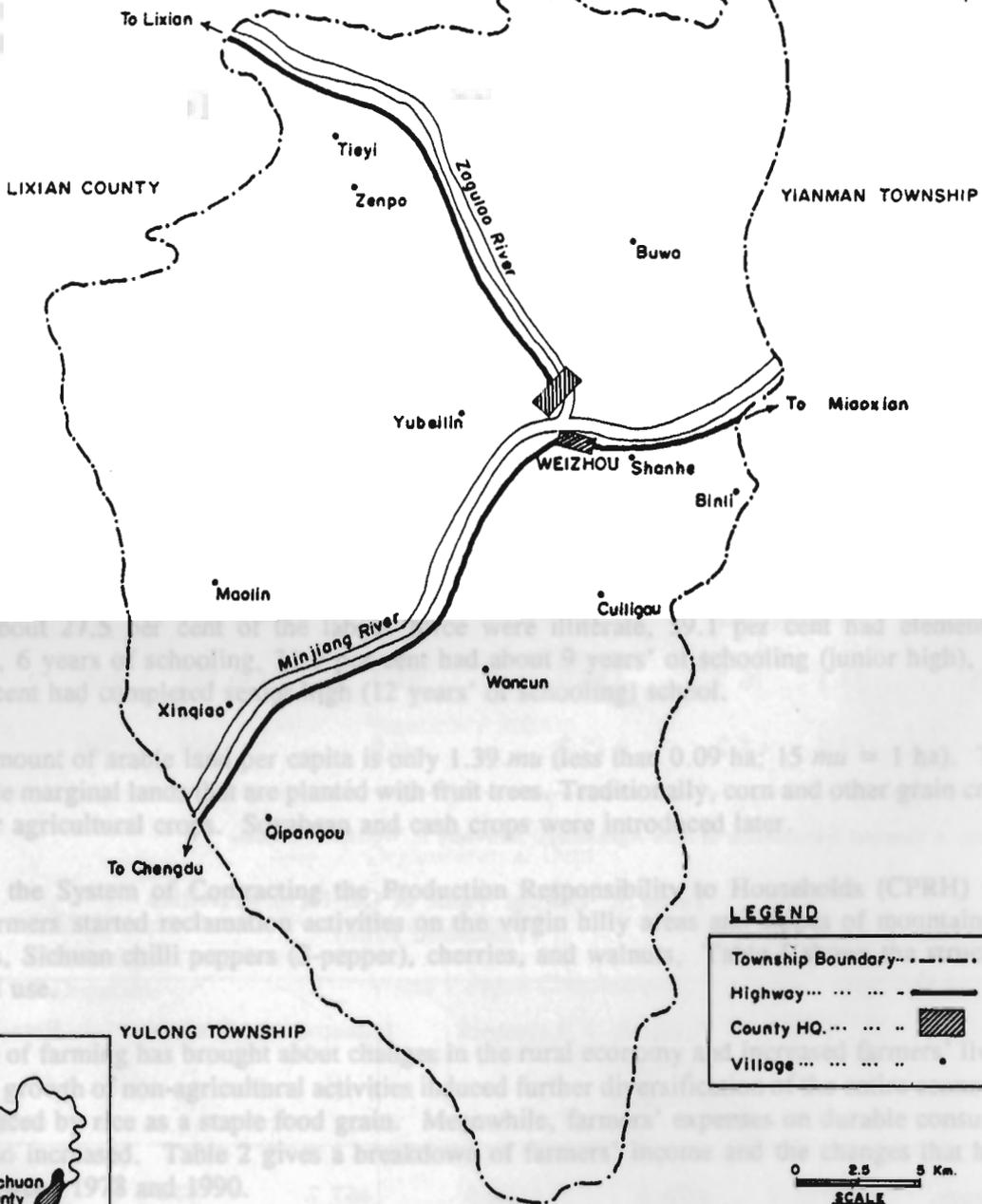
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Map 1

WENCHUAN COUNTY WEIZHOU TOWNSHIP



LEGEND

- Township Boundary ·····
- Highway ———
- County HQ. [hatched square]
- Village ·····

