

Land Policies, Land Management and Land Degradation in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas

Nepal Study Report

**Socioeconomic and Ethno-Political Research
and Training Consultancy (P) Ltd. (SEEPOR)**

**International Centre for Integrated
Mountain Development
Kathmandu, Nepal
2000**

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Preface

The Mountain Farming Systems' Division of ICIMOD, with support from the Global Mountain Programme, initiated a comparative study on the effect of land policies on land management and degradation in six regional countries; Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan; sharing the Hindu Kush-Himalayan mountain range. One study was commissioned in each country. The exception to this was India where two studies, one in the North-west and one in the Northeast, were conducted to capture the diversity and size of the Indian Himalayas. Each of the country studies was carried out by a team of experts from biological as well as socioeconomic disciplines.

The study was based on a concept paper developed by Professor Piers Blaikie in association with ICIMOD staff. The Team Leaders of the country studies came to ICIMOD in May 1997 to discuss the concept paper and agree on the methodology and operational aspects of the project. Each of the studies was to investigate four sectoral policies, e.g., Agriculture, Forestry, Wildlife and National Parks, and Tenure and Property Rights. Additionally, each study looked at the national and or provincial environmental policy and its implementation. The idea was to investigate thoroughly all the sectoral policies and their impact on land management. Each of the studies also chose one particular issue of interest for the country or area that had a significant impact on land management. The study period was between June-October 1997 and final reports were presented in a workshop at ICIMOD in early November. Subsequently, the reports were revised for publication.

We believe that, by publishing these studies, ICIMOD will facilitate an important contribution for a wider audience, in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region and beyond, who would benefit from the detailed information and analysis of this very important topic.

ICIMOD would like to acknowledge the contribution of Professor Piers M. Blaikie, of the University of East Anglia, U.K., in the design and implementation of this study. From within the Centre, Professor Blaikie was assisted by Dr. Syed Zahir Sadeque, Social Scientist, ICIMOD, and Dr. Tej Partap, Head, Mountain Farming Systems and Coordinator of the Global Mountain Programme at ICIMOD. In addition, a multidisciplinary advisory team of ICIMOD professionals, namely, Dr M.Banskota, Dr N.S.Jodha, and Dr T.S.Papola, provided valuable inputs during the study.

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We appreciate greatly the excellent cooperation received from Mr. P. Regmi, Soil Conservation Officer, Kaski District, and his staff during field visits. The local communities and VDC officials from the villages visited by the team were equally helpful, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

Abstract

This is a study about government land policies and their impact on land utilisation and management and on land degradation. Land policies in Nepal were, in general, found to have a negative impact on the majority of the population and cause land degradation. It is a mutually reinforcing process in which degradation has aggravated poverty and poverty has further exacerbated degradation. A review is first made of the overall national framework for guiding development efforts with due regard given to sustainability and maintenance of the environment. The various perspectives on land degradation are discussed and five key areas of concern selected for this study (agriculture, property and entitlement, forestry, national parks and wildlife, and decentralization are analysed). Performance in the country's leading economic sector, agriculture, is found to be unsatisfactory, while achievements in forestry and protected area management are mixed. Land ownership and tenure entitlements are unfavourable from both equity and efficiency perspectives. Finally, while there has been considerable rhetoric regarding participatory and bottom-up processes of resource management and decision-making, empowerment of local bodies through decentralization remains inadequate.

Acronyms

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank
AIDAB	Australian International Development Assistance Bureau
APP	Agricultural Perspective Plan
APROSC	Agricultural Projects Services Centre
AsDB	Asian Development Bank
CDO	Chief District Officer
CIDA	Canadian International Development Association
CPFD	Community and Private Forest Division
CFDP	Community Forestry Development Project
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CFUG	Community Forest User Group
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DFO	District Forest Officer
DFO	District Forest Office
DLS	Department of Livestock
DNPWC	Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOB, TU	Department of Botany, Tribhuvan University
DOF	Department of Forests
DOT	Department of Tourism
DSC	Department of Soil Conservation
DSP	Decentralization Support Programme
DRCFDP	Dolakha Ramechhap Community Forestry Development Project
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
FORESC	Forest Research Survey Centre
FRISP	Forest Resource Information System Project
FUGs	Forest User Groups
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
HMGN	His Majesty's Government/ Nepal

ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IDA	International Development Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IHDP	Integrated Hill Development Project
IOF	Institute of Forestry
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Project
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
JT	Junior Technician
JTAs	Junior Technical Assistants
KHARDEP	Koshi Hill Area Rural Development Project
KMTNC	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
KTWR	Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve
LAC	Lumle Agricultural Centre
LDO	Local Development Officer
LGP	Local Governance Programme
LRMP	Land Resource Mapping Project
MAB	Man and Biosphere Programme, UNESCO
MFS	Mountain Farming Systems' Programme
MFSC	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MPFS	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector
MPFSP	Master Plan for the Forestry Sector Project
MTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MOWR	Ministry of Water Resources
NACFP	Nepal Australia Community Forestry Project
NARC	Nepal Agricultural Research Council
NPC	National Planning Commission
NUKCFP	Nepal UK Community Forestry Development Project
NEPAP	Nepal Environmental Policy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NEA	Nepal Electricity Authority
NA	Not Applicable
NMCP	Northern Mountains Conservation Project
OP	Operational Plan
PDDP	Participatory District Development Programme
PDLT	<i>Panchayat</i> Development and Land Tax
PF	<i>Panchayat</i> Forest
PDO	<i>Panchayat</i> Development Officer
PPF	<i>Panchayat</i> Protected Forest
PPP	Parks and People Project
PWR	Parsa Wildlife Reserve

RBNP	Royal Bardia National Park
RCNP	Royal Chitwan National Park
RSWR	Royal Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMSs	Specialised Subject Matter Specialists
T&V	Training and Visits
TCN	The Timber Corporation of Nepal
TU	Tribhuvan University
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WECS	Water and Energy Commission Secretariat

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