

Inaccessibility

The remoteness of mountain areas and difficulties associated with travel there for persons from lowland capitals and market centres have contributed to an isolation of these areas. The high costs of transportation and, therefore, investment in the mountains and minimal communication with urban and regional centres have resulted in the exclusion of these areas from the development programmes and commercial growth that are occurring in non-mountain regions. These include the provision of government services in the health, education, and agricultural extension sectors. The result is that mountain residents must themselves go out from their homes to gain access to the knowledge and services needed for improvement in their lives. Yet, due to their isolation ("backwardness"), they often lack the confidence to take the

initiative and request the services that they are rightfully owed as national citizens. If this is the case for men in mountain communities, for women it is all the more difficult. Due to cultural traditions, women do not usually travel outside of their immediate surroundings, nor speak to strange men, and generally lack the confidence to approach officials with requests.