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Mountain Farming Systems
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Strategies for Sustainable Mountain Agriculture in the Middle Hills of Nepal

CASE STUDY

Sugandha Shrestha and Yamun Yadav

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

1992

...system Bank
...culture in the
...of mountain
...scheduling, and
...was developed. This help
...productive agriculture.

...production and resource
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Sugandha Shrestha is a Staff Member of the MFS Division, ICIMOD, and Yamun Yadav is the Project Director, FAO/Women Development Division, Jawalakhel.

Middle Mountains of Nepal. Conducted from 1988 to 1990, these field studies focused on the current status and emerging directions of mountain farming systems. To cover broadly different agro-ecological zones, three types of farming systems were studied. They included (i) an annual crop-dominated farming system, (ii) horticultural crop-dominated farming system, and (iii) livestock-dominated farming system. Despite demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences among different countries these types of farming system showed considerable similarities, especially with reference to emerging sustainability scenarios as a result of rising pressure on mountain resources.

It can be added that these studies sponsored by ICIMOD and conducted by national experts from the respective countries are not strictly uniform in terms of descriptive coverage of issues and depth of analyses. They are published as such with necessary language editing.

Preface

The Mountain Farming Systems' Division at ICIMOD, with support from the Asian Development Bank and the Ford Foundation, commenced work on strategies for sustainable mountain agriculture in the countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region in 1988. Focussing on the imperatives of mountain characteristics such as inaccessibility, fragility, diversity, marginality, human adaptation mechanisms, and 'niche', a conceptual framework called the Mountain Perspective Framework was developed. This help assess the sustainability implications of public policies and programmes for mountain agriculture.

Using the same framework, attempts were made to examine farmers' production and resource management practices, their adaptations to the aforesaid specific mountain conditions, and their responses to development interventions. This was done through field studies of various farming systems in selected areas of China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.

The focal issue emphasised, in reviews of both agricultural policies and programmes and farmers' practices and responses, was the degree of match or mismatch between attributes of public and private (i.e., farmers') interventions in mountain areas, on the one hand, and imperatives of mountain conditions, on the other. This could serve as a first step towards assessing the sustainability implications of present resource use patterns in mountain areas. The major findings based on the above work are available through an ICIMOD publication entitled 'Sustainable Mountain Agriculture'¹.

Detailed versions of the empirical material synthesised and incorporated by the above publication are disseminated separately. A major part of this material is comprised of studies of farmers' strategies in selected areas: West Sichuan (China), Chitral (NWFP, Pakistan) Himachal Pradesh (India), and the Middle Mountains of Nepal. Conducted from 1988 to 1990, these field studies focussed on the current status and emerging directions of mountain farming systems. To cover broadly different agro-ecological situations, three types of farming systems were studied. They included (i) an annual crop-dominated farming system, (ii) horticultural crop-dominated farming system, and (iii) livestock-dominated farming system. Despite demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences among different countries these types of farming system showed considerable similarities, especially with reference to emerging unsustainability scenarios as a result of rising pressure on mountain resources.

It can be added that these studies sponsored by ICIMOD and conducted by national experts from the respective countries are not strictly uniform in terms of descriptive coverage of issues and depth of analyses. They are published as such with necessary language editing.

This report provides details on the farming systems in the Middle Hills of Nepal.

¹ N.S. Jodha, M. Banskota, and Tej Partap (eds). *Sustainable Mountain Agriculture*, Vol. I - Perspectives and Issues, Vol. II - Farmers' Strategies and Innovative Approaches. Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Company (P) Ltd., 1992.

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