



# *Applied Ethnobotany in Natural Resource Management- Traditional Home Gardens*

**Highlights of a Training Workshop  
held at  
Kohima, Nagaland, India  
18-23 June 1997**

*Editors*

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Archana Godbole  
Pei Shengji**

**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
1998**

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## Foreword

The Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region has unique importance because of its diverse biophysical environment and the extremely rich culture of its inhabitants belonging to hundreds of ethnic groups and indigenous communities. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has a strong commitment to sustainable development of this region and has strong links with government as well as non-governmental institutions in the regional member countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ICIMOD, with financial assistance from the International Development Agency of Denmark (DANIDA), have launched a three-year programme to develop the field of ethnobotany applied to indigenous management and conservation of plant resources through capacity building, supporting research and promoting action-oriented field projects.

The need for training workshops is emphasised under this project to orient field researchers towards applied ethnobotanical work in conservation and community development. Five such national and sub-regional training workshops were organized in the ICIMOD member countries in close cooperation with national organizations. In order to focus discussion during the course of the workshops and to present appropriate field techniques and methods for applied ethnobotanical work, each workshop was assigned a definite theme. In the case of north-eastern India, the theme was traditional home garden systems. Home gardens are known to supplement swidden farming practices prevalent in most traditional mountainous societies around the world. With this in view, the workshop report includes an overview of current research in home garden systems as well as analyses of the approaches followed in these diverse traditional systems.

The Nagaland Environmental Protection and Economic Development (NEPED) Project of the Government of Nagaland hosted the workshop. This project, undertaken with financial assistance from the International Development Agency of Canada (CIDA), is actively engaged in promotion of improved agroforestry techniques building upon the traditional knowledge and skills of native farmers. Organization of the workshop was further facilitated by the Applied Environmental Research Foundation, an organization pioneering action research in applied ethnobotany and assisting NEPED on botanical aspects of the programme. Participants and resource persons came from many diverse institutions representing the north-eastern mountainous states. The Uttar Pradesh Academy for Administration, a partner institution of ICIMOD in the Uttarakhand region of the State, also contributed by sending two staff members from their Mountain Cell to participate in the workshop.

It is hoped that the network of people actively involved in applied ethnobotanical work in the region and those who came together as a part of the workshop will further benefit by the publication of this report. The publication will also make a useful contribution to the recognition of indigenous knowledge of the local communities particularly in management of home garden systems. At a broader

level, it gives the underlying message that true participation of local communities for the benefit of society can only be brought about by incorporating their traditional skills in community development and conservation projects.

Egbert Pelinck,  
Director General

# Acknowledgements

The workshop agreement was made at a meeting between Mr A.M. Gokhale, Chairman, NEPED Steering Committee, and Mr Egbert Pelinck, Director General, ICIMOD at Nagaland Bahavan in New Delhi on 19 July 1996. Their full support to the successful organization of this workshop is appreciated. The visionary leadership of the NEPED team leader, Mr R. Kevichusa, and the dedication of all other members of the project operations' unit are duly acknowledged. The opportunity of sustained interaction with the four local experts was extremely rewarding for other participants, and they are thanked for their time and patience. Many Naga villagers of Khuzama, Zulake, Khonoma, and all the vendors from the local market of Kohima town parted with pieces of wisdom during discussions during field work and, without their positive interest and participation, it would not have been possible to carry out the exercises successfully. The support of Dr Robert Hoeft and Dr Yildiz Aumeeruddy, coordinators of the People and Plants initiative based in UNESCO, is duly acknowledged. Many colleagues at AERF and ICIMOD assisted in the successful organization of the workshop and their help is appreciated and acknowledged.

# Abstract

A training workshop on applied ethnobotany at Kohima in Nagaland was organized jointly by ICIMOD, NEPED and AERF covering various aspects of nature conservation and community development projects and utilising home gardens as a thematic focus. Twenty-two participants and resource persons from all over the north-eastern states of India came together to share their experiences and learn about research approaches in the field of ethnobotany. The report, 'Applied Ethnobotany in Natural Resource Management: Traditional Home Gardens', highlights the aspects of traditional knowledge in household production systems. Home gardens are known to complement swidden agriculture and animal husbandry practices utilising land and other resources extremely efficiently in mountain areas. Involvement of local experts to talk about indigenous knowledge aspects during the course of discussions on various topics proved very helpful for clarifying many concepts and issues that surfaced during the workshop. The report consists of three main sections. An introductory section provides relevant background information and introduces the theme of the workshop in detail, and the second section provides an overview of research and approaches to analysing home garden systems. The third section provides information on various field visits, an account of interactions with NEPED, and orientation to the market survey exercise. Five annexes give details of survey formats, programme of the workshop, participant information, and workshop evaluation.

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