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Enterprise-based Transformation of Hill Agriculture

*A Case Study of Vegetable Growing Farmers
in Garampani Area, Nainital District, India*

K.N. BADHANI

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K.N. Badhani

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Preface

Development experiences in most of the mountain areas of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region, over the past decades, have shown that the prevailing predominant mode of their economies – subsistence agriculture – is becoming increasingly unsustainable both economically and ecologically. Diversification of economic activities into products and services, for which these areas offer a comparative advantage, through enterprise-based production for the market is considered necessary for sustaining livelihoods and alleviating the poverty of the rapidly increasing population. It is in this context that ICIMOD established a programme on Development of Micro-enterprises in Mountain Areas with the objectives of identifying constraints and opportunities and developing policy, programme, and training guidelines for enterprise development in hill and mountain areas of the HKH region. As part of this programme, the Centre has commissioned a number of studies in different countries and areas of the HKH region with a view to documenting experiences of development and functioning of enterprises covering different aspects such as comparative advantage of products, processes, and factors in enterprise development, technology, credit, marketing, and development of entrepreneurial skills as well policies and programmes by government and non-government agencies for promotion of enterprises.

The present paper 'Enterprise-based Transformation of Hill Agriculture', by K.N. Badhani, is one in this series of studies. It is being published with the hope that it will be found useful by those engaged in research and development, policy-making, programme formulation, and implementation for the promotion of enterprises, as well as by the present and potential entrepreneurs in their respective activities.

T. S. Papola
Head
Mountain Enterprises and Infrastructure Division

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K.N. Badhani

Abstract

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The farmers of Garampani area of Nainital District in the Central Indian Himalayas have developed specialised skills in cultivating off-season vegetable crops. The present study was conducted to identify the factors and circumstances leading to the switch over by farmers from subsistence to commercial crops, the process of change and adoption, economic impact of change, and its replicability factor.

The study suggests that the existence of a primary market at Nainital was the main factor that induced the farmers from the proximate villages to adopt vegetable farming, and gradually this process of transformation diffused to other villages. Many socioeconomic and behavioural factors influenced the pace and extent of adoption. Markets developed almost autonomously with the increase in the volume of production.

Currently, vegetables are grown in 63 per cent of the area under cultivation. It has increased the farmers' income 2.72 times and direct employment 2.69 times. It has rectified, to a great extent, the unequal distribution of workloads among males and females and checked the rate of migration. However, vegetable growers of the Garampani area are facing many difficulties and need scientific consultation and assistance to resolve them.

Experiences from the Garampani area suggest that the sustainability of mountain agriculture can be ensured by adopting off-season vegetable crops. However, this would need a scientific plan of action in order to maintain a balance among farming, animal husbandry, and natural resources.

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