

SEABUCKTHORN

A Multipurpose Plant Species for Fragile Mountains



Lu Rongsen

ICIMOD OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 20

Kathmandu, NEPAL
1992

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ICIMOD, with its geographical mandate extending to countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, attempts to facilitate ecologically and economically sound development of mountain areas. The centre carries out its mandate through problem-oriented applied research, knowledge exchange, information management and capacity building. The centre's primary concern is to provide a platform for the exchange of information relevant to mountain development. The centre's primary concern is to provide a platform for the exchange of information relevant to mountain development. The centre's primary concern is to provide a platform for the exchange of information relevant to mountain development.

One such successful experience is the development and launching of the first journal of mountain development, *Journal of Mountain Development*. This journal is a widely distributed quarterly journal of mountain development and is the international journal of mountain development.

China, through systematic research, has developed a unique and innovative approach to mountain development. The Chinese have not only recognized the importance of mountain development but have also made significant contributions to the development of mountain development.

This paper, written by Rongsen Lu, examines the Chinese experience in mountain development. It is a valuable contribution to the understanding of mountain development. The paper is a valuable contribution to the understanding of mountain development. The paper is a valuable contribution to the understanding of mountain development.

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Published by
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Cover photograph: The Golden Glow of Seabuckthorn Fruit.
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Published by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

G.P.O. Box 3226,

Kathmandu, Nepal

ISBN 92-9115-030-0

Typesetting at ICIMOD Publications' Unit

Printed at:

Nepal Lithographing Co. (P) Ltd.

Lazimpat Plaza, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Foreword

ICIMOD, with its geographical mandate extending to countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region, attempts to facilitate ecologically and economically sound development of mountain areas. The centre carries out its mandate through problem-oriented applied research, focussed training, organised exchange, and dissemination of information relevant to mountain development. One focussed activity of ICIMOD in its current phase of work is to identify successful development experiences in mountain regions, to examine the preconditions of their success, and to facilitate replication of such success in other parts of the HKH Region. These success stories cover technological innovations, institutional initiatives, and resource management systems.

One such successful experience is the development and harnessing of the vast potential of seabuckthorn (*Hippophae L.*). This shrub-tree is widely distributed throughout the temperate zones of Asia and Europe and in the subtropical zones of Asia at higher altitudes.

China, through systematic research, has succeeded in utilising and managing wild stands of seabuckthorn and in cultivating them in well-managed, commercial plantations. The Chinese have not only rehabilitated fragile slopes using this soil-building and soil-binding plant but have also used it to manufacture several products of high value.

This paper, besides introducing the plant, summarises the Chinese experience in utilising and cultivating seabuckthorn, which is of relevance to other similar areas in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas where economically viable alternatives are very limited. In this context, it should be pointed that, besides seabuckthorn, there are many more underutilised plant species of potential value about which our present knowledge base is extremely poor. The need for a systematic search for these genetic resources and their underlying ethnobotanical characteristics and their development in an economically and environmentally sound manner will be an important step towards the promotion of biodiversity across these mountain areas. ICIMOD will continue to support this search and build up the knowledge base on underutilised plant resources of mountain areas.

The purpose of this paper is to disseminate the Chinese experience to other parts of the HKH. The paper is complemented by a 20 minute video film that helps generate awareness about the high income potential source for high mountains where not many options with high payoffs exist. Some sensitisation among mountain development agencies has already taken place through the above film and through circulation of the preliminary draft of this paper. Some explanatory work and training activities involving seabuckthorn have also been initiated. These activities are being undertaken as a part of the work under the Mountain Farming Systems' (MFS) Programme of ICIMOD. Professor Lu Rongsen, who has had more than a decade's work experience on seabuckthorn, deserves to be congratulated for this piece of work.

E. F. Tacke
Director General

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