AGROFORESTRY IN MOUNTAIN AREAS OF THE HINDU KUSH-HIMALAYAN REGION

Jeannette Denholm

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This paper, which was commissioned by FAO and prepared by ICIMOD, examines the agroforestry practices in the Himalayan Region. It provides information on existing indigenous systems, agricultural policies, and institutions. The various forms of indigenous agroforestry and the traditions of mountain agriculture are described in detail. It is hoped that this paper will be useful to those who are concerned with the development of mountain agriculture and forestry in the Himalayan Region.

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Forestry and agroforestry systems in the Region were reviewed and field visits were made to provide information on the present and potential. The discussion of agroforestry systems is based on the information that was available. The author has neither attempted nor intended to offer a critical appraisal of the present situation, nor has he sought to identify the present and potential of agroforestry in the Region.

Such information on field systems is difficult to obtain. According to one report in the FAO, although many reports are available, they are incomplete or inconsistent with those of the present or region of origin. The literature, thousands of articles have been published in Indian journals, but these are not always known to researchers outside India. Similarly, Chinese reports are increasingly becoming of the language barrier. An ongoing collection of such papers documents at ICIMOD should provide more data with which to work information in the future.

The author expresses his gratitude to the author, Mr. Francisco Delgado, for his assistance in the preparation of this study. He also expresses his appreciation for the material provided from ICIMOD and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

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Cover photograph: This farm in Central Bhutan exemplifies a typical farming system of the HKH Region relying on extensive use of croplands, forests, grasslands and hedgerows in an integrated manner as an agroforestry system (J. Denholm).

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Foreword

This paper, which was commissioned by FAO and prepared by ICIMOD, assesses the agroforestry situation in the Himalayan Region. It provides information on existing indigenous systems, agroforestry programmes, policies, and institutions. The various forms of indigenous agroforestry and the tradition of communal management of natural resources illustrate the potential for more widespread promotion of agroforestry in the region as an appropriate land use system.

Forestry and agroforestry experts in the Region were contacted and asked to provide documentation on projects and procedures. The discussion of agroforestry systems is based on the documentation thus made available. The author has neither attempted nor intended to offer a critical appraisal of the projects' effectiveness, but has merely stated their objectives and activities as reported in project documents.

Such information on field experience is difficult to obtain. According to one expert in the field, although many reports do exist, they are inaccessible to researchers other than those of the country or region of origin. For instance, hundreds of articles have been published in Indian journals, but these are not always known to researchers outside India. Similarly, Chinese reports are inaccessible because of the language barrier. An ongoing collection of such project documents at ICIMOD should provide researchers with easier access to such information in the future.

We wish to express our gratitude to the author, Ms. Jeannette Denholm, in recognition of the value of this study. We are grateful for the support received from colleagues at both ICIMOD and the Environment and Policy Institute of the East-West Center during the preparation of the report. Special thanks are extended to N.S. Jodha, Jefferson Fox, Larry Hamilton, Terry Rambo, and Michael Dove for their valuable contributions.

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