



APPLIED ETHNOBOTANY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SUBREGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP
ON APPLIED ETHNOBOTANY
AT BANGLADESH FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CHITTAGONG
(DECEMBER 17-22, 1997)

Editors

R L Banik

M K Alam

S J Pei

A Rastogi

Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI)

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FOREWORD

There is an ever-increasing body of conservation and development scientists as well as policy makers that subscribe to the view that planning for biodiversity conservation should focus on effective integration of the natural and the social capital. The wealth and diversity of biological and physical resources that constitute the natural capital are under varying degree of direct and indirect utilisation by the communities in the mountains, and beyond through highland-lowland linkages. The concept of social capital underlies a growing understanding that capital today is to be equated with the knowledge and skills of human beings. It has to do with the ability of people to associate with each other and is critical to supporting their livelihoods. The interactions between the mountain people and natural system have helped in maintaining the richness of the species, communities and genetic materials in both productive systems and wild lands of the mountain environment.

The Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region has unique importance by way of its diverse biophysical environment and extremely rich indigenous cultural milieu 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: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and ICIMOD, with financial assistance from International Development Agency of Denmark (DANIDA), have launched a three year programme to develop the field of ethnobotany applied in indigenous management and conservation of plant resources through capacity building, supporting research and promoting action oriented field projects.

The need of training workshops under this project is emphasized to orient the field researchers for applied ethnobotanical work in conservation and community development. Five of such national and subregional training workshops were organised in the ICIMOD member countries in close cooperation with concerned national organisations. The Special Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Environment of Forests, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh authorised Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) to conduct this sub-regional training workshop on the request of ICIMOD. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Royal Government of Bhutan nominated senior officers to participate. Other participants and resource persons came from various other national organisations in Bangladesh with a strong presence of the officials of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board. It is the cooperative spirit and commitment of all the participating institutions that enabled ICIMOD and BFRI to jointly organise this successful workshop.

It is hoped that the network of people actively involved in applied ethnobotanical work in the region and those who have come together as a result of the workshop would further benefit with the publication of this report and strengthen applied ethnobotanical research leading to recognition and incorporation of local knowledge systems in the conservation and development programmes.

Egbert Pelinck,
Director General
ICIMOD Kathmandu, Nepal

PREFACE

Ethnobotany is the traditional botanical knowledge of the people. It has become as an important science in recent years, because of its vast treasure of indigenous knowledge. This important indigenous knowledge is being rapidly lost as natural ecosystem are being destroyed. Dependence of our livelihood on plants needs not to be mentioned here.

The traditional utilisation of biologically diverse resources not only reflects the diverse use pattern, but also the way of different land use, management and conservation pattern. There is now growing recognition for the relevance of ethnobotanical knowledge and its potential role in the design of sustainable development and alternative economic options. It is also recognised that indigenous knowledge can reduce research cost significantly.

Acknowledging the biological and ethnical diversities, and pronounced interaction between forest and hill people, a **Sub-regional Training Workshop on Applied Ethnobotany** was planned for field level researchers, foresters, teachers, development workers and planners from Bangladesh and Bhutan under the collaborative partnership of Hindu Kush-Himalayan Ethnobotany Project of ICIMOD. Accordingly, it was held during 17-22 December 1997. Bangladesh Forest Research Institute, Chittagong had the opportunity to host it. The major objectives of the workshop were human resources development in ethnobotanical field and capacity building in designing and implementing applied ethnobotany projects for community based sustainable resource management and development. **APPLIED ETHNOBOTANY** is the outcome of this workshop. I believe systematic organisation of thematic papers on General introduction to applied ethnobotany, Methodologies and approaches, Non-timber forest products, Ethnobotanical enterprises will help the researchers and development workers in designing, planning and conducting ethnobotanical research. Chapter on Bamboo and rattan resources will also throw lights on propagation, indigenous management system and participatory conservation of these resources in Bangladesh. Reports on field visits incorporated in this book have given an idea on the ethnobotany of Marma tribe from Bangladesh.

This proceeding is the outcome of the efforts of the workshop participants, resource persons, guest speakers, staff members of ICIMOD and my colleagues from this institute. I am very much thankful to them.

I believe this book will certainly help the workers of this region and raise the standard of their ethnobotanical research.

M. A. Sattar
Director
Bangladesh Forest Research Institute
Chittagong

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