
Book Review

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Chapagain, Prem Sagar. 2009. *Agriculture and Environment in the Eastern Nepal Himalayas*, VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, Germany, pp 166 + viii, acknowledgements, tables, figures, pictures, diagrams, reference and annex, paperback, price not quoted.

'Agriculture and Environment in the Eastern Nepal Himalayas' is an important book that deserves attention for many reasons. Agriculture and environment are two main present-day global concerns. Nepal is an agrarian country and agriculture is the main livelihood base of people. It has significant role in terms of both employment and domestic product. Identification of the processes and factors for transformation of agriculture is essential for its development. Environment is also the important factor determining the agricultural production and overall lives and livelihoods. The issue of agricultural reform has remained a major concern of the government with a view of poverty reduction for many decades. This book has made an attempt to highlight on agriculture and its transformation processes and associated factors focusing the situation of three villages of Ilam district in Eastern Nepal.

This book is organized in eight Chapters. All the chapters are arranged sequentially. The first chapter provides general background of the study followed by the main research agendas and the organization of the book. To understand and frame the changes in farming system and their impact on different aspects of the society is the main objective of the study. It points out the changes between 1980 and the present and their impacts on socio-economic and environmental aspects of the study area.

The second chapter provides methodological details. This chapter is divided into three sub-sections. The first section presents different agricultural systems of the world. The second section deals with different theories related to agricultural change. These include population induced agricultural change and accessibility and market induced agricultural change. The third section deals with data collection methods. The study is mainly based on qualitative

methods. The study is confined on three villages of Namsaling village development committee (Yolmu, Yakha and mixed village) in Ilam district. The analysis is based on interpretative approach.

Third chapter is devoted in highlighting physical, social and economic characteristics including infrastructure and services. Location, site and slopes are described in physical characteristics; caste/ethnicity, population size and composition are covered in social characteristics. Road connections and institutions available in the village are also described.

Chapter four concentrates on traditional agricultural practices. This chapter is divided into 11 sections. The first and second sections define household and discusses on division of labor. Likewise, third section presents the local scheme of land classification (*khet*, *Bari*, *pakho*, forest, *bhir* and *pahara*). Forth section deals with land tenure system and the fifth focuses on major crops grown in the study area. Sixth section deals with cropping pattern including cropping calendar. Seventh section deals with processes and practices of farming through land preparation to the harvesting. Likewise, section eight concentrates on livestock including fodder. Market, institution and ritual aspects of farming are discussed in subsequent sections.

Chapter five is devoted in analyzing modern farming system. This chapter is also divided into seven sections. General introduction of modern farming system is discussed in the first section followed by land types and use pattern, land holding and ownership in the second. The third section deals with major cash crops and dairy cow. Labor management, production and productivity of cash crops and household income including expenditure pattern are

discussed in section 4-6. The role of market, infrastructure and institutions for agricultural transformation is discussed in the seventh section.

Chapter six concentrates on analyzing factors and processes of agricultural change. This chapter is divided into three sub-sections. Accessibility and market center development, local knowledge and availability of different types of land, off-farm income activities and schooling of children, the forward linkages and information, and institutional and political factors are described as the factors of agricultural change. Market and accessibility, ecological diversity, off-farm income and social linkages, institutional and political linkages are identified as process of agricultural transformation.

'Conceptualizing the agricultural change' is dealt in chapter seven. This chapter is divided into six sub-sections. The first section provides conceptual background followed by population resource relationship in the subsequent sections. Accessibility and market induced agricultural change, the issue of environmental sustainability and the local farming practices are also discussed. Factors of agricultural transformation are also discussed.

Despite in-depth analysis of agricultural systems with review and detail theoretical discussions this book is not devoid of limitations. Some of the limitations and mistakes observed in this book are as:

- The author has considered three ecological belts or zones (page 53 and 54) for three study villages on the basis of altitude and microclimates. This makes confusion for the reader.
- In some places title in content and title in the text are not matched. For example, subtitle written as 'organization of the book' in page 5 but it is 'organization of thesis' in the content page.

- Some of the diagrams are provided with unnecessary titles. The same title is given inside and outside the borderline of the diagram (page 77). Some of the diagrams are not clear. For example, diagram 4.2 (page 59) is not clear. Some words in this diagram are hidden. Likewise, figure 6.2 (page 123) is also not clear. In this diagram, captions are not clearly visible.
- Inconsistencies in use of terminologies are also evident. In page 78 the term land holding is written as 'land-holding' while in other places it is not.
- The initial letters of words in the content are capitalized in some places while in others it is not.
- There are some inconsistencies and mistakes evident in reference citations. For example, it is referred as 'Turner and Bush (1978)' in page 9, but this is not listed in the references. Likewise, it is given as 'Saner et. al., 1981' (page 9, line 11) that is not correct form. The term 'ibid' has been used in many places but the author seems to have ignored its proper meaning.
- As in other books and publications the book is not devoid of print mistakes. Some of the print mistakes evident in the book are: "Phauda Bahadue' (page 22 line first) instead of Phauda Bahadur, Pashupatinagra (page 34 sixth line from the bottom) instead of 'Pashupatinagar', Gork (page 66) instead of Gorkhe, 'pata basi' (page 42, line 2nd from the bottom) instead of pata bari and 'bahngere (page 49 line first) instead of 'bhangere' (line10).

Though there are some limitations, the book is relevant and useful for researchers intending to investigate agriculture especially farming system. It proves helpful for students and policy/decision makers for knowing the processes and factors of agricultural transformation and its impact in household income. Therefore, this is a good contribution of the author for academics and others.