

Thesis Abstract of AGS Students

Gender roles in agroforestry system in the eastern hills of Nepal: Case study of salle village

Bijaya Bajracharya (1993)

The agroforestry systems practiced in eastern hills of Nepal including the major components of the systems, their uses and interaction are described. Salle village represents an example of low productivity agriculture surrounded by rapid environmental degradation as a result of deforestation.

This research identifies components of agroforestry systems and their interrelationships, gender division on agroforestry activities and impact of the existing tree planting program, conducted by PAC (Pakhribas Agricultural Centre), on women.

Data was gathered through formal survey, PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) and RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) with five different socioeconomic groups of farmers representing the whole village.

Results indicated strong interaction among the components i.e. crops, trees and livestock. Crops are the main components followed by livestock and trees. In the last five years, the number of small ruminants (goat, sheep) was found to be decreasing by about 48 per cent. This is related to the prohibition of using grassland (now under tree plantation) for grazing animals. On the other hand, new tree species such as *Pinus wallichiana*, *Quercus glauca*, *Castanopsis hystrix* and *Juglans regia* have been introduced. However, these species are not suitable to fulfill the village fodder requirement.

The substantial role of gender with particular reference to women in agroforestry systems of mid hills are highlighted. The study showed that women make important decisions and contribute their labor in household, farm, livestock and forestry activities. The degree of their involvement, however, vary among socioeconomic groups. It was found that, on average, women worked in various activities for 12 hours 49 minutes in a day while men worked 8 hours 5 minutes. The working time of both were observed to be longer in monsoon than in winter.

Women have a significant role in the management of tree species. Although most of the tree management activities like fodder and fuelwood collection and planting of saplings were observed to be generally performed by both (56 per cent), it was noted that 38 per cent of respondents reported exclusive involvement of women in these activities. The analysis of labor use patterns also indicated significant difference in the involvement of women as compared to men. Preference criteria for tree species were also different between gender. However, some tree species like *Saurauia napaulensis*, *Ficus roxburghii*, *Ficus nerifolia* and *Alnus nepalensis* were preferred by both men and women.

Overall, women as compared with men, involve more in agroforestry production and management activities. Tree plantation program conducted by PAC has brought some changes and consequences at Salle village. These include changes in livestock population, livestock management, availability of bedding material and some fodder and the division of labor. While the household changed from free grazing livestock system to stall feeding, the women find themselves with more work as children who once take care of the livestock are sent to school. In this context, the improvement of agroforestry systems in eastern hills of Nepal cannot be done without the contribution of women.

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