



Sustainable Land Management in the context of out-migration in Panchase area, Kaski, Western Nepal

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In the mountain areas of Nepal the migration of men to cities or abroad is very important and also increasing due to several reasons: unemployment, lack of education, fragmentation of land, low agricultural productivity and search for better lives among other reasons. This migration is leaving behind mainly elderly women, but also elderly men, wives and children, to deal with adapting to changing climate conditions alongside managing daily life: continuing their agricultural practices, maintaining terraces and irrigation canals, stabilizing slopes, etc. Migration also leads to a change in land use and often to abandonment of land. The research questions underlying this study are: what is the impact of migration on land and water degradation, especially in regard to land abandonment and land management practices?

The assessment of the consequences of migration in the area of origin is linked with a participatory and expert-based mapping and appraisal of land management practices. The mapping allows capturing the most important land degradation features as well as major land management practices / technologies, their spread, effectiveness and impact within a selected area. In combination with a variety of other bio-physical and socio-economic research methods, the mapping contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of those areas.

Preliminary findings show that migration has both negative and positive consequences in the area studied: positive consequences include strengthening of coping capacities, increased household income due to remittances, access to health and education, conservation of natural resources, and employment, in addition to possibly greater women empowerment. However, out-migration appears to have as well negative environmental consequences on land with high abandonment rate, on labour shortage, on the social fabric, where the elderly were traditionally cared for by younger families and on domestic violence, which has increased.

Migration is also leading to a loss of local and traditional knowledge about land management.

In light of these trends, the challenge for the populations studied will be on how to manage land considering changing demographics, uncertain climatic conditions, less available labour and lower food production in these mountain areas. This presentation will show the field work in Nepal containing results on the migration issues, sustainable land management practices and challenges as well as opportunities related to it.