

Land based livelihood in Baltistan, Pakistan

By Shagufta Jeelani, 2005

Abstract

This study explores level of dependency of the rural population on various sources of income (e.g. land, off-farm) and livelihood diversification patterns. The data for this study was collected in two villages; Khalangranga and Parang in district Skardu, Baltistan region, Pakistan. The area is rugged and mountainous with low vegetation cover. The primary data was collected using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods including household surveys, focus group discussions, and wealth ranking and village profiles. The findings reveal that more than 90% population in the study area depend on farming. Farming is the main livelihood option for rural communities. However it provides insufficient farm production to meet the needs. Poor households are more dependent on farm income compare to well off. As a result of the construction of KKH, land fragmentation, low farm productivity and increased population, households are diversifying their livelihoods toward off-farm opportunities. The distribution of income and opportunities are not equal for all wealth groups. Safety nets, mainly based on religious beliefs exist in the area and provide vital support for poor especially in times of crises. The households diversify their livelihoods mainly for two reasons, to reduce vulnerability and to accumulate wealth. As a result of low production coupled with other factors off-farm diversification has increased during the last twenty years. The underdeveloped market provides unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Livelihood diversification is higher among males compare to the females. The main constraints for women's livelihood diversifications are cultural norms, social restrictions, and lack of education. However this trend is changing as a result of NGO interventions and male migration.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of Master in Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture (MNRSA)

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