

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in a High Altitude Society in Kumaun Himalaya, India

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ABSTRACT Considerable effort has been made to study the resource use patterns of indigenous people with a view to understanding the traditional knowledge base of different ecosystems. This study has tried to explore the linkages between the subsistence economy and utilization and conservation of natural resources in the transhumant Bhotiya society of central Himalaya. These people are also aware that the biological diversity is a crucial factor in generating the natural resources on which they depend for their survival. Hence, they have domesticated a number of wild plants and crops, and have devised their own mechanisms for indigenous cattle production. These practices of conservation of their natural resources, has ensured their survival in extreme inhospitable environmental conditions of high altitudes. But, now their indigenous knowledge and practices are on the verge of extinction, due to the integration of their society with the main stream of other societies and market economy.

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