

Celebrating World Environment Day 2013

ICIMOD
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THREE DECADES
FOR MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE

Event: Dialogue Forum on 'Food Security and Poverty in Marginal Mountain Regions in the Himalaya: Globalization and Local Conditions'

Venue: Kangchenjunga Conference Hall, ICIMOD Headquarters, Khumaltar, Lalitpur

Date/Time: Wednesday 5 June 2013, 10:30–11:50



Highlights

- Announcement of the winning photos from the ICIMOD Digital Photo Contest 2013 'Water and Life'
- Short presentation on the Digital Photo Contest by Suman Jaiswal, ICIMOD

About Dr Jagannath Adhikari, Key Speaker

Dr Jagannath Adhikari has carried out and published a great deal of research on food security, resource management, agrarian change and migration, and livelihoods. His publications on food security include books like *Food crisis in Nepal: How Mountain People Cope* (1999), *Food Crisis in Karnali: A Historical and Politico-Economic Perspective* (2008), *Humla: Food Crisis and Underdevelopment* (2011), and *Decisions for Survival: Farm Management Strategies in the Middle Hills of Nepal* (2000). His most recent book is *Everyone is Leaving, Who Will Sow Our Fields: Impact of Migration to Malaysia and Gulf in Khotang District, Nepal*. He is currently a visiting professor at the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia and coordinates a research project on climate change and food security in South Asia.

Dr Adhikari's presentation is mainly concerned with why food insecurity and poverty still persist. It illustrates the strong connection people living in remote rural areas have to their surrounding ecosystems and their vulnerability to food security. For example, food insecurity and malnutrition problems have not been adequately dealt in regions like Karnali, the mid-western and eastern mountains of Nepal, and among indigenous communities like the Chepang. The present trend

of globalization has made these communities even more vulnerable in terms of food and nutritional security. Their resistance to change their food habits and inability to cope with the problems that market brings, especially in terms of access and quality combined with fluctuations in food prices have led to food and nutritional insecurity.

Moreover, their own production has declined because of intertwined causes of land degradation, declining biodiversity, labour shortages, and failing terms of trade with imports. The situation regarding food insecurity and poverty in similar areas in South Asia and China is also highlighted for a comparative perspective.

The paper argues that 'poverty' measurements, which give more emphasis to income, can be a poor indicator of sustainable food security. As experienced in Nepal, a decline in the 'poverty level' has not been matched by improvements in food and nutritional levels, as these are also related to sociocultural, political, and geophysical factors, including biodiversity and resource management.

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