Gender Dimensions of Rangelands Management in the greater Himalayas: Women’s Struggles and Marginalization

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Rangelands: Unique ecosystem in the greater Himalayas

Livelihoods
- 100 million women and men pastoralists & agro-pastoralists
- 1.3 billion people living downstream

Environmental
- Storage & regulate water
- Stabilize climate
- Protection against soil erosion
- Support for nutrient cycle

Cultural services
- Aesthetic
- Sacredness (religious & spiritual)
- Indigenous knowledge of resource management and use
• Rangelands in the greater Himalayas
• Research problem
• Gender and rangelands nexus
• Gender analytical approach
• Key findings
• Conclusions and ways forward
Study motivation

Rangelands **specificities**:
- High mountain, dry and harsh environment, fragility, marginality & pastoralism

**Multiple dimensions** of rangelands management
- Socio-cultural, livelihoods, institutional & environmental
- The sustainability of rangeland resources is linked with the context-specific knowledge and practices of men and women

**More studies from biophysical, livestock and institutional perspectives**
- Quality, productivity and economic dimension of rangelands
- Policy reform and institutional arrangement

**Limited analysis from a gender perspective**
Women and men pastoralists are amongst the **poorest in the world** (Kerven 2011)

- They live in remote areas and harsh environmental conditions, and are isolated from development, and forgotten in national policies.

**Gender differences:**

- Women and men differ in terms of access, use, ownership, and control over rangeland resources, as well as decision-making and division of labour (power relations) (Kristjanson 2010, Ridgewell 2007).

Multiple **drivers of change** in the greater Himalayas and its implications on gender relations (e.g. increased women's workload)
To what extent rangelands management and pastoral livelihoods practices in the greater Himalayas are gender sensitive and responsive?
Analytical dimensions

- **Inclusion & participation**
  - Membership in rangelands institutions (statutory and customary)
  - Participation in decision-making
  - Community's perception on gender roles

- **Gender equitable rangeland management & pastoral livelihoods**

- **Productive resources, ecosystem services & incentives**
  - Usufruct right
  - Ownership
  - Control

- **Rangelands policy, strategies & plans**
  - Access to information
  - Skills & knowledge
  - Division of role
  - Access to services (e.g. health, education)

- **Capacity strengthening**
Methodology

- **Seven case studies, 2010**: Nepal, Bhutan, India, China (Tibet Autonomous Region, Yunnan & Sichuan) and Pakistan

- **Focus group discussions**: Women and men

- **Key informants interview**: Village leaders, service providers

- **Policy review**: National rangeland policy and strategies
Dimensions of women's marginalization in rangelands:
A case study from Upper Mustang, Nepal
Case study area: Semi-arid Upper Mustang, Nepal

Characteristics

- Pastoralism type: Mixed mountain agriculture
- Tibeto-Burman social system
- Customary institution: Mukhiya
- Landscape with cultural significance
- Out-migration of men and youth
- Poor quality rangeland resources
### Unequal gender division of labour

**Women extremely work hard in rangelands**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Women’s labour</th>
<th>Men’s labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hrs/day</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water fetching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firewood collection</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking and serving meals</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and washing</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture production</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal husbandry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious ritual</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community meeting</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing and entertainment</td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inadequate access to natural resources

- Women's needs (e.g. firewood, forage, water) are **unmet**
  - Rangelands supply only 11% of the total firewood requirement
  - Women spend significant amount of time in collecting livestock dung for energy
  - Water scarcity increases women's time to fetch drinking water; sometime they experience fight among themselves

Photo: Manohara Khadka, ICIMOD
"We [women] have to be in a queue several hours to fetch water from a tap. Sometimes, we fight ourselves. It is always the women who have to worry about water for family. Men do not even know what kind of problems we face in water collection and how much we have to fight for it" (a woman pastoralist, Upper Mustang, Nepal, August 2010)
Inclusion & participation in rangeland governance

- **Women's exclusion**: Customary institution and decision-making (e.g. Mukhiya system)

- **Gender identity**: Men as heads of family, village leader and property owners, and women as 'household keepers'

- **Decision-making power**: Men hold decision-making power over animal husbandry, land use, including high-value crops (e.g. non-timber forest products and apple)
Institutional responses to addressing gender

- **No access to loan by women:** Gender identity is the main decisive factor

- **Gender blind service delivery** practices (e.g. no gender consideration in training related to pasture, animal husbandry, cropping). Service providers are gender insensitive.

Photo: Manohara Khadka, ICIMOD
"We organize technical training for farmers on animal husbandry and pasture management. Our role is to train them on technical issues, but not to care whether men or women come to training" (A government official, Mustang, July 2011)
Policy measures: Yet to realize gender issues

- **Government of Nepal** developed recently the "Rangeland Policy, April 2012". But, it is gender blind.

- Policy introduces many **development ideas** (e.g. value chain, community-based rangeland management, carbon trading, livelihood, climate change) and none of these ideas recognize gender issues (GON 2012).

- **Reduced access to rangelands** through declaration of rangelands areas under protected areas.
Conclusions

• In comparison to men pastoralists, women pastoralists in the case study areas are marginalized socioeconomically, environmentally and politically for many reasons. E.g.
  – Unequal gender division of labour,
  – Unequal power relations between men and women,
  – Conventional perception on gender roles,
  – Gender insensitive customary institutions,
  – Degraded rangelands,
  – Gender insensitive service delivery system

• Gender blind policy enforces women's marginalization
Ways forward

• **Technologies**: Labour reducing technologies related to energy & water. Gender responsive to address needs of women.

• **Policy**: Focus and inclusion of women and gender expertise in policy making.

• **Institutions**: Capacity strengthening with a special focus on making institutions accountable towards gender issues and increase women pastoralists' access to basic services (e.g. health, information, infrastructure, education).

• **Gender analysis** of rangeland management
Thank you