Agricultural innovation in Himalaya: Understanding local-level food system dynamics in response to food insecurity

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Abstract

Statement of the Problem: Farmers in the Himalayan region have been suffering from great challenges of poverty and food insecurity. A widely advocated strategy by diverse group of academics, researchers, multilateral and bi-lateral development stakeholders to cope with those challenges is to enhance farmers' innovative capacity. However, there is lack of systematic analysis that covers the broad aspects of local level agricultural innovation in the context of improving farmer's adaptive ability. At this point, this research particularly focuses on mapping innovative practices and analyzing the influencing factors as well as actors of farmers' innovative capacity. It also sets up a discussion on, to what extent farmers' innovative capacity make farmers more adaptive to the poverty and food insecurity.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Empirical evidences have been produced from fieldwork in 2016 employing household survey (n=50), group discussions (n=4), key informant interviews (n=10). The comparative case analysis between Majuwa (subsistence-oriented) and Aahale (market-oriented) farming villages from the Himalayan region was based on the theories of "innovation system" and "innovative place"

Findings: Study reveals that several innovative practices have been emerged in Aahale village during last ten years' duration. In this village, higher frequencies of innovativeness have been identified in off-season vegetable and livestock sectors in which interconnection between two succeeding new practices has been found. Based on the premise "the frequencies of actual innovations are the index of innovative capacity", it is conformed that market-oriented village has higher degree of innovative capacity than subsistence-oriented village. It has been concluded that actual innovations in agriculture might have triggered by compound and interrelated factors/actors such as farmers' education, trainings, availability of natural resources and higher accessibility. However, the interactive involvement of several supporting institutions has had significant influence in farmers' innovative capacity thereby farmers have coped best with poverty and food insecurity. Whereas gender and caste/ethnicity based social discrimination has enacted as social-cultural barriers of innovative capacity that has had indirect negative impact on food security.

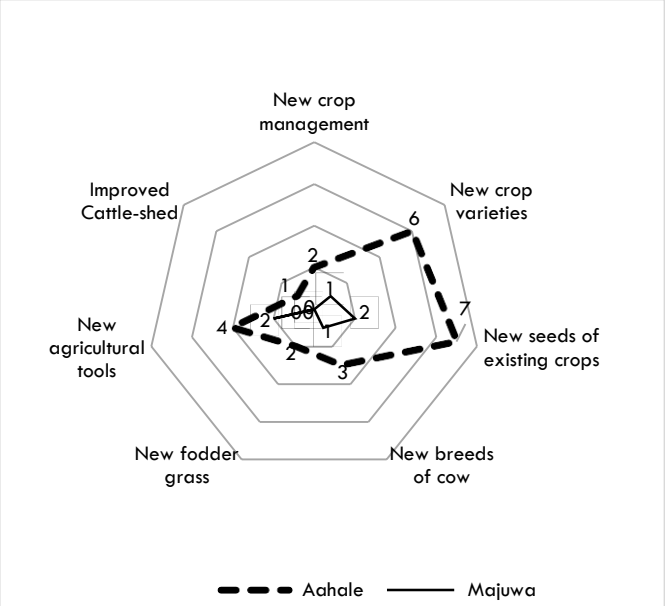


Figure 6.2 Agricultural innovations in Aahale and Majuwa

Publications

1. Adhikar, B (2012) Glacial Lake and Outburst Flood in Nepal Himalaya. The Geographic Base vol-4, 28-32.
2. Adhikari, B. and Chapagain, P.S (2013). A Study on Large Cardamom of Nepal. The Geographic Base vol-5, 28-32



Biography

Binod Adhikari is M.Phil candidate at the University of Bergen under the quota scholarship. He has completed his Bachelor's degree from Tribhuvan University of Nepal. His field of interest is Himalayan farming system, food security and sustainable development.

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