

The Last of Centuries Old Cardamom Farming in Eastern Nepal: Crop Disease, Coping Strategies and Institutional Innovation

Authors : K. C. Sony

Abstract : This paper investigates the coping strategies of households confronting disease in large cardamom (*Amomum Subulatum* Roxb.) in eastern Nepal. Cardamom farmers draw on various coping strategies to reduce the impact of crop disease in their livelihoods. Yet farmers face tremendous decline in production with a constant effort for revival. Past evidences provides dearth of information about coping strategies employed by farmers and institutional intervention to combat disease. Using factual data from Ilam district, and conducting a political economic analysis, this research addresses the gap by 1) understanding the impact of crop disease in farmers' livelihoods, 2) identifying the coping strategies adopted by farmers and, 3) examining the existing institutional arrangements to address the disease. Coping strategies vary by household's status defined by size of land, alternative income, and access to supporting institutions. Measures adopted are burning the cardamom field, changing land use pattern, diversifying crops, and visiting institutions for support. The local government's support is limited to providing trainings and producing new varieties of cardamom. During crisis, farmers expect institutions to help revive the cardamom production, despite customary practice to combat disease. To retain and improve the livelihoods of farmers, there needs to be institutional innovation at the community level and policies that endorse immediate and sustainable support during hazards.

Keywords : cardamom, coping strategy, disease, institutions, Nepal

Conference Title : ICSH 2016 : International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : May 16-17, 2016