

Prospects of Agroforestry Products in the Emergency Situation: A Case Study of Earthquake of 2015 in Central Nepal

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Abstract : Agroforestry is one of the main sources of livelihood among the people of Nepal. In particular, this is the only one mode of livelihood among the Chepangs. The monster earthquake (7.3 MW) that hit the country on the 25th of April in 2015 and many of its aftershocks had devastating effects. As a result, not only the big structures collapsed, it incurred great losses on fabrication, collection centers, schools, markets and other necessary service centers. Although there were a large number of aftershocks after the monster earthquake, the most devastating aftershock took place on 12th May, 2015, which measured 6.3 richter scale. Consequently, it caused more destruction of houses, further calamity to the lives of people, and public life got further perdition. This study was mainly carried out to find out the food security and market situation of Agroforestry product of the Chepang community in Raksirang VDC (one of the severely affected VDCs of Makwanpur district) due to the earthquake. A total of 40 households (12 percent) were randomly selected as a sample in ward number 7 only. Questionnaires and focus groups were used to gather primary data. Additional, two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were convened in the study area to get some descriptive information on this study. Estimated 370 hectares of land, which was full of Agroforestry plantation, ruptured by the earthquake. It caused severe damages to the households, and a serious loss of food-stock, up to 60-80 percent (maize, millet, and rice). Instead of regular cereal intake, banana (Muas Paradisca) consumption was found 'high scale' in the emergency period. The market price of rice (37-44 NRS/Kg) increased by 18.9 percent. Some difference in the income range before and after the earthquake was observed. Before earthquake, sale of Agroforestry, and livestock products were continuing, but after the earthquake, Agroforestry product sale is the only one means of livelihood among Chepangs. Nearly 50-60 percent Agroforestry production of banana (Mass Paradisca), citrus (Citrus Lemon), pineapple (Ananus comosus) and broom grass (Thysanolaena maxima) declined, excepting for cash income from the residual. Heavy demands of Agroforestry product mentioned above lay high farm gate prices (50-100 percent) helps surveyed the community to continue livelihood from its sale. Out of the survey samples, 30 households (75 percent) respondents migrated to safe location due to land rupture, ongoing aftershocks, and landslides. Overall food security situation in this community is acute and challenging for the days to come. Immediate and long term both response from a relief agency concerning food, shelter and safe stocking of Agroforestry product is required to keep secured livelihood in Chepang community.

Keywords : earthquake, rupture, agroforestry, livelihood, indigenous, food security

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