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Publications

• **Tropical forest resource dynamics and conservation - From local to global issues.**

Wiersum, K.F. (ed.) 2000. ISSN 0926-9495. 172 pp. Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, The Netherlands. Price: EUR 11.34 excluding fee for postage.

This is volume 33 in the series known as Tropical Resources Management Papers. It is itself a collection of papers that were presented at a symposium under the title 'Acts of man and nature: different construction of social and natural resource dynamics'. The papers are grouped under three themes: perspectives on the forest; land-use processes at the forest fringe; and forest conservation in the context of political and economic processes. Case studies come from all over the world.

The publication presents theoretical developments that have taken place in the social and natural sciences in the fields of:

- the management of common property;
- legal pluralism and political ecology;
- induced innovation and conflict negotiation.

The studies examine forest use by local communities in order to gain insight into the impact of social and political processes on forest degradation or conservation, and into the dynamics of land use at the forest fringe.

The book is a valuable source of information for researchers, policy-makers and students interested in forest resources and conservation and in issues involving indigenous knowledge. The socio-cultural structures of local populations are seldom taken into account in development policies. The book takes a new approach to issues of development and the management of scarce resources. The views of the rural population should always be taken into consideration.

This enhances partnerships, participation and the sharing of responsibility.

The book concludes that the gradual expansion of social research on tropical forest conservation and management to include examination of community-level processes will certainly continue in the future.

Publications of this nature make a significant contribution.

(Review by John W. Forje, Department of Political Science, University of Yaounde II Soa, and Senior Research Officer, Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research, Yaounde, Cameroon. E-mail: johnforje@hotmail.com)

• **Man and Forest series**

Seeland, K. & Schmithüsen, F. (eds) No. 1 (Man in the forest): 2000. 372 pp. ISBN: 8124601526. D.K. Printworld Ltd., New Delhi, India. Price: USD 30.00.

Jena, M.K., Pathi, P., Dash, J., Patnaik, K.K. & Seeland, K. No. 2 (Forest tribes of Orissa): 2001. 430 pp. ISBN 8124601895. D.K. Printworld Ltd., New Delhi, India. Price: USD 44.40.

The Man and Forest series comprises monographs on the use and management of forests as well as on forest livelihoods in various regions of South Asia. The series highlights the relevance of indigenous knowledge of forests and renewable natural resources in South Asian communities.

The inaugural volume takes a critical look at the benefits and limitations of IK in general, and forest management by local tribal people in particular. The second volume documents the Dongaria Kondh and their traditional knowledge of their natural and supernatural environment. Forthcoming volumes include Minor Forest Produce in Orissa, Forest Tribes of Orissa, Ethnobotany Among Selected Tribes of Orissa, and Forest Use in Nepal.

The editors welcome contributions covering relevant issues in the man-forest interface.

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• **Towards integrated soil fertility**

management in Malawi: incorporating participatory approaches into agricultural research

Kanyama-Phiri, G., S. Snapp, B. Kamanga and K. Wellard. February 2000. ISSN 1560 3520. Managing African Soils no. 11, IIED-Drylands Programme, Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Price: USD 7.

This publication describes two case studies of participatory research in soil fertility management in Malawi; a short-term (three-year) approach focusing on 'best bet' technologies in target villages in four different agro-ecological zones, and a long-term community-oriented approach (lasting more than five years) in a watershed located in southern Malawi. The first approach used a trial to satisfy both the researchers' and the farmers' requirements. Promising results were obtained from on-farm trials with intensified cropping systems incorporating legumes, particularly the option of growing a wide range of legumes with small amounts of mineral fertilizer. The second approach addressed the problem of eroded slopes used by farmers with limited access to resources. Results indicate that it is difficult to make progress on these degraded sites; legume-based technologies meet with little success without considerable input of mineral nitrogen fertilizer. Lower slope and valley sites performed better, but the main drawback here is the high investment in terms of labour.

The paper aims (1) to document farmers' indigenous knowledge of soil characteristics and management technologies; (2) to evaluate the effectiveness of participatory research methods, and (3) to articulate the priorities of smallholder farmers in order to improve future research in and development of soil fertility technology in Malawi. The authors succeeded only in meeting the second of these three objectives. Documentation of the indigenous knowledge of soil characteristics is restricted to a short list of farmers' criteria to characterize a soil's fertility. The priorities of smallholder farmers to improve future research in and development of soil fertility

management warrant only a few sentences in the concluding remarks of the paper. Nevertheless it is an interesting paper, particularly from the point of view of setting up useful participatory agronomic research trials in an African setting.

Full text available at: www.iied.org/drylands/pubs2.html

(Review by Otto Spaargaren, Head Documentation and Information Department, International Soil Reference and Information Centre, Wageningen, the Netherlands. E-mail: spaargaren@isric.nl)

• Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge

The National Institute of Science Communication (NISCOM), New Delhi (India), is publishing a new quarterly about traditional knowledge (TK). The first issue is over 80 pages thick.

The journal contains research papers, reviews, short communications etc. Its focus is mainly on India, with contributions on an enormous variety of subjects, such as traditional health care systems like *Ayurveda*, *Siddha* and Homoeopathy, and traditional practices in agriculture, architecture, metallurgy, etc. Articles on both scientific and home remedies are presented. The journal has full-colour photos and clear illustrations.

The editors hope to provide a viable platform for documentation of TK. It is stressed that this is very important, as the lack of documentation is one of the reasons for TK piracy. Along with Indilinga (see IKWW July/August 2002), this journal will supply such a platform.

Annual subscription (four issues) in India: INR 300, other countries: USD 100.

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