

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

the high mountainous cold arid region of Ladakh, located in Indian Trans-Himalaya. This remote region has been noticeably inaccessible and has seen a rapid transformation in the traditional subsistence-based economy in recent years with a trend towards livestock diversification. Based on semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions with agro-pastoral communities of the Nubra region and Nomadic pastoralist communities of the Changthang region in Ladakh, this paper discusses the nature and trends of socio-economic diversification and factors responsible for this shift. In addition to survey responses, archival data were used to provide additional historical context. This research also explores the nexus of climate change and socio-economic change, focusing on the significance of traditional agro-pastoral ecological knowledge in influencing resilience and adaptation strategies to the challenges posed by climate and socio-economic changes.

Traditional Buddhist institutions that are based on indigenous knowledge evolved in consonance with limited production possibilities. They were characterised by socio-cultural practices such as polyandry, inheritance through primogeniture and monastic way of life to ensure that balance remains between population and carrying capacity of the land and optimum utilisation of scarce resources. High mountain livelihoods have been changing due to a number of internal and external factors, including deployment of vast military set up in the region, opening up of the region for tourism, expansion of government and bureaucratic employment in the region, improved accessibility, connectivity, etc. food subsidies. Climate and socio-economic changes have brought both opportunities and challenges to agriculture and pastoralism. Local institutions play a vital role in managing resource utilisation, conservation, pasture management, local governance, conflict resolution, and improving adaptive capacity by providing ecological and socio-economic security.