

Submitted Abstract

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Title	Socio-Environmental Survey And Sustainable Management Of A Cinchona Plantation Village Situated In The Eastern Himalayas, India.
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Abstract

The Eastern Himalayas in India demonstrates diverse ecological characters in its varied range of flora and fauna. The local communities also form an integral part of the ecological landscape; deriving various services from the forest and mountain ecosystems. Many scattered hamlets are found in this zone and some of them are proximate to the forests enriched with endemic biodiversity. Wholesale (27°1'59" N, 88°51'45" E) is a small village situated in Kalimpong district, India and is proximate to Neora Valley National Park and Gorumara National Park. The village has 98 houses with a total population of 451 inhabitants. The village is one of the newest tourist destinations in the Eastern Himalayas. Wholesale village has extensive coverage of Cinchona plantation and is a part of Dalgaon division of Rongo cinchona plantation in West Bengal, established in 1938. A detail survey of the village was done in April, 2019 to explore the socio-environmental and socio-ecological dynamics of the landscape. Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews supplemented by field notes were arranged to collect data from the village. There was particular focus on agriculture, livestock management, traditional water management, waste management, disaster management, biodiversity and ecosystem services. The development of ecotourism was analysed through the number of homestays, modes of communication and promotion, tourist inflow data and ecotourism activities (trekking, bird watching, camping, rafting, cultural visits etc.). Biodiversity of the region was documented by visiting the forest areas in Neora Valley National Park and Gorumara National Park; possible threats to biodiversity were documented. Management strategies were suggested for conservation of forest biodiversity and sustainable development of the village areas. Coexistence of ecotourism and conservation measures can have significant impact on the sustainable development in the transboundary Himalayan landscapes. Detailed study is needed in the Eastern Himalayan villages to explore the socio-ecological dynamics in the context of climate change.