

Preface

It was October 2010 when our research plan for the project proposal on “Livelihood security in a changing socio-economic environment in Himachal Pradesh, India” was submitted to the Academy of Finland, the Research Council for Culture and Society. We supposed that the evaluation reports of the scientific panel groups from the Academy of Finland would be received by the following spring, in 2011. Already in 2009 the feasibility study had been surveyed during the 1-year preliminary research phase. At that time, we conducted the pilot study, defined the target areas, and further developed our collaboration between the University of Turku and the co-partner institutes, especially with the University of Delhi.

Therefore, it was a great pleasure to hear that our research plan had been approved by the Academy of Finland. This was in May 2011. The actual project was ready to start in September 2011. We focused our research on the roots of the Himalayan region: the state of Himachal Pradesh. Successful cooperation began with the University of Shimla and the Government Post-Graduate College, Chamba.

Through this research project, we have discovered factors in how livelihood security is going to be achieved in fast-growing and changing mountainous environments. Primarily, we integrated land cover and non-farming sector data as a common context to link interviews, field observations, and community participation.

The main outcomes of the research tasks are now published in this book, taking care to see that the results and these collected experiences are disseminated further. The findings of the research deal with the broader objectives of the changing patterns of agricultural production with special reference to diversification, as well as to forest-based livelihood outcomes, Clean Development Mechanism forest project activities, the roles of different ethnic groups and non-governmental organizations, and the benefits and shortcomings of tourism as livelihood sources. Conducting research together has also been a time for building capacity for the researchers and teachers in the partner universities and colleges.

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