

Preface

Many parts of the globe and innumerable social groups within it remain marginal even in the present era of globalization. Though various marginal societies have gained some prosperity, many are subjected to increasingly demanding market forces. While mountain regions and other marginal areas are becoming better known to the world, the majority of the residents within them are still facing challenges such as poverty, physical isolation, and social marginalization. The developmental initiatives undertaken by local government and planning institutions have often failed to significantly improve socioeconomic conditions in and between mountainous and other marginal areas and in their neighboring territories. The models of development imposed by outside agents have often undermined the needs and structures of local mountain societies and ultimately have often only served the causes of market forces.

The fate of marginal and mountain communities depends on the framework of national or international economic policies. It is worthwhile to mention that mountain regions are particularly vulnerable to open market policies, mainly because of their fragility and environmental sensitivity. They do not have equal access to the same social and political rights or the same opportunities for development. The conditions of marginality in its various shades are evident in the various modes of local and regional responses. The primary focus of this volume is to investigate the nature and processes of marginalization and the degree to which effective responses to such marginalization have been initiated, either from within affected areas or by outside organizations, both within mountainous and other marginal areas. In the context of globalization, it is important to acknowledge and understand the impact of climate change at different scales in mountain and marginal areas of the world. The local and regional impacts of climate change are of considerable importance in guiding and determining policy- and decision-making system. Three key processes, namely marginalization, globalization, and climate change, underlie the assessment of the challenges and opportunities which impact livelihoods in the mountainous and marginal areas of the world, and collectively, these considerations provide the basis for this book.

This volume has grown out of a number of papers presented at the International Geographical Union's (IGU) Commission conference held in Nainital, India, from May 1 to 9, 2011, jointly organized by the IGU Commission on Marginalization, Globalization and Regional and Local Response CO8.27 and the Department of Geography, DSB Campus, Kumaun University Nainital, India. The theme of the conference was "Local and Regional Responses to Globalization in the Mountains and Marginal areas of the World." It comprised three days of paper presentations, followed by a field trip to various parts of the Kumaun Himalaya, particularly to the Johar Valley to pay tribute to Pundit Nain Singh, a famous nineteenth-century explorer of Tibet, visiting his home regions Munsiri and Pithoragarh.

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