



Farmers' rights, local food systems, and sustainable household dietary diversification: A case of Uttarakhand Himalaya in north-western India

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ABSTRACT

The farmers and rural communities, world over, have contributed greatly in management of agrobiodiversity including plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). It is well accepted now that the efforts of farming communities in creation, conservation, exchange, and enhancement of PGR should be recognized and strengthened. Farmers' access and rights over seeds are considered an essential component of food sovereignty. In the present article, we discuss the aspects of farmers' rights, the community level seed systems, food sovereignty and the potential of farmer household production and dietary diversification in combating malnutrition and community health promotion with regard to farming communities of Uttarakhand hills in north-western India. Salient findings of two case studies, on farmers' varieties documentation and registration, and the potential of local food systems in addressing community health and nutrition were used to particularly showcase the nutritional contribution of native foods in the context of sustainable food-based approaches to community health and nutrition. Further, the need of a proactive alliance was suggested between local communities and their key allies collaboratively creating a research and advocacy agenda in support of agrobiodiversity and the revival of local food systems and landscapes within the broader framework of food sovereignty.

KEYWORDS

Farmers' rights; community seed systems; food sovereignty; household production and dietary diversity; nutritional security

Introduction

The transition from hunting–gathering to agriculture, the Neolithic revolution, started some 12,500 years ago with the domestication of a small number of wild plant species across various parts of the world, more particularly in the global south. The domestication of wild plant species led to the first agricultural revolution that provided us with a relatively secure source of food. The diversity we have today in these crops and domesticated animals is the result of the interaction between countless generations of farmers and the

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