

## WOMEN AND MOUNTAIN ENVIRONMENT: PROSPECTS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY, STATUS AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPEMNT OF NORTH WESTERN HIMALAYA

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*In traditional societies of north western Himalaya, women played an important role. The distinct distribution of work of men and women has evolved locally for productive functional use and has been inheriting since generations. The status of different sexes is exclusively dependent upon culture of the people concerned. The status, position and authority of women are, by and large, equal to men in the study area. The role of women is not only important for socio-economic activities but their role is also equally important in non-economic activities as well. Women play valuable role in traditional farming practices. Organizing frequent fair and festivals is one of their outcomes of enjoyment since age-old time. Women have full right and freedom to do whatever they wish. Introduced modern on-farm technologies are the root cause of disordering the harmonious relationship between tuned environmental setup and diverse socio-cultural society, which has strong symbiotic relationship. Growing infrastructure facilities and mushrooming commercialization have imposed tremendous threat to women, mountain environment and to traditional knowledge. Lack of government's programmes focusing to women based cultural diversity is dragging indigenous culture on the brink of cultural pollution. Developmental approach should be centered on the traditional knowledge based packages involving to local people.*

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