

Multifunctional Roles of Integrated Farming Systems: Toward Sustainable Livelihoods in Coastal Saline Agroecological Zone of West Bengal, India

Purnabha Dasgupta¹, Rupak Goswami², Atanu Deb³

^{1,2}Integrated Rural Development and Management Faculty Centre, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Narendrapur, West Bengal

³Integrated Rural and Tribal Development and Management Faculty Centre, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University, Ranchi, Jharkhand

ABSTRACT

Agroecological practices like integration of different enterprises within farming systems have increasingly been acknowledged as key development alternative to safeguard rural people's basic needs and enhancing their socio-ecological capacities by sustaining rural livelihoods. This paper explores the multidimensional aspects of agroecological practices that could potentially address the compelling livelihood necessities of less advantaged smallholder farmers in developing countries like India. The results show that the farmers' foremost concern with their farming system is to meet their socio-economic, cultural and ecological needs when addressing the multifaceted adversities of biotic and abiotic stresses. Integration among farming system components was employed as a livelihood strategy and played pivotal role in meeting the multidimensional needs of the farm family. The concept of agricultural multifunctionality is proposed to help in addressing the existing conceptual limitations in sustainable agriculture and, thus, to overcome the crater between ecological research and social realities in agroecology based development.

Keywords: Smallholder Farms, Integrated Farming System, Multifunctionality of Integrated Farms, Sustainable Livelihood, Agroecological Practices;