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## Book review of 'Himalayan EcoSystem' by Dr. D. N. Tewari (ed.)

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**Chapter 6:** Shroder, J.F., L. Owen, and E. Derbyshire, "Quaternary glaciation of the Karakoram and Nanga Parbat Himalaya";

**Chapter 7:** Hewitt, K., "Altitudinal organization of Karakoram geomorphic processes and depositional environments";

**Chapter 8:** Gardner, J.S., and N.K. Jones, "Sediment transport and yield at the Raikot Glacier, Nanga Parbat, Punjab Himalaya";

**Chapter 9:** Khan, M.J., and N.D. Opdyke, "Position of the PalaeoIndus as revealed by the magnetic stratigraphy of the Shinghar and Surghar Ranges, Pakistan";

**Chapter 10:** Quade, J., T.E. Cerling, J.R. Bowman, and M. Asif Jah, "Palaeoecologic reconstruction of floodplain environments using palaeosols from Upper Siwaik Group sediments, northern Pakistan";

**Chapter 11:** Rendell, H.M., "The palaeoclimatic significance of the loess deposits in northern Pakistan";

**Chapter 12:** Papastamatiou, D., and C. Vita-Finzi, "Decreased tectonism of the Sui Dome";

**Chapter 13:** M. A. Ali Beg, "Surface soils and Indus River sediments";

**Chapter 14:** Flam, L., "Fluvial geomorphology of the Lower Indus Basin (Sindh, Pakistan) and the Indus Civilization";

**Chapter 15:** Jorgensen, D.W., M.D. Harvey, S.A. Schumm, and L. Flam, "Morphology and

dynamics of the Indus River: implications for the Mohen Jo Daro site";

**Chapter 16:** Snead, R.J., "Uplifted marine terraces along the Makran coast of Pakistan and Iran"; and

**Chapter 17:** Snead, R.J., "Geography, geomorphic process and effects on archaeological sites on the Makran coast".

Because of the detailed and focused nature of most of the papers within this volume, **Himalaya to the Sea** is certainly more valuable as a reference book for earth scientists presently conducting research in the Himalayan region or within the Indian subcontinent than it is as a general reference book for the non-geologist and those interested in aspects of the Himalaya and Indian subcontinent other than geomorphology and Quaternary geology. Even within the geological sciences, this volume is specifically geared towards those interested in the Late Miocene through Recent geological and geomorphological evolution of the Himalayan orogen and adjacent sedimentary basins. Therefore, despite the excellent quality and interesting subjects of the papers presented within **Himalaya to the Sea**, this book is perhaps more useful in a university library than on the bookshelf of an individual interested in the Himalaya, India and Pakistan in general.

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**Himalayan EcoSystem. Edited by Dr. D. N. Tewari.** International Book Distributors, Dehra Dun, 1994. 355 + iv pp. ISBN 81 7089 211 2

Anyone familiar with the Himalayan region will be aware of the vast range of habitats and ecosystems encountered, largely due to the climatic variability experienced in the region. The varying altitude of the Himalayan region gives a large range of temperatures (resulting in sub tropical to Alpine conditions), diurnal fluctuations, and rainfall. The southern Himalaya experience a monsoonal climate, particularly in the eastern end of the range, whilst the northern areas of Ladakh and Tibet are semi arid cold deserts. In addition to climatic variability, there is also a great diversity in the type and extent of human modification of the natural environment, an issue which is very topical.

Tewari has collated 20 papers from eminent researchers working in the multidisciplinary area of Himalayan environmental management. The focus is

towards forest ecosystems, reflecting the primary natural vegetation type of the region, and the editors' and contributors' interests. Anyone looking for a classical approach to ecosystem science, such as energy flows, nutrient cycling, the production of organic matter and systems analysis, will be disappointed. Tewari has used the term ecosystem in its widest sense. The majority of the volume concentrates on management/conservation issues, and initiatives to involve local communities in ecosystem management. Whilst the content may not be exactly what is expected from the title, it does allow for wide ranging and interesting papers.

After a brief preface which outlines some of the principal features of the region, and problems experienced by it, the initial 2 papers examine the forest types of the Indian Himalaya. Tewari and Singh do this

in some detail, but as a list of types. This does not provide much information about the ecosystems, but this is perhaps inevitable owing to the great number of different forest types described. The value of these chapters is questionable, as this information is available elsewhere in more detail (Negi, 1990; Shrestha, 1989). A description of ecosystem features and interactions for the major forest types would have been more appropriate. The next chapter, by Negi, examines forest management in the Himalaya. This gives a good account of the main forestry systems employed for each major forest ecosystem. Additionally there is useful information regarding research being conducted by Himalayan forestry Departments. Unfortunately this only covers India. This recurs frequently in the volume: Authors talk about the Himalayan region in general, but only provide information and data from their own country. Sahni discusses biodiversity and conservation measures in the Himalaya. This chapter is the first departure from a pure forestry orientation, as the author considers the entire range of important and endangered flora. Conservation measures are only briefly appraised, discussing the concept and requirements of Biosphere reserves and National Parks. Shiva looks at the roles and potential of non timber forest products. It is principally a list of useful species, divided into product type. It does not give the actual use of the plant, just the type of product i.e. medicinal. It does indicate areas where research is being conducted or needed to evaluate the potential of promising species. Osman gives an account of the birds of prey found in the Afghanistan Himalaya. This paper does not provide information on the habitats and environmental requirements of the birds, which is of key interest in a volume such as this. Shengji discusses indigenous knowledge systems and their influence on forest management, an area receiving increasing attention. Although short, this interesting paper has good references. Chandra considers the water resources of the Himalaya, looking briefly at how human activities have influenced flow, and the modeling of Himalayan water resources. Tegwani discusses soil and water conservation, principally looking at the failures and successes of various programmes. Rao et al. look at the methodology for conserving watersheds in the Himalayan from erosion. The next three papers look at the involvement of the local community in resource management. Hegde describes the main types of agroforestry practised in the Himalayan region. Additionally he proposes a strategy for the promotion of agroforestry. The strategy is species-based, rather than needs-based, and appears to be rather simplistic. The next 4 papers look specifically at the people of the

Himalaya, and how they interact with their environment. One excellent paper discusses ways of reconciling the conflicting objectives encountered when managing forests in tribal areas to maintain biodiversity. Two papers deal with gender issues, an area of great importance in the Himalayan region when attempting community empowerment. The last 2 papers appear to be tacked on at the end. One of these discusses the reclamation of mining sites in the Himalayas, and the other details forest diseases in the Himalaya.

This book is definitely not an examination of the Himalayan ecosystem in a biological context. It is far more wide ranging than this. It is difficult to identify a specific focus, and it appears to randomly cover various aspects of ecosystem management, conservation strategies and development considerations. A few specific criticisms must be made. The preface does not give any definition of what the editor means by ecosystem, or attempt to tie the papers together in any way. Without this the book reads like conference proceedings with no unifying thread. The editorial grip should have been tighter on authors. There is no index. This is a sad omission as many topics, such as climate considerations, occur in several papers. In some of the papers there are tables with no indication as to what the figures refer to, or units. There is some misspelling, and quotes are not always referenced. Despite the above criticisms, the volume contains a lot of very useful, informative and interesting material. The book contains substantial information on ecosystem management, and biogeographical information essential for development organisations. It is good that these papers, many of high quality, are available in this volume, as it is often difficult to obtain papers published in the Indian subcontinent (this book is also hard to obtain outside the subcontinent). The book is recommended to anyone working in natural resource management in mountainous areas.

## References

- Negi, S. S., 1990; **Himalayan forests and forestry**, Indus pub. Co., New Delhi.  
Shrestha, B. P., 1989; **Forest plants of Nepal**, Educational enterprise, Kathmandu

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