Conference on Sustainability 2014 : Future Urban Developments at Different Scales, KIT, Karlsruhe, Germany, 9-10 May 2014

'Peri-Urban Villages of Bangalore, India: Reclaiming the Commons to Cope with Climate Stress

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Abstract

The paper views the patterns of adaptation to climate stress and environmental changes in per-urban villages in semi-arid India and argues that resilience to climate change will be maximum for farming and land use systems that respect common property resources and the knowledge systems that are associated with community based resource utilization systems. The paper situates its arguments with reference to a village near Bangalore city. It is argued that the traditional knowledge systems in the village , by not considering Private Property Resources and Common Property Resources as mutual opposites, permitted a system of utilizing private property systems as common property resources during certain temporal phases of a year. However it is also explained that the advent of commercial farming in the village in the 1980s and the externalities of solid waste pollution from Bangalore city by the turn of this century caused resource utilization systems to deviate from traditional land use systems. The new resource utilization modes do not respect the limiting factor of water in semi-arid environments and have reduced the permeability of private property resources to common usage. This enhances the risk of accelerated depletion of natural resources in the village , thus increasing the risks of climate change to all sections of the community. The adverse trends are aggravated by policies and financial assistance programs that support unsustainable patterns of resource usage. Based on evidence from the field, the paper argues about the importance of reclaiming the commons from commercialization trends and advocates policy solutions that link adaptation friendly agriculture with traditional knowledge based on CPR-PPR synergies. It is argued that policies that emphasize food and nutritional self sufficiency, if coupled with climate action plans that seek to enforce the symbiotic nexus of PPR and CPRs can go a long way in ensuring that sustainable development goes well with the task of increasing the availability of food and nutrients to the rural and urban poor. It is argued in the paper that traditional landraces and man-livestock relationship patterns and associated knowledge resources associated with farmer based plant and livestock breeding, if tapped and synergistically combined with modern plant/ animal breeding technologies can, provide a robust solution to the issue of adaptation to

climate change in semi arid India.

Keywords: Adaptation, Common Property Resources, Traditional Resource Management,

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