

ABSTRACT

The study focuses on the environmental assessment and agricultural decisions of small farmers in the north of St. Vincent. Critical to this thesis is an approach in which the farmer becomes the nexus of the farming system. It is argued that this is necessary if agricultural improvement strategies are to more effectively address themselves to the needs of the farmers. This entails a methodology which facilitates the elicitation of farmers' views and attitudes unconstrained or uncontaminated by the interviewer. Repertory grid procedures (RPGs) is one such data collection technique utilised in this study. The socio-physical variations in the farming systems under consideration are emphasized and the influence of the differing assessments of these by farmers, on the agricultural management and adjustment strategies highlighted. The farming system is therefore seen as a reflection of farmers' assessment of and responses to aspects of the physical and socio-economic environment.