

Role of Non-Timber Forest Products in Local Livelihood and Household Economies in Resource-Rich vs. Resource Poor Forest Area of Mizoram

Authors : Uttam Kumar Sahoo, K. Lalhmingsangi, J. H. Lalremruati

Abstract : Non-timber forest resources particularly the high-value, low volume NTFPs has drawn interest as an activity all over the world during the past three decades that could raise standards of living for the rural folks while being compatible with forest conservation. This is particularly true for the people living in and around or fringes of protected areas. However, the economics that plays between resources' stock and its utilization by the humans is yet to be validated and evaluated logistically. A study was therefore designed to understand the linkages between resource (especially NTFPs) availability and their utilization, existing threats to this biodiversity conservation and the role of NTFPs within the livelihood systems of those households that are most directly involved in creating conservation threats. About 25% of the households were sampled from the two sites 'resource-rich' and 'resource poor' area of Dampa Tiger Reserve (Western boundary). Our preliminary findings suggest that the collection of relatively high-volume and low value NTFPs such as fuelwood, fodder has caused degradation of forest resources while the low-volume and high-value NTFPs such as wild edible mushrooms, vegetables, other specialty food products, inputs to crafts, medicinal plants have resulted into species promotion/conservation through their domestication in traditional agroforestry systems including home gardens and/or collateral protection of the Tiger Reserve. It is thus suggested that proper assessment of these biodiversities, their direct and indirect valuation, market and non-market profits etc be carried out in greater details which would result in prescribing effective management plans around the park.

Keywords : household economy, livelihood strategies, non-timber forest products, species conservation

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