



Contribution of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Rural Livelihood and Rural Economy

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Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) play a vital role in supporting the livelihood and rural economy of forest-dependent communities. The present study was conducted in Balikonta, Titirgaon, and Kalipur villages of Jagdalpur block, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, to assess the contribution of NTFPs to income generation, employment, and livelihood security. Primary data were collected from 50 respondents through interviews and field observations, along with secondary sources. The study revealed that major NTFPs such as Salfi, Tamarind, Mahua, Tendu leaves, and Karanj seeds provide significant economic support to rural households. The study highlights the need for sustainable management, better marketing facilities, and value addition of NTFPs for improving rural livelihoods.

Keywords: Livelihoods, employment, sustainable

Introduction

Non-timber forest products (NTFPs), also known as non-wood forest products (NWFPs), minor forest produce (MFP), special, alternative and secondary forest products. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are of socio-economic and cultural importance for the forest dwelling communities, particularly for the tropical countries like India (Yadav and Dugaya, 2013). About 20 - 40% of annual income of tribal is contributed by the NTFPs (Planning Commission, 2011). NTFPs serve as a livelihood buffer during times of diminished agricultural income and greatly enhance the rural economy through their collection, processing, and marketing situated in the Jagdalpur block of the Bastar district. These communities are located near forest regions and have a significant tribal community, causing forest resources to play a crucial role in household livelihoods. Census data shows that Balikonta, Titirgaon, and Kalipur are prominent rural communities in the research region. This study explores the role of NTFPs in enhancing household income, job creation, and livelihood stability in these chosen villages. It further evaluates the contribution of NTFPs to enhancing the rural economy and recognizes the difficulties encountered by gatherers, such as market entry, value enhancement, and sustainable stewardship.

Review of Literature

Yadav and Dugaya (2013) studied the importance of NTFPs among forest-dwelling communities and reported that these products have significant socio-economic and cultural value, especially in tropical countries like India.

Ghosal (2011) emphasized that NTFPs contribute significantly to household economies by providing supplementary income and supporting the livelihood security of rural and tribal communities.

Kandari and Omprakash (2009) reported that NTFP collection plays an important role in enhancing rural livelihoods and provides employment opportunities to forest-dependent households.

Pandey, Tripathi and Kumar (2016) highlighted that NTFPs are a major livelihood resource for millions of forest fringe communities in India. They also pointed out that NTFPs act as a safety net during economic hardships and contribute to income generation through processing and marketing activities.

Ahmed, Jana and Roy (2016) studied the marketing system of NTFPs and found that poor market access, involvement of intermediaries, and lack of value addition reduce the economic benefits received by collectors.

Chandel, Yadav and Jhariya (2017) documented the economic and traditional importance of NTFPs in Chhattisgarh and emphasized their role in supporting tribal livelihoods through collection and utilization of forest resources.

Churpal et al. (2021) studied economically important NTFPs of Chhattisgarh and reported that products such as tendu leaves, mahua, sal seeds, and medicinal plants provide significant income and employment opportunities for tribal communities.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that NTFPs are essential components of rural livelihoods and contribute significantly to the rural economy. However, challenges such as unsustainable harvesting, inadequate processing facilities, and poor marketing systems need to be addressed for maximizing the benefits of NTFPs

Methodology

The study was conducted in Balikonta, Titirgaon, and Kalipur villages of Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, to analyze the contribution of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) to rural livelihood and the rural economy. A descriptive research design was adopted. Primary data were collected from 150 respondents through questionnaires, interviews, and field observations, while secondary data were obtained from reports, journals, books, and government publications. The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis and tabular methods

Results and Discussion

Selection of Respondents

The study was conducted in three selected villages—Titirgaon, Baalikota, and Kaalipur of Jagdalpur block, Bastar district, Chhattisgarh. A total of 424 farmer families were identified in the selected villages, out of which 50 respondents were selected for the present study through sampling methods. The selected respondents were interviewed to analyze the contribution of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) to rural livelihood, income generation, and employment opportunities.

Table :Sampled District, Block and Villages for the Study

S. No.	District	Block	Selected Villages
1	Bastar	Jagdalpur	Titirgaon Baalikota Kaalipur

Cost, Return, Income and Employment Generated through Major NTFPs

The study revealed that NTFPs play an important role in supplementing the income and employment of rural households in the selected villages. The major NTFPs collected by the respondents were Salfi, Tamarind, Mahua flower, Tendu leaves, and Karanj seeds.

- Salfi was found to be the most important NTFP, contributing about 40% of the total NTFP collection. Households collected approximately 300–350 litres annually, generating an estimated income of ₹12,000–18,000 per year. Salfi tapping and collection provided around 50–90 days of employment during the season.

- Tamarind contributed about 35% of the total NTFP share and was another major source of income. Each household collected around 250–300 kg annually, earning approximately ₹15,000–20,000 per year and providing 20–25 days of employment.
- Mahua flower accounted for about 12% of NTFP collection. Households collected nearly 80–120 kg annually, providing an income of ₹5,000–8,000 and seasonal employment of 10–15 days.
- Tendu leaves contributed about 8% of total NTFPs. The collection of tendu leaves provided an annual income of approximately ₹4,000–6,000 and generated 8–12 employment days for collectors.
- Karanj seeds contributed around 5% of the total NTFP collection. Though its economic contribution was comparatively low, it provided additional income of about ₹1,500–2,500 annually and generated 5–8 days of employment.

Overall, the findings indicate that NTFPs significantly contribute to rural livelihood security by providing seasonal income and employment opportunities. Among the studied products, Salfi and Tamarind were the major contributors to household income, highlighting the economic importance of forest resources in the selected villages of Bastar district.

Cost and Return of Collected NTFPs of Selected Households

Note: Tendu leaves are measured in standard bags. One standard bag contains approximately 40 kg and 50,000 leaves. The cost, return, income generation, and employment contribution of major NTFPs collected by selected households in the study area.

- The results show that NTFPs play an important role in enhancing rural livelihood by providing additional income and employment opportunities.
- Among the collected NTFPs, Salfi was the most significant product, contributing 40% of total NTFP collection. It recorded the highest income generation of ₹21,902.10 with 90 employment days, indicating its major contribution to household livelihood.
- Tamarind was the second most important NTFP, contributing 35% of total collection and generating an income of ₹11,899.23 with 45 employment days. The high economic value of Salfi and Tamarind makes them important sources of seasonal income for rural households.
- Mahua flower contributed 12% of the total NTFP collection and generated ₹5,345.84 income with 40 employment days. Tendu leaves contributed 8% and generated ₹1,991, while providing 50 employment days due to its labour-intensive collection process. Karanj seed contributed the lowest share (5%) and generated ₹1,057.83 income.

The total collection of NTFPs was 995.54 kg, involving a total collection cost of ₹13,430 and generating ₹42,196 income with 265 employment days. The findings reveal that NTFPs significantly contribute to income diversification and employment generation among forest-dependent households of Titirgaon, Baalikonta, and Kaalipur villages of Bastar district.

Conclusions

The study concluded that NTFPs play a significant role in improving the livelihood and rural economy of households in Titirgaon, Baalikonta, and Kaalipur villages of Bastar district. Salfi and Tamarind were the major sources of income, while other NTFPs provided additional employment and economic support. Improved marketing facilities, value addition, and sustainable management can further enhance the benefits of NTFPs for rural communities.

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