

PROJECT TITLE: (REF AZ 3031 a)

STUDY OF
NON TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS (NTFP)
IN
TROPICAL FORESTS OF WESTERN GHATS,
KARNATAKA, INDIA

PROGRESS REPORT:

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IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:
PRAKRUTI, SIRSI, INDIA

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PROGRESS REPORT

Study of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) in the Tropical Forest of Western Ghats, Karnataka, India

1. Activities completed to date:

1.1. **Secondary data:** Collection of secondary data from different sources was completed. Data is collected about forest area, geographical area, and availability of NTFP products in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats of Karnataka. Besides, information was collected about the revenue earned by Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) and quantity collected from all forest divisions in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats of Karnataka viz., Sirsi, Honnavar, Karwar, Haliyal, Yellapur divisions of Kanara Circle, Belgaum division of Belgaum circle, Sagar, Shimoga, Bhadravati, Chikmagalore, Koppa of Shimoga circle, Madikeri, Kundapur, Mangalore divisions of Madikeri circle, H.D. Kote and Chamarajanagar divisions of Mysore circle. In addition, secondary data is collected from LAMPS (Large Scale Adivasi (tribal) Multipurpose Co-operative Society) of Bhagamandala, Mudigere, Kushalnagara, H.D.Kote and Chamarajanagara. Data is collected for last five years viz., 1991-92 onwards.

1.2. **Field study:** Study areas were identified throughout the tropical forest region of the Western Ghats of Karnataka. We identified fourteen clusters in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats with twenty-eight villages. During this reporting period we have completed data collection for ten clusters of villages, which includes 20 villages were studied in the process, representing almost all types of forest dwelling communities, and different forest regions. Selections of study areas were made considering factors like availability of NTFP, forest cover, caste/communities etc. In each village information were collected about socio economic conditions of families and dependency on NTFP for economic, medicinal, cultural and food security in their daily life.

Questionnaire method: Questionnaires were designed and given to the field assistants to collect the data. Questionnaire contained three sections, which included the details of Socio economic details of the family, NTFP dependency, and a set of questions. The objective of the questionnaire was to collect the information about the distance covered by collectors, suggestions for regeneration and sustainable harvesting and other NTFP related aspects etc.

Participatory Rural Approach (PRA): PRA Techniques can be effectively used for collecting information about NTFPs in the village, from forest dwelling communities.

It is a quick and easier method to have the view of 'insiders'. Unlike some of the other research methodologies, PRA can be extended it to any research questions. Besides, we can cross check the data obtained by scientific methods, from another 'angle'.

We have used PRA techniques for collecting information about NTFP, from the forest dwelling communities. PRA were done in all the study villages. Research team with the help of local assistant conducted the PRA. It was ensured the participation of major portion of villagers representing all sections of the society while conducting the PRA. The local assistant fixes date and time after consulting with the villagers. Wherever possible, we visited the village a day before the actual day of PRA to gain the confidence of villagers.

Some of the techniques of participatory appraisal used in collecting data are briefed below.

1) Inflow-outflow chart: Using this method information about the availability {inflow} of NTFP in the study area and the use and market {outflow} of the same was collected. The method helped to find out the various ways and extent of processing that the consumption and commercial NTFP undergo before being used by the collector or the external consumer.

2) Ranking and scoring: This is used to get information about the how local resources are valued and managed. The information generated by the wealth ranking were helpful in selection of informants in such a way as to offset the bias the inherent in different prospective. Matrix ranking is used to investigate the various values, which a group attaches to particular resources.

3) Resource mapping and transact walk: This method helped in listing out the various species of NTFP that grow in the area. Transact walk helped in collecting information about the status of NTFP in different period. Further discussions on this also provided answers to issues like why some species have gained importance while some of them are no longer used or depletion of some species.

4) **Venn diagram:** The method is used to demonstrate clearly the NTFP with multi-purposes uses i.e., to say it helps to list out those NTFP which come under more than one category be it commercial, consumptional or medicinal.

5) **Forest penetration map:** This method was used for collecting information about the distance to be covered in different seasons and the time spent for collecting different NTFP. We could hardly use this method in some of the fields, as it is time consuming. However, field assistants in some clusters have used this technique.

6) **Seasonality map:** This method was used for collecting information about the availability and quantity of NTFP in different seasons.

Using these methods, we were able to get information about the changes in availability, use pattern, collection pattern and impact of collection on tropical rain forests over the years.

The objectives of the study are achieved using the PRA techniques as linked to methodology as given below.

	Objectives	PRA tools	Output
1	Inventory of NTFP species	1. Resource map 2. Transect walk	List of NTFP, Forest type, Type of ownership
2	Classification	Venn diagram	Classification map of NTFP with different use pattern, application, parts used
3	Seasonality	Venn diagram	1. Seasonality calendar 2. Seasonality calendar with magnitude
4	Availability (quantity)	1) Venn diagram 2) Trend line 3) Ranking and scoring 4) Transect walk 5) Resource map 6) Charting	1. Availability map (Quantity wise) 2. Changes in availability of NTFP 3. Matrix scoring of NTFP in study area in view of availability 4. Village resources with quantity 5. Product flow chart
5	Importance (which is the resource important to collector)	1) Venn diagram 2) Trend line 3) Ranking and scoring 4) Transect walk 5) Resource map 6) Charting	1) Economic importance of NTFP (Product importance scoring Table) 2) Changes in use pattern 3) Matrix Scoring of NTFP-(Importance) 4) Village resource map with economic value Comparative product Ranking.
6	Impact of collection on ecology	1) Trend line 2) Transect walk	Changes in availability/collection pattern Degradation/change of Eco system.

7	Impact of collection on economy of Forest Dwellers	1)Trend line a) Quantity b) Income	Changes in Economy of collector Changes in quantity of NTFP.
8	Dependency on Forest products	1)Trend line a) Quantity b) Income	Changes in collection of NTFP.
9	Market	Trend line	a) Variation of Market price(price fluctuation) b) Sold price and net margin enjoyed by person in marketing chain
10	Gender and NTFP perspectives	a) Time line b) (Daily activity schedule) c) Venn diagram d) Pie chart e) Trend line	a) Role of women in NTFP collection processing, and sharing of benefits b) Daily activity schedule- Time line
11	Collection and processing method	Inflow-outflow	(Documentation of collection and processing practices). Trend line of NTFP collection
12	Background information about village	Historical transect	History of NTFP collection

Focus Group Discussions (FGD): These are yet another participatory method to obtain the different views about one issue at hand. FGDs as they are called, are popular in their use because it brings out the ideas of the participants as they are. In other methods, the participants are questioned in different forms and the responses are recorded. Here there are very few questions asked. Most of the information that are obtained are the responses to each other's views. All individuals present participate on the same plane, i.e. as participants only. The study intends to use this method of data collection, mainly because the research assistants belong to the same group of people as the respondents and have just as much to offer in terms of information as the rest of them.

Case studies: Case studies were done for NTFP collectors in all the clusters. Case studies of five Nati Vaidys(traditional medicine men) were done. These include medicine men, women, midwife, and veterinary medicine-men etc.

Value addition industries: there are several value addition industries in the Western Ghats region of the Karnataka. These industries helped in creating the demand for NTFP products of the region. Such industries were identified and some of them were studied. Demand and supply realities of these industries were studied.

2. **Assessment of Achievements to date:**

We have completed assessment of NTFP resources in ten clusters of tropical forest region in Western Ghats with twenty villages. Looking at the data collected, we can say that it provides a valuable background material on NTFP resources in this region. These studies clusters have provided the following information on the issue.

- The forest dwelling communities who are engaged in NTFP collection.
- Their dependency on NTFP for survival
- Comparative data on total family income to income from NTFP.
- The status of tropical forests and its capacity to produce NTFP
- Marketing of NTFP
- Legal issues related to NTFP and state level policy on NTFPs.
- Role of women in NTFP management and processing

The above issues provide an in-depth understanding of the NTFPs in tropical forest ecosystem. It is an achievement because there is no database or information on these issues for Western Ghats region.

While assessing the achievement we feel that the information we have collected is basically the indigenous knowledge base of the people who live in midst of tropical forests. Thus, the credit of the knowledge on NTFP should go to the numerous forest dwelling communities, who assisted us in carrying on this study. The study has touched upon only a small fraction of the traditional knowledge of forest dwellers.

3. Difficulties experienced to date:

Language problem: - Western Ghats region has different types of communities. Each different ethnic community speaks different local languages. We met with ethnic communities speaking Kannada, Marathi, Konkani, Tulu, Malayali, Coorgi and tribal language of Jenukurubas. It was not possible for research team to directly interact with the local people, in some of these villages. However, with the help of local field assistants, this problem was successfully tackled.

Geographical reasons: Geographical reasons of unavailability to reach the village were faced in data collection. In some clusters, research team walked more than 16 kilometers of in hilly and thickly forested region.

Gaining the confidence of villagers took more time.

Turnover of staff/personnel: In order to collect the data from the interior forest region initially we recruited educated people as field assistants. By the time we trained them in this particular work, they would leave the project and join assignments that gave an opportunity to work in the urban areas. Thus, it was quite difficult for the project to collect data with frequent turnover of the staff.

In order to overcome the problem we recruited rural youth with low educational qualification but with an interest in NTFP. These rural assistants were able to write reports in Kannada language. This policy was more effective. Nevertheless, it has posed another difficulty. We had to translate the Kannada reports into English. Though there are many educated youth, persons with an aptitude and skills for translation on NTFP issues were hard to get. Forced by this, the limited staff of the project had to take additional burden of translating the Kannada report into English.

Computer skills: The array of data collected had to be fed into computer for analysis. However, in a small town like Sirsi, it was very difficult to get people who could take up the task of feeding the data. In past one year we appointed four women candidates to do this job. Three of them have left and presently we have found one person helping us with this work.

Distances: The long distance that needs to be covered (approximately 400 kms from headquarters) to study some clusters made it difficult to complete the job on time. Travelling and communication was difficult.

Lack of interest: The government Forest Department, who are managing forests and NTFP resources, have the official data. As they are not interested in NTFP, our effort to get data from the Forest office was painful, lengthy process. This also led to delays in data collection.

Climate: The monsoon rains start from June and continue till September or even October. It rains intermittently for weeks together. This makes it very difficult for the staff to go for field visits.

4. Activities to be completed:

- Collection of data, PRA and survey for four clusters.
- Analysis of data and writing report based on the material collected.
- A Kannada(in local language) Report for local people
- Pre testing of booklet in vernacular language
- Finalisation of Booklet and printing.
- Preparation for workshops
- Holding of workshops