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STUDIES ON MEDICINAL PLANTS AS LIVELIHOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

Natural resource is our common future. Within the natural resource, the forestry sector has gained importance. Overall trades in forest product are currently estimated to makeup 2-3 percent of the total merchandise trade. Both primary and secondary forest products showed a good contribution on local, regional and international economy. Development of natural resource management to the local community level, particularly at the forestry sector, is important to improve community livelihoods and economic empower. Economic evaluation has always played an important role in studies of how plants are used by local peoples and how that attains importance in global or regional markets to posses contribute on national and community development.

In this communication, an attempt has been made to scrutinize the role of medicinal plants, a non-timber forest products as a source of income of the poor. Information are collected from different secondary data and with contact of some native forests dwellers.

Key words:

Natural Resources, Forest Ecology, Economic Development, Non Timber Forest Products, Medicinal Plants.

Introduction

The United Nations Conferences on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, brought into sharp focus that the natural system was over burdened with concurrent human activities. The first principle of the Rio declaration stressed that human beings were entitled with healthy and productive life in harmony with nature (UN, 1993). The resulting Agenda 21 took this principle of sustainable development further. People seek to manage natural resources for two reasons. First, management of natural resources improves their conditions of livelihood. Second, environmental degradations are threatening, either to life sustaining processes through deforestation, fuel shortage, etc., or to people's aesthetic value. Natural resources can be held under any one of the four property rights regimes: open access, common property, private property, and state property. In practice, natural resources are rarely managed by one of these alone. Use and conservation of natural resources simultaneously can help attaining well being of people on sustainable basis.

Over the last two decades, a profound change has been witnessed in the area of natural resource management especially in the forestry sector, with countries at least partially developing right and responsibilities over their natural resources to the users (Edmonds, 2002, Larsen and Ribort, 2004) with the hope that forest resources will be better conserved and at the same time livelihood systems of forest dependent people will be involved. India has been at the forefront of developing natural resources management to the local community level, particularly in the forestry sector, for more than a decade. In a follow-up documents issued in 1990, the central government issued guidelines to all the state governments to implements ' joint forest management systems'(JFM) by devolving everyday forest use and management rights to the community. It has been observed that almost all the states have formally resolved to implement JFM and making it one of the largest of such programs in the world (Kumar, 2002; Behera and Engel, 2006).