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Domesticating Wild Non-wood Forest Products (NWFPs): Opportunities of Alternative Farming for Rural Livelihoods in Nepal

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Abstract

Non- wood forest products (NWFPs) contribute substantially to the livelihood systems and local economies of rural societies in Nepal. NWFP cultivation is not an established trend in Nepal. Bringing NWFPs domestication as cultivation practice is a challenging task. However, in addition to Jatamansi, many experiments were made to domesticate some valuable NWFPs like Atis, Bojho, Sugandhawal, Chiraito, Keshar etc. in Karnali zone in the past decades. NWFP cultivation in Jumla has been successfully conducted since couple of decades, but it is limited as a domestication trial only and has not yet been brought on commercial scale. The study was conducted in Jumla district from 2003 to 2005. Study aimed to assess the profitability in trading, economic cultivation and market opportunities of *Nardostachys grandiflora*. It also assessed the investment feasibility of Jatamansi cultivation and assessed the attitude and preference of people toward Jatamansi Cultivation. Participatory methods were employed together with cost benefit analysis of agricultural crops and Jatamansi in the study. The results show that the greatest net present value (NPV) at the 12 % discount interest rate is possible from Jatsamansi cultivation than NPV of agricultural crops. NPV received from the Jatamansi cultivation is 1.27 times greater than that of the agricultural crops. This means, at present time, farmers are getting involved in less profitable cultivation of the conventional agricultural crops. Even though, the feasibility of investment on the cultivation of Jatamansi is not economically justified, the attitude of people towards cultivation of NWFPs is extremely positive, while its demand in the market is high and it can be immediately sold to the local traders. Major factors responsible for hindering the cultivation of Jatamansi are lack of land followed by maturity period, lack of appropriate techniques, lack of seed and the market price fluctuation. More than 28 % respondent realised that lack of land is the major constraints in expanding Jatamansi cultivation, where as 24 % realise that maturity period of more than 5 years is a major cause that they cannot opt for Jatamansi cultivation. There is a room for maximising the net profit by adopting Jatamansi cultivation.

Keywords: Community forest, cost benefit analysis, cultivation, domestication, *Nardostachys grandiflora*