



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Community Based NWFP Management Initiatives: Innovations and Adoption in Non-Wood Forestry in Nepal

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Abstract

In a short period of time, Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) in Nepal have created plenty of off-farm employments by entrepreneurship on collection, semi-processing and marketing of the products. The multiplier effects and hierarchical benefits are now distributed from individual level to households, community and national level. Though the history of use and management of various NWFPs has long tradition in Nepal, there have been some significant achievements in conservation and rural development through the sustainable management of NWFPs in the recent decades. Economic exploitations for meaningful support to poorest of the poor and conservation are the major concerns nowadays.

NWFP trade and bartering in Nepal exists since the time immemorial, however the commercial trade of NWFP by the limited number of people begun in the 1950s. Since the commercialisation of NWFPs, various innovations in NWFP resource assessment, domestication or cultivation, marketing and enterprise development have taken place. One of the successful examples is community based NWFP management. Communities have initiated, mainly by themselves, sometimes with few external supports, domestication, cultivation. In the mean time there are many challenges in the adoption of NWFP innovations because of its immediate cash value and market liquidity as well as its common property in nature.

The objectives of this study are to explore the opportunities and constraints in NWFP innovation management in relation to its participatory initiatives and gradual developments since their scientific recognition to date and suggest future direction for their extension. The data were collected from various organisations, reports and publications as well as through the information obtained from interview with the professional involved in NWFP management.

This study concludes that in a very short span of its innovation to date, the sustainable management has taken momentum in many community forestry user groups (CFUGs). However there are many other CFUGs to be aware and support needed for extension and technology transfer. In national level policy frameworks, there is urgent necessity of bringing NWFP in the main stream of sustainable forest management and grant full right to the community for NWFP based economic activities for fulfilling the objective of conservation of the resources and economic development of rural people.

Keywords: Adoption, community forestry, innovation, Nepal, non-wood forestry

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