**Impact of linking community forest user groups to forest product value chains on income of different class groups**

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**Abstract**

Generally, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) collection is globally considered as one of the strategies of poor people for their livelihoods. The collection is important for meeting subsistence needs and earning money by selling the collected NTFPs. There are many approaches taken in community forest users groups in commercialization of NTFPs. This study analyses and compares the contributions of the enterprise-based non-timber forest product (NTFP) management approach with the traditional management approach to the household income of NTFP collectors. This study followed a panel type of longitudinal research approach; hence the data collection was done in two phases. Same households were interviewed in both phases using same semi structured questionnaire. The study findings show that, in absence of an NTFP-based enterprise, users do not consider NTFP collection as a lucrative work and they are not assured of timely sale of the NTFPs harvested by them. In such a situation, mostly better off households can take risk to harvest and store for longer period of time until they get good price. On the other hand, when the community forest user group has a secured link with markets; through establish of enterprises or collection centers, the participation and thereby earning of the poorest users from NTFP collection increases remarkably. The study concludes that linking forest products to the value chain builds the confidence of the poor users thereby consider NTFPs collecting job as their livelihood strategy. Hence, direct NTFP market linkages through establishment of enterprises or collection centers could be few of the approaches to reducing poverty.

**Keywords:** Non-timber forest product, enterprise, poverty, community forestry, Nepal