

The socio-ecological significance of Non- timber forest produce in nurturing tribal livelihoods: A comprehensive Review

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Abstract:

Non-timber forest products (NTFP) are essential for maintaining tribal populations means of subsistence all over the world. The comprehensive study examines the socio-ecological importance of NTFP in tribal lifestyles, taking into account its social, economic, and ecological aspects. Tribal groups' use of NTFP is firmly based in their traditional knowledge and cultural practises, enabling the survival of indigenous knowledge systems and fostering a sense of communal identity. The use and sharing of NTFP strengthen tribal communities social bonds by establishing networks for communication and cooperation.

Economically, NTFP contributes significantly to tribal livelihoods, serving as a source of income and economic resilience. Commercializing NTFP offers opportunities for income generation, entrepreneurship, and poverty alleviation. NTFP-based enterprises promote sustainable development by reducing dependence on unsustainable practices and enhancing local economic autonomy. From an ecological perspective, NTFP harvesting practices align with sustainable resource management. Tribal communities possess intricate ecological knowledge, ensuring the sustainable extraction of NTFP while maintaining forest ecosystem health. Their traditional ecological knowledge contributes to biodiversity conservation and ecosystem protection. Challenges such as deforestation, land encroachment, climate change, and inadequate policy support threaten the sustainable use of NTFP. Intellectual property rights, market access, and fair trade issues hinder equitable benefit-sharing from NTFP trade.

Recognizing the socio-ecological significance of NTFP is crucial. Policies should empower tribal communities, preserve traditional knowledge, promote sustainable harvesting practices, ensure equitable benefit-sharing, and create favourable market conditions for NTFP-based enterprises. Understanding the importance of NTFP in tribal livelihoods is essential for sustainable development, cultural resilience, and conservation efforts. Collaboration between indigenous communities, researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders is vital to address challenges and leverage NTFP's potential for inclusive and sustainable development.

Keywords: Non-timber forest products, Tribal, Livelihood.