



Research Article

Soligas and NTFP collection in Bilgiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) wild life sanctuary

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Abstract : Non timber forest products (NTFPs) provides livelihood for millions of rural people who live in and around the forest. Many studies valued NTFP extractions against other economic uses of the forests, the usufruct rights allow soligas to continue gathering a wide variety of NTFPs from the state owned forest lands in the sanctuary. These products are extensively marketed through co-operatives such as Large Scale Adivasi Multipurpose Co-operative Society (LAMPS). Commercially important species of the forest make up to 70 per cent of the individuals indicating the high utility values of these forests. Bilgiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wild life sanctuary is rich with its biodiversity in all 6 forest types and there are mainly 5 families of soligas involved in collection of NTFPs in 57 podus with 100 per cent family involvement in NTFP collection by following sustainable harvesting. Commercially 8 species are extracted and marketed through LAMPS. In addition, several species are traded through other channels. The major NTFPs collected in BR hills are gooseberry, *Acacia sinuta*, *Sapindus laurifolia*, lichen, honey, fire wood etc. NTFP collection not only provides employment to soligas but also improves their socioeconomic status.

Key Words : NTFP, Soliga, LAMPS, Gooseberry

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INTRODUCTION

Non-timber forest products comprise all forest products other than timber and fuel wood. These products seem to be minor in comparison with timber and fuel wood but are essential from the point of their utility, economic and importance in local economy. Millions of people around the world rely on these NTFPs to meet their subsistence needs and for local cash economy (Mahapatra and Tiwari, 2005). In India almost all NTFPs are nationalized and can be sold

only to government agencies. Prior to nationalization NTFP could be sold to anyone. In BRT Wild Life Sanctuary the Soligas use to sell forest products to forest contractors. However about 30 years ago, a Large Scale Adivasi Multipurpose Society (LAMPS) was set up. This is an state controlled co-operative body which market NTFP collected by the Soligas, which are partly controlled by the government. The lamps market the product without processing or value addition. The Soligas thus essentially receive wage labours for extraction of NTFPs (Siddappa Shetti, 2004).

BRT Wild Life Sanctuary located in Karnataka is a confluence of western and eastern ghats and is rich in biodiversity. The region is home to the indigenous soliga tribal community. nearly 7500 people live in the sanctuary earning a combined total of Rs 7 lakhs per year from non timber forest products (NTFPs) from the forest to meet a proportion of their subsistence-cash income. In BRT

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