

Forest Policies for the 21st Century

Sixth Executive Forest Policy Course

27 May - 6 June 2013, Thimphu, Bhutan

NON-WOOD FOREST PRODUCTS AND FOREST POLICIES

CTS Nair

Organized by: Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank

- **NWFPs consists of a broad group of products that encompass all plant and animal products other than wood (Goods of biological origin other than wood).**
- **An assortment of very diverse products – food, medicine, fibres, gums, resins, cosmetics, cultural items.**
- **Level of dependence on NWFPs extremely varied – Often extrapolation of local studies could be misleading.**
- **Historically non-wood forest products have been an integral part of pre-agrarian and agrarian societies.**
- **Obviously forest policies focused on wood production relegated non-wood forest products as “Minor Forest Products”.**
- **It is only during the recent decades that NWFPs have come to prominence on account of their (a) livelihood significance, (b) commercial value and © a source of income to government.**

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

- **Provide an indication of the changes in the use of non-wood forest products and the expansion of trade.**
- **Discuss the emerging scenarios in the production and processing of non-wood forest products.**
- **Analyse how forest policies have addressed non-wood forest products issues.**
- **Discuss what needs to be done.**



CHALLENGES IN DEALING WITH NWFPs

- **A very diverse array of products, production systems and end uses.**
- **Largely subsistence use – Extremely challenging to obtain even an approximate estimate of what is produced, collected and used.**
- **Difficulty in tracking the value chain – A significant part of which is in the informal/ illegal domain. Absence of transparency**
- **Multiple players and stakeholders.**

DIFFERING USES/ CHARACTERISTICS

Category	Examples	Characteristics
Subsistence	A wide array of products used as food, medicines,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Local importance•Largely based on local culture and knowledge
Traded in regional/ national markets	Tendu leaves, Shellac, bamboo and rattan, edible insects, medicinal plants used in traditional medical systems (Ayurveda, Chinese medicines).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Industrial applications – food and non–food industries•Natural health care products•Increasing use in pharmaceutical industry
Traded globally	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Mushrooms, sandalwood oil, agar–wood oil, medicinal plants, gums and resins, bamboo and rattan products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Many are high values products•Rising incomes and societal preferences for green products have led to growing demand

- **Collection from the wild:**
 - largely hunter-gatherer system – may or may not be linked to markets.
 - **Over-exploitation and illegal trade**
- **Cultivation integrated with other agricultural crops (especially home-gardens):**
 - **Marketing challenges.**
- **Commercial/ industrial scale cultivation as monoculture crops:**
 - **Vulnerability to market changes (boom and bust scenarios)**

Each system has its own challenges and opportunities

- **Significant decline in the consumption of subsistence products, especially in the context of increased products considered as superior.**
- **Reduction in subsistence collection, especially on account of increasing wages and better employment opportunities.**
- **More systematic cultivation of some of the NWFP items in response to increasing demand from NWFP industries (Especially health and beauty products) .**

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- **To what extent forest policies are addressing of NWFP issues?**
- **What is the role of NWFPs in poverty alleviation? Are some of the claims exaggerated?**
- **Do we have a clear understanding of what needs to be done?**
- **What is the ability of institutions to go beyond the forest boundaries and better understand what is happening?**
- **To what extent certification and fair trade help in improving NWFP contribution to livelihood?**
- **Do we need a separate NWFP Policy or is it possible to address the complex issues under the umbrella of forest policies?**

Thank You