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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	THE IMMIGRANTS DILEMMA AND HOW THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER COPES WITH THE MIGRATED LOT: A COMPARISON OF UK AND PAKISTANI COMPANIES <i>DR. AMER AL-KASSEM</i>	1
2.	ASSESSING CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN WONDGENET WOREDA BETWEEN THE SIDAMA AND GUJI-OROMO PEOPLE <i>DR. BREHANU BORJI AYALEW</i>	5
3.	THE RANKING OF EFFECTIVE FACTORS ON LABOR PRODUCER WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY TOPSIS (THE CASE OF A PROVINCE IN IRAN) <i>DR. YOUNOS VAKIL ALROAIA & RAHIL KATOLI</i>	10
4.	THE STRATEGIC GAINS OF ORGANIZATIONAL VERTICAL INTEGRATION: A STUDY ON SOME EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS <i>GOLAM MOHAMMAD FORKAN</i>	17
5.	THE IMPACT OF MICRO CREDIT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT <i>RATHIRANEYOGENDRARAJAH</i>	22
6.	THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INTRINSIC MOTIVATION ON PERCEIVED INVESTMENT IN EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND WORK PERFORMANCE <i>ASIF SHAHZAD, AAMER WAHEED & MUHAMMAD ARSALAN KHAN</i>	27
7.	THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF COMPANIES <i>ROYA DARABI & ALIREZA ESLAMPOOR</i>	36
8.	EDUCATED UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IN KARNATAKA: A STUDY <i>DR. RAJNALKAR LAXMAN & AMBANNA MALAKAPPA</i>	42
9.	COMPARATIVELY STUDY OF REAL ORGANIZATION & VIRTUAL ORGANIZATION (STUDY OF SELECTED COMMERCIAL BANK) <i>VIVEK UPRIT & MANGAL MISHRA</i>	46
10.	A STUDY ON MERGERS AND BANKS PERFORMANCE IN INDIA <i>M. VAISHNAVI, DR. S. NIRMALA & V. JEYAKUMAR</i>	51
11.	IMPACT OF MICROFINANCE ON POOR PEOPLE: A STUDY OF LIVING STANDARDS, EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE DAVANAGERE DISTRICT OF KARNATAKA STATE <i>MANJULA B.G & DR. CHANNABASAVANAGOUDA</i>	56
12.	INDIA'S SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES: DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT PERFORMANCE <i>PRAMOD P. LONARKAR & DR. A. B. DEOGIRIKAR</i>	59
13.	THE RE-VITALIZATION OF KHADI - A NEED OF THE HOUR: A CASE STUDY AT SANGRUR (PUNJAB) <i>RAKESH MISHRA & DR. P. K. JAIN</i>	63
14.	VALIDATION AND EVALUATION OF BURNOUT AMONG NURSES <i>DR. BEJOY JOHN THOMAS & DR. G. S. DAVID SAM JAYAKUMAR</i>	67
15.	'SWADESHI': A TOOL OF ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT <i>DR. AVIJIT ROYCHOUDHURY</i>	72
16.	WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR THROUGH SHGs: A STUDY IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT <i>C. RATHINAM & DR. K. KAMALAKANNAN</i>	75
17.	A STUDY ON CENTRAL COORDINATED VEGETABLE MARKET IN PARAVAI MADURAI: PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FARMERS <i>DR. MRS. S. FATIMA ROSALINE MARY & S. P. SAVITHA</i>	79
18.	EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AT HOUSE-HOLD LEVEL THROUGH SELF-HELP-GROUPS- A STUDY OF KHORDHA DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF ODISHA, INDIA <i>DR. ANUJA MOHAPATRA</i>	83
19.	ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT <i>DR. TASI KAYE</i>	88
20.	STUDENTS AND PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION <i>DR. NARINDER TANWAR</i>	92
21.	ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE OF TRIBAL ON FOREST: A CASE STUDY IN THE GANJAM DISTRICT OF ORISSA <i>PADMA LOCHANA BISOI</i>	96
22.	NON – PERFORMING ASSETS IN STATE CO-OPERATIVE BANKS IN INDIA – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>DR. A. DHARMENDRAN</i>	102
23.	GOVERNANCE OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN INDIA: A MYTH OR REALITY? <i>A. LAKSHMANA RAO</i>	107
24.	MODERN DAY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OF TAMILNADU – A CASE STUDY <i>S. SHAILAJA</i>	112
25.	PERFORMANCE OF PRIME MINISTER'S EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PROGRAMME SCHEME IN NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT <i>S. DHINESHANKAR & DR. S. MAYILVAGANAN</i>	116
26.	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A STUDY BASED ON INDEX OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA <i>N. P. ABDUL AZEEZ & S. M. JAWED AKHTAR</i>	119
27.	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT – BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING <i>ANANDAMMA N.</i>	126
28.	POVERTY AND FOOD SECURITY NEXUS IN INDIA <i>PARVAZE AHMAD LONE & NASEER AHMAD RATHER</i>	129
29.	A STUDY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF DAIRY CO-OPERATIVES IN TAMIL NADU <i>S. MADHESWARAN</i>	133
30.	AN ECONOMIC STUDY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK <i>P. SANTHOSH KUMAR</i>	137
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	140

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ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE OF TRIBAL ON FOREST: A CASE STUDY IN THE GANJAM DISTRICT OF ORISSA

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ABSTRACT

Forest, is an important source of renewable natural capital that contributes a large component of environmental resource base of an economy. As an eco system it serves human society directly and indirectly by providing a large variety of goods and services. (Gutierrez, 1992; Pearce, 1992; Pearce and Warford, 1992). The important goods human society collects from forests are fuel, wood, timber, minor forest products and various services like Carbon Sink, Bio Diversity, Flood Control etc. (Reid and Miller, 1993, Shiva 1992). However, many of these important services are outside the market system (Hanley et al, 1997). Forests and tribals are like the two sides of the same coin, co-exist and are inseparable. The tribal life style is deeply interwoven with all aspects of tribals socio-economic, religious and cultural practices are knitted with the forest. Therefore, the forest is termed as the foster mother (Basu 1987). Tribals who always like to be in the midst of forest largely depend on the forest resources like stems, roots, tubers, fruits, leaves, flowers, herbs, meat from wild animals and birds for their daily needs. Even monetary requirements are also partly fulfilled by the minor forest products. India has the largest concentration of tribal population in the world (GOI, 2001). The tribals are children of Nature and their life style is conditioned by the ecosystem. On account of its varied Geo-climatic conditions and diverse ecosystem, India has a wide range of tribal people, 84.5% millions consisting of 8.4% of its total population. Majority of them are forest dwellers and in spite of many competing demand and pressures, these people continue to depend on forest for livelihood and existence. The present study is an attempt to examine the nature and extent of forest dependency of the local and tribal people in the South Ghumusar Forest Division area in Ganjam District of Orissa, India. The study is built upon both primary and secondary information

KEYWORDS

Economic Dependency, Forest Income, Tribal Community.

INTRODUCTION

Forest resources in particular often contribute to a substantial share of livelihoods of rural and tribal communities. There is increasing recognizing of the important role of forest and forest resources in the lives of the rural and tribal poor. More than one billion people in the world depend on forest for their livelihood (World Bank, 2001). Income from forest resources is common strategy of the poor to complement agricultural income from small and marginal land holdings (Dasgupta and Maler, 1993). It is coping strategy by the poor to mitigate the risk inherent in the subsistence agriculture (Pattanaik and Sills, 2001; Takasaki et al., 2004; Baland and Francois, 2005). Forest for the poor and tribal household, forestry is an important safety net.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is perused under the Ghumusar South Forest Division in the district of Ganjam, Orissa, India, one of the most diversified geographical tracts. It has the highest number of people among the 30 districts of Orissa, a total population of 31.37 lakhs (2001 census), 8.55% of the state population. About 90,000 tribal people live in this District. The economy of this District is predominantly agricultural and forest based. However the coastal and the plain areas have gained momentum for commercial and industrial activities.

The Ghumusar South Forest Division has total of 1441.96 Sq Kms, 51.15% of the total area of the Division, 536.75 Sq. kms of reserve forest over 33 blocks and 905.20 Sq.Kms of non reserve forest over 66 blocks. The forest coverage in the division is higher than both the state and national average. Sorada block range is the largest range having 428.82 Sq.Kms of forest area, 29.73% of total forest over of the division (GOO, 2001). The Ghumusar South Forest Division has a sound forest base and hence influences the livelihood and life style of the surrounding people in a grater way. Our study is confined to forest dependence that is the economic contributions of the forestry sector to the life and living of the local tribal communities. The study looks into both the income and earnings from forestry in term of wood and non wood forest products.

In a summary statement it can be said that the study investigates an economic assessment of forest dependency by the tribals in their day to day earnings and livelihood.

OBJECTIVES

This study investigates the degree of economic dependence on forest resources of the tribal community living around the Ghumusara South Forest Division in the undivided Ganjam District of Orissa. Since forest resources play a prominent role in the livelihoods of the tribal people, the work intends to investigate the extent of contribution of forest and forest products to the economic life of the local tribal community. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. The role of forests in the survival strategies of tribal households.
- ii. How large is the forest income?
- iii. How is the level dependency on forest income?
- iv. The relative role NWFPs in forest income.

HYPOTHESIS

The study intends to verify the following hypothetical propositions through an analytical frame work.

Hypothesis 1: Forest income is the major source of livelihood for the poor tribal Communities.

Hypothesis 2: Forest income is closely and positively related to total income.

Hypothesis 3: Forest income levels and dependence postulate U shaped relations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is built upon both primary and secondary information. The secondary information has come from the reports and publications of various agencies and Government departments, voluntary agencies and NGOs, survey reports and research findings or other institutions. The reference materials have been gathered from the books and Journals available in the libraries in the state of Orissa as well as outside the state. Primary survey of 50 households in the study area consists of 9 villages. The primary survey was conducted during April- 2011 with the help of a structured questionnaire.

The relevant data collected from different sources are rearranged, processed and tabulated adopting standard statistical tools, tables and graphs are used to facilitate the analysis. The work is based as statistical and economic reasoning to judge and assets the dependence of tribals on forest and forest resources. During the household survey local measures were used to estimate forest products. Letter on they were converted to standardize to have meaningful quantitative analysis. The standardized prices of forest products were first ascertained from different villages and letter ex-village prices were set thorough

discussion with villagers. The processed data are presented through tables, graphs, figures etc. Standard statistical tools like mean, median, variance, standard deviation and percentages are very frequently used.

The central research problem is addressed through the primary information gathered from 50 sample households covering 9 villages and the sample villages were selected on the basis of a purposive random sampling. To examine the extent and nature of dependence on the forest a household survey was done to elicit data. Tribal communities living in and around the forest are the target group of the study. For conducting the primary household survey nine villages stretching over three Panchayats under the Ghumusar South Forest Division in the undivided Ganjam Districts of Orissa were taken. Again only fifty households were chosen randomly from the nine villages which consist of 23.36% of total households in the villages. Among the tribal communities dominant communities like Kandhas and Sauras were selected for the purpose.

In the study, the flow approach has been adopted. The income has been measured as the share of product consumed by the households and that sold in the market. For the household consumption purpose, products being valued at retail prices prevailing in the village.

In this work, the concept of stated income is used, in which the head of the household expressed their annual income from different sources by memory recall method. The total income of the household is composed of the sum of the value of the total production under different activities. The composition consists of the value of output from agriculture, forests, shifting cultivation, livestock.

The sample households come from 9 villages under three different forest ranges of old Ghumusar South Forest Division. The selection of villages was on the basis on the forests.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A socio-economic survey of 329 households, living in four villages on the fringes of forests in Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj and Ganjam districts, revealed that an average household draws as much as 49.2% of its total annual income/benefits from forests (Singh, 1997).

Prof. B.K. Roy Burman Committee estimated that in tribal areas more than 60 percent of the households depend on forests for incomes ranging from 25% to 75% every year.

Mallik (2000), estimated the percentage of income derived from forest varied from 22 per cent to 41 per cent in different forest areas in undivided Koraput and Kalahandi districts. The poor particularly the landless labourers and marginal farmers derived the largest share of their total income from forest products.

William Cavendish's study (2000) of 30 villages of 200 households in the Shindig ward of Zimbabwe in the late 1990s provides a careful look at how the poor make use of nature-based income.

TRIBAL POPULATION IN ORISSA

The geographic area of Orissa is 15.57 million hectares, which constitutes 4.74 % area of the country. Total geographical land area is 15,571,000 hectares, out of which 5,606,000 hectares is the total forest area which is the 36% of the total land area (GOI,2000) .

So far as Orissa State is concerned it has 48838 Sq. Kms forests, 7.38% of total national forest area is 31.4% of the total geographical area of the state. Of this 52.28% is dense forest and 47% of the total forest area under reserve forest, protected area is 52% and 0.02% of on classified forest. Orissa forest is composed of tropical broad leafed species like Sal (*Shorea Robusta*), Teak (*Tectona Grandis*) which are economically viable.

Forests and trees have customarily played a critical role in the livelihoods of the tribal poor in Orissa. The majority of this group depends fully or in part on forest resources to meet their subsistence needs. For them, forests are also a source of construction material, fuel, medicines, animal feed and nutrients for crops. The tribal population thus has an organic link with forests as they depend on forest resources almost throughout the year (Pathy 2003, p. 2834). Many of these rural people are also forest producers, who plant trees along their farm boundaries. Also, small scale manufacturing of forest-based products like furniture, tools, and baskets provides an important source of rural non-farm employment to these poor people. For many poor people in the forested and marginal agricultural lands, commercial markets for these forest products offer one of the few available and sustainable options to overcome/alleviate their poverty.

FOREST BASED ACTIVITIES IN THE STUDY AREA

Goudagotha Panchayat is bordering Orissa state and is 30 km away from the nearest NH -217. All of the tribal groups are Sauras and Kandhas. There is neither electricity nor drinking water facilities and the valley has no paved roads. The reserved forest here is completely degraded. Tribals depend on agriculture and shifting cultivation.

In contrast to other tribal areas, the Goudagotha Panchayats have excessively depend on forest-based activities due to thick forest cover. There is a plenty of fodder, fuel wood and timber. Women walk a distance of 1-2 km twice a week for firewood. Fodder for Livestock is easily available around their region. Women and children are primarily responsible for grazing the cattle. To obtain construction timber, the tribals travel 3-4 km. For medicinal plants and herbs that are widely used in the villages, medicine men travel for at least two three days in the forests more than 30 kms away. Approximately 70 percent of all the work is done by women and female children. This includes work related to agriculture, forest produce collection and domestic chores. Men are primarily responsible for ploughing the fields and carrying forest products the daily market.

About 70 percent of the populations in Mohana Panchayats are identified as tribal people. The tribals in this area belong to Sauras and Kandhas. The demarcation of reserve forest falls close to the inhabited villages and is a source of conflict between the tribals and the forest department. Tribals use the forests as sources of NWFPs, fuel wood, housing materials, medicinal herbs, water and irrigation, and for grazing their cattle, hunting and charcoal making.

Several different NTFPs in Mohana Panchayat are collected by tribal women such as Sua, tamarind, nuts, fruits, kanugu, jack and mango. It is very labor intensive to collect many of these forest products. In the case of adda leaves and tamarind, women play a major role in collecting, drying, packing them into baskets and carrying the processed products to the markets. Stall feeding of cattle is not practiced in this area. Men take the cattle out for grazing and travel very close to their villages. For firewood, both men and women travel 2 to 3 km once every two days. Women, however, spend more time collecting dry twigs and logs whereas men fell trees and take them back to the village. It is women, however, who go for firewood collection, especially during the agricultural season when men are busy ploughing the fields. It is not uncommon for women to gather wild tubers and roots while collecting firewood.

Manikyapur Panchayat is very close to the main road to Berhampur road. The tribes cultivate paddy, agriculture is primarily on dry land. Minor cereals, millets, pulses, red gram, and oilseeds like Niger and castor, are the main cash crops. Shifting cultivation is rarely practiced in this Panchayat.

Some of the tribes of Manikyapur Panchayat under Dharakote block are different from the tribes of Goudagotha Panchayat under Sorada block. Most of the tribals depend on bamboo and bamboo product. They are engaged in the "Pati" work, means making baskets from bamboo. In this Panchayat there is a small amount of tribes. Their life style is just like the life style of their neighborhoods. The tribes of this Panchayat have to walk 4 to 5 kilometers to collect fuel wood, small log, leaves and fruits. In contrast to other tribal areas, the people of this Panchayat have very few forest-based activities due to the absence of forest cover. They face extreme shortages of fodder, fuel wood and timber. Women walk a distance of 4-5 km twice a week for firewood. A frequent source of fuel in this region is the dung cakes prepared by the women. However they have to commute 8 to 10 kilometers for timber and bamboo for making baskets. Their main occupation is to make basket out of bamboo. Some of the tribes are agriculturalist having their own land and bullocks. They got considerable income from goat and making basket. The lands are irrigated by the Harabhangi Irrigation Project. Though lands are irrigated the average productivity is very low, because they are not using modern technology in the process of production. They are the untouchable persons of their region. They are prohibited to enter the temples and other scared places of their region. The tribes have to walk Theravada for selling their forest product. There is medical facilities and fresh drinking water. For their medical they have to walk only 1 kilometer to the near Primary Health Centre of Manikyapur.

It is evident from the description of forest dependence in these three Panchayat Ganjam district of Orissa, that tribal household survival is inextricably bound to forests. This is so even in areas where forests have receded. Moreover, it is the women and children who transform the forests to meet both subsistence and income needs of a tribal household. Women and children in all of these Panchayats engage in NWFP and fuel wood collection to a greater extent than men.

Men, on the other hand, are primarily responsible for house construction and agriculture. Much of the collection of NTFPs, fuel wood and fodder are undertaken in forests and common lands adjoining the villages. When forests and commons are highly degraded, as in the Manikyapur Panchayat of Dharakote block, women and men travel long distances to obtain the necessary fuel, fodder, food, and medicinal plants. Where forests and commons are degraded, enormous additional burdens are placed on women and children. From comparisons of the different Panchayats the Ganjam districts, there is a positive relationship between the level of forest degradation and the amount of time and labor expended by women and children in collecting forest produce. Exploratory data also indicate that women and children engage in NTFP collection for a greater portion of the year in these degraded areas. The duration of NTFP collection ranges between 6 and 9 months out of the year. NTFP collection is seasonal and contingent on the availability of the product. Pressure on the forests in this region is increasing, but left with few alternatives for sustaining their livelihoods, tribal expend ever greater energy and resources in collecting increasingly precious NTFPs. The rapid decline in forests and village commons in semi-arid regions has eroded sources of supplementary income for women. In the face of these pressures, it is critical to give women greater say in the control and use of village forests and commons because they tend to fare better under common property resource regimes, where the rights are more egalitarian between genders, than in privatized property regimes where men have more control (Agarwal, 1994a). Forest co-management strategies that fail to engage women in the use, control and management of village forests place women in a precarious situation vis-à-vis forest resources. In spite of all the pressures, women will still continue to rely on forest resources, but the absence of their rights and responsibilities to control and use these resources will make them vulnerable and leave them without options against competing claims.

TABLE-1: CONTRIBUTION OF FOREST INCOME

Table-1: Contribution of Forest Income					
Total Income	Forest	Farm	Livestock	Wage work	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
2	23895 (30.62)	18900 (24.21)	28200 (36.13)	7040 (9.0)	78035 (100)
3	37423 (76.56)	8245 (16.86)	3210 (6.56)	0	48878 (100)
4	7396 (56.47)	5700 (43.52)	0	0	13096 (100)
5	26626 (63.93)	13560 (32.56)	1460 (3.50)	0	41646 (100)
6	13881 (62.86)	8000 (36.23)	200 (0.91)	0	22081 (100)
7	7408 (23.42)	21070 (73.12)	2350 (0.91)	0	31628 (100)
8	26234 (82.92)	4750 (15.01)	650 (2.05)	0	31634 (100)
9	82120 (54.45)	63050 (41.81)	5620 (3.72)	0	150790 (100)
Total	246208 (49.28)	203875 (40.81)	42440 (8.49)	7040 (1.42)	499563 (100)

Source: Household Survey

FOREST CONTRIBUTION TO AGGREGATE INCOME IN THE STUDY AREA

In the survey we used a stretched income approach where the head of the households were asked to state their annual income in a memory recall method. The total income of the household is composed of the sum total of various sources like agriculture, daily wage, forest, livestock etc. The sectoral composition of income for the sample villages and the total sample is presented in Table- 1. In case of the whole sample forest contributes 49.28%, the highest share followed by agriculture (40.81%), livestock (8.49%) and wage work only 1.42%. The sectoral composition indicates the importance of forest income, which except of villagers 1 and 7 are above 25% of total income. Villages 1 and 7 have an agrarian dominates, agriculture contributes 73% to the total income of the villages. Wage work is present only in Khajuripoli village. Livestock income is higher in Khajuripoli village and it is below 10% of the total income for the rest of the villages.

EARNING AND INCOME SHARES BY SOURCE AND BY VILLAGE

Forest income is of two types, absolute income and cash income. Cash income is otherwise known as the income earned from the sales of the surplus forest product over and above self consumption/subsistence. The part of cash income is important since it is surplus and is used for the betterment or welfare of the household. Looking from this angle it is inferred that forest income plays an important role by contributing a proportionately higher share. As is seen from the table a total of 51% of earnings or cash income comes from the forest sector for the whole sample. The contribution ranges between 9% (village 7) to 93% (village 8). Five out of nine villages enjoy more than 60% of cash income from forestry. This is not an uncommon finding as in the absence of alternatives forest dwellers largely depend on the local natural resources, the forests. (Table-2)

TABLE-2: EARNING AND INCOME SHARES BY SOURCE AND BY VILLAGE (IN INDIAN RUPEE)

Sales earnings	Forest	Farm	Livestock	Wage work	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1	6890 (0.13)	44000 (0.85)	640 (0.01)	0 (0)	51530
2	3900 (0.24)	2400 (0.15)	2600 (0.16)	7040 (0.44)	15940 (1.00)
3	21346 (0.42)	125 (0.02)	29000 (0.57)	0 (0)	50471 (1.00)
4	4051 (0.81)	900 (0.18)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4951 (1.00)
5	9242 (0.61)	4550 (0.30)	1250 (0.08)	0 (0)	15042 (1.00)
6	12100 (0.89)	1250 (0.09)	200 (0.01)	0 (0)	13550 (1.00)
7	900 (0.09)	6370 (0.67)	2150 (0.15)	0 (0)	9420 (1.00)
8	19490 (0.93)	750 (0.03)	650 (0.03)	0 (0)	20890 (1.00)
9	57810 (0.71)	22090 (0.27)	590 (0.03)	0 (0)	80490 (1.00)
Total	135729 (0.51)	82435 (0.31)	37080 (0.14)	7040 (0.02)	262284 (1.00)
Total Income					
1	21225 (0.25)	59800 (0.73)	750 (0.09)	0 (0)	81775 (1.00)
2	23895 (0.30)	18900 (0.24)	28200 (0.36)	7040 (0.09)	78035 (1.00)
3	37423 (0.76)	8245 (0.16)	3210 (0.06)	0 (0)	48878 (1.00)
4	7396 (0.56)	5700 (0.43)	0 (0)	0 (0)	13096 (1.00)
5	26626 (0.63)	13560 (0.32)	1460 (0.03)	0 (0)	41646 (1.00)
6	13881 (0.62)	8000 (0.36)	200 (0.09)	0 (0)	22081 (1.00)
7	7408 (0.23)	21070 (0.73)	2350 (0.09)	0 (0)	31628 (1.00)
8	26234 (0.82)	4750 (0.15)	650 (0.02)	0 (0)	31634 (1.00)
9	82120 (0.54)	63050 (0.41)	5620 (0.37)	0 (0)	150790 (1.00)
Total	246208 (0.49)	203875 (0.40)	42440 (0.08)	7040 (0.01)	499563 (1.00)

Source: Household Survey

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOTAL INCOME AND TOTAL FOREST INCOME

Forest income is closely and positively related to total income. We found the forest income increased with an increase in total income. This can be explained with a simple regression analysis (using a log log model that provides the best fit). Our study also supports and produced the following result. $\log AFI = 0.100 + 0.924 \log AI$ (AFI = Absolute forest income, AI = absolute total income). The equation shows the elasticity of forest income with respect to total income is close to unity.

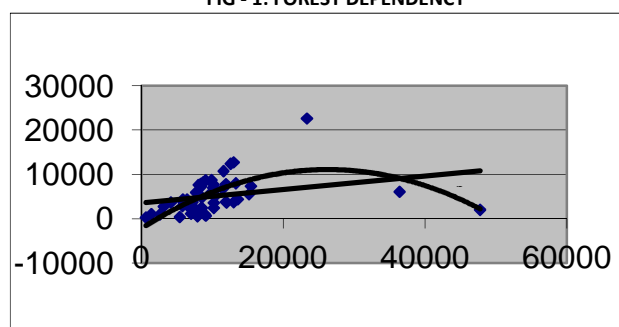
Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio	P[T >t]	Mean of X
Constant	.1008897461	1.6440244	.061	.9526	
LOGAI	.9245390674	.14985480	6.170	.0003	10.926214

R²(adj)=0.80462, N=10

DISTRIBUTION OF FOREST INCOME

How does forest dependence change with total income? The total forest income increases as we move from the bottom to the top, there emerges an important pattern that the relationship between the two exhibits a bell shaped relationship. From the graph presented below it is observed in the study area that with an increasing total income forest dependence increases upto a certain level, beyond which it is found the forest dependence declines with an increase in income. This means there is environmental Kuznets curve, where an inverted U shape emerges between the increase in total income and increase in forest income. This says in share of forest income the poorest and the richest groups have a significantly lower dependence than the intermediate group or the people in the middle income range.

FIG - 1: FOREST DEPENDENCY



CONCLUSION

This research empirically analyzed the relationship between livelihood and income of the tribals and the surrounding forests in the South Ghumusar Forest Division of Ganjam, in Orissa. An attempt is made to measure the nature and extent of forest dependency of Kandhas and Sauras as their economic life through a set of statistical and econometrics tools and well defined and relevant variables.

Importance of forest income is evident from the information gathered through household survey. In this chapter we found forest resources contribute largely to the economy of the forest dwellers. 49% of the total income comes from the forest resources and 51% of the total earnings is the contributes of the forest to the local economy. Agriculture is just behind the forest resources contributing 40% in total income and 31% to total earnings.

Among the nine villages majority of them also enjoy a higher share of their cake from this sector. Considering various concepts of income like the absolute income, subsistence income, cash income and relative income for both forest and non forest sectors we found that forest is the major contributes to the economic life of the tribal people. It is not only a substance sector, rather it supports a larger portion of the cash income which are spent in other sectors like purchase of a farm implements that add to the wealfare of the tribal community. Also the study conformed two component substances that can increase in total income positively supports the quantity of forest income and forest income is high of among the middle income group and less for the very poor and rich. This indicates a higher portion of forest income contributes in the middle group hinting on the presence of an environmental Kuznet' Curve in the forest sector.

VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS

The ratio and the percentage methods, the simple regression model and the trend analysis with the help of the scatter plot and graph the entire three hypotheses are conformed.

The data and information from household survey indicates high level of dependence on forest for income. Sample households derive 49% of income on an average. A component analysis of income that is the subsistence income and cash income both are high for the lower communities. This confirms the first hypothesis, that forest income is the major source of livelihood for the poor tribal communities. It is a common that forest income is closely and positively related to total income. An increase in total income for the forest dependent communities is associated with an increase in forest income. Our second hypothesis is based on this using a simple log log regression model; we found that elasticity of forest income with respect to total income is close to unity. This confirms our 2nd hypothesis. Forest dependence changes with total income.

This hypothesis emphasizes on this, we proved this using the total income and the forest income. The linear trend in figure 1 states that, forest income increases, with the increase in total income, but distribution of forest income along with the increase in total income is in form of a inverted 'U' shaped (Fig-1). This confirms our 3rd hypothesis.

SUGGESTIONS

The analysis of the research problem provides the following suggestions and recommendations in order to improve the economic strength of the forest dependent communities on account of the importance and the role forests play in these poor men's economic life.

Since forest income has a crucial role for the tribal households, for both income and consumption purposes, there is a need to recognize this sector.

An important policy implication stems from this study that, since forests have greater role for poverty alleviation, therefore forest based approaches are necessary in poverty alleviation.

Increasing access to forest resources many enhance the income derived from forest. So there is a need for careful designing of access to forest resources. For sustainable management of forest resources, policy makers need to understand the regional differences in the volume of capacity of forest resources and also how individual household's responses to alternative attributes is?

Study findings indicate potential forest led for poverty reduction through cooperation. Therefore there is a need for joint and community forest management which is also important from the point of view of sustainability of the forest resources.

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