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## EMPLOYMENT GENERATION AND COMMON PROPERTY RESOURCES IN EAST SIANG DISTRICT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Women's role is crucial in the family and household economy, yet women have not been given equal rights in social, political as well as economic fields. The necessity of improvement of status of women has been recognized all over the world as an important aspect of national progress and development. Apart from the day to day household work, varied farm activities and other domestic responsibilities, women particularly in this tribal society spare a substantial time for Common Property Resource (CPR) based activities. Keeping this fact in mind, the present study is a modest attempt to analyze the importance of common property resources on the life of the tribal women. The study also envisages constructing a household model of women participation on common property resource based activity using evidence from rural study area. Forest/ CPR based collection for daily household purposes completely depended on the females in the study area.*

### KEYWORDS

Tribal women, Household economy, Domestic responsibilities, Common Property Resource, Employment.

### INTRODUCTION

Women are an integral part in Adi society. The nature and type of economic and non-economic role played by women have undergone continued transformation in accordance with the changes in socio-economic factors, education levels and technological developments and with the changing concepts regarding the extent to which women's contribution is desirable and necessary. Although women's role is crucial in the family and household economy, women have not been given equal rights in social, political as well as economic fields. The necessity of improvement of status of women has been recognized all over the world as an important aspect of national progress and development. It is also felt that the problem of poverty cannot be tackled without providing opportunities of productive employment to women. Productive employment to women would provide necessary economic base and improve their social status (Mandal and Ete, 2007).

Apart from the day to day household work, varied farm activities and other domestic responsibilities, women particularly in this tribal society spare a substantial time for Common Property Resource (CPR) based activities. They collect various minor as well as major forest products for their day to day requirement. Carrying of heavy loads of fuel wood (one of the most important CPR product) either on head or with traditional basket by women is a long practice in the tribal society. In the traditional tribal society the strength of a good mother and wife is judged by the amount of wood/fish they can carry/catch. However, the incursion of macroeconomic forces like emergence of property right, development of marketing network, commercialization of various CPR products, urbanization, etc. gradually deprived the tribal women from their age-old access to these resources. Very few studies are conducted so far on common property resources and its implementation to rural poor in the state. Keeping this fact in mind, the present study is a modest attempt to analyze the importance of common property resources on the life of the tribal women. The study also envisages constructing a household model of women participation on common property resource based activity using evidence from rural study area (Mandal, 2012).

Poverty and household food security are much debated issues in development literature, and women's contributions to food and economic security have received attention for the last 15 years. Collection of natural resources is usually carried out entirely by women in developing countries, particularly in fragile and rugged mountain environments. The value of women's contributions may be computed by 2 methods: **opportunity costs and output method**. The results will show that women are at the forefront of food and economic security and in some cases are breadwinners (Agarwal, 2004).

Women are providers of fuel wood and household energy in the developing world by virtue of gathering fuel wood from forests and elsewhere, directly along with their children. They spend considerable time in such activity by walking for long distances, for example, in Nepal, Women and girls collect 84 percent of the fuel (World Resources Institute: 1994-95), the average hours spent per day are between 1 and 5 hours per adult with one or two children. In some other developing countries, the average hours spent per day in gathering fuel are as follows: in Bangladesh, 3 to 5 hours; in Tanzania, 8 hours; in Kenya, 3.5 hours; and in Peru 2.5 hours. The women also walk for a long distance for such a task (Sheila, 1989).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study area:** In this sub section an attempt is made to provide a brief profile of the three villages selected for the study are Pam, Old- Deka and New- Deka. Among the total 22 numbers of villages in Nari sub- division, the Old- Deka village has been one of the oldest settlements in the sub- division. Both of the these villages are inhabited by the Galo tribe and are situated in one of the remotest part of the district under Nari Circle vis- a- vis administrative unit of Nari sub- division. These two villages are situated in the foothills of the Siwalik zone of the Himalayan mountain range, bounded by the plains of Dhemaji district (Assam) on the South, Deka river and its tributaries known as Besor, Yagar, Hitum and Tumse stream on the west, cultivable plain lands and two small streams called Kombo and Pome on the east and the picturesque hills covered by the sub- tropical evergreen forest known as Deka hills on the north. The villagers of these three villages used to practice both settled as well as Jhum cultivation. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the people of surveyed villages. However, there are variations in both the villages. The details are shown in table-1.

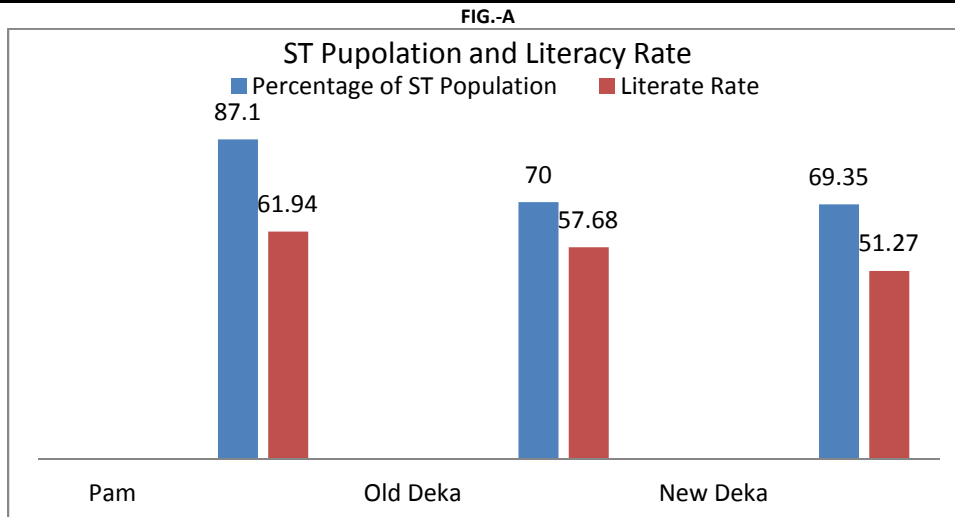
**TABLE-1: GENERAL INFORMATION AS PER 2011 CENSUS**

Village	H.H.	Person	Male	Female	Person ST	Male ST	Female ST	Person Literate	Male Literate	Female Literate
Pam	65	318	155	163	277 (87.10)	131	146	197 (61.94)	109	88
Old Deka	68	371	195	176	260 (70.00)	135	125	214 (57.68)	118	96
New Deka	71	509	250	259	353 (69.35)	170	183	261 (51.27)	141	120

Source: Census Report, 2011

The total households of the three villages: Pam, Old Deka and New Deka are 65, 68 and 71 only.

The percentages of ST population in the villages are 87.10, 70.00 and 69.35 and also the literacy rates are 61.94, 57.68 and 51.27 respectively. ST population and literacy rate both are highest in Pam village while both are lowest in New Deka village. These are shown in Figure-1.



The livelihood pattern of the people of these three villages was primitive type and depended more on common property resources. Globalization and modern live style were not seen in this area of the state. The three basic needs of life: food, cloth and shelter were managed by their own production on the basis of community cooperation.

**Data Base:** The research is based completely on primary data collected from village survey. 50 households from each village of the three villages were selected through random sampling technique without replacement to fill up the pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire through direct interaction with respondents. Out of 50 households, 25 males and 25 females from the age group (20-50) years were selected as respondents to fill up the questionnaires, as this age group is particularly more responsible to earn the livelihood for their family. The village survey was taken in the month of August, 2013.

**Tools:** Simple numerical calculations, graphical representations, different statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, Yule’s Coefficient of Association are used to analyze the data.

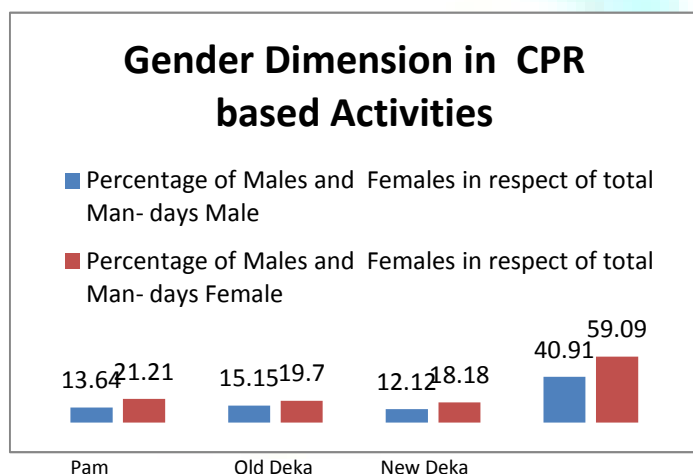
**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In our surveyed area the various sources of household energy were fuel wood, kerosene, LPG and electric power. Almost all the households were using fuel wood for cooking purpose and getting room temperate as there was extreme cold due to frequent snow falling. In the study area, collection of fuel wood from common property resources was a main source of domestic energy. It dealt mainly with the women’s labour allocation to fuel wood collection along with other products from CPRs. Local CPRs were very much important in the economy of rural people in general and women in particular. Women and the children were the sole or significant collector of various items from CPRs. Women by virtue of their gender role and domestic responsibilities had been pushed in their efforts to meet daily household needs from CPRs. Here we consider only adult males and females. Gender dimension in collection of forest produces is shown in Table-2 and Figure-1 and Figure-2 below.

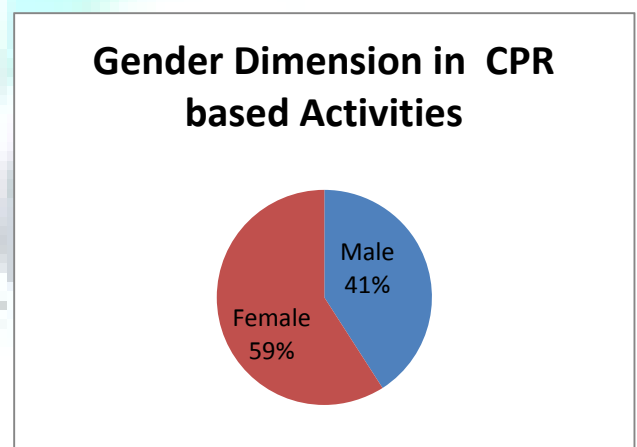
**TABLE-2: GENDER DIMENSION IN CPR BASED ACTIVITIES**

Village	Respondents		Total Hours Spent in Collection of Different Items from CPRs Daily		No. of Man-days in Collection of Different Items from CPRs Daily		Percentage of Males and Females in respect of total Man- days	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pem	25	25	72	112	9	14	13.64	21.21
Old Deka	25	25	80	104	10	13	15.15	19.70
New Deka	25	25	64	96	8	12	12.12	18.18
Total	75	75	232	312	27	39	40.91	59.09

Source: Field Survey; 1 man day = 8 hours spent in collection of items from the CPRs.



**FIGURE-1**



**FIGURE-2**

From our field study, we got 27 number of man-days for males and 39 number of man-days for females out of 150 respondents (males=75 and females=75) for collecting the different items daily from CPRs for maintaining their livelihood considering 1 man-day = 8 hours. Circle wise there were 9, 10 and 8 man-days for males in Pem, Old Deka and New Deka respectively while there were 14, 13 and 12 man-days for females in Pem, Old Deka and New Deka respectively and also their percentages are shown in Table-1 and Figures-1 and 2. The share of females for collecting the different items daily from CPRs was always higher than that of males in all the three circles in regard of man-days. Total percentage of females was 59.09 while that of males were 40.91. Therefore, women engaged averagely 4.16 hours daily where as males 3.09 hours daily on the CPR- based activities.

**Critical Dependence on Forests for Subsistence:** Women were dependent on forest for food, fibre, fodder, medicines, raw materials for producing small items like leaf plates, mats etc. for use at home or for selling them in markets and stones for construction house. Apart from their dependence on forest lands as



gatherers of forest produce, the women were also employed by forest department and contractors to work as unskilled labour. Women were supposed to participate in community forestation programmes and were also involved as producers in farm forestry programmes. Hence, four roles which women played in forestry are gathering, wage employment, management and production. But here women faced three main problems; their rights of collection were not well recognized and publicized, many minor forest products had been nationalized by state in the interest of revenue and diminishing opportunities for self-employment through collection of forest products (Saxena, 1993).

**Women's Priorities Not Reflected:** Indigenous communities in many localities have embarked on social forestry programmes to improve their quality of life and regenerate surrounding environment by planting trees. The performance of such social forestry projects is a mixed experience, where some have sustained, while many others have not. From gender perspective, most of them have failed to incorporate women groups' perceptions, priorities and needs. Commercial species planted on grazing land at the behest of forest department have deprived local women of any benefit and encouraged local level institutions like panchayats to harvest such plantation for income. Women's priorities, in species selection are not of any consequence for social forestry projects here; such priorities and indigenous knowledge have been kept out of the projects by default (Saxena, 1993). We got same picture in our study area. Plantation programmes were also taken in several times in this area where women were main participants but their roles were not reflected.

**IMPACT OF DIVERSION, EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT ON THE DEPENDENCY OF CPRs**

Women to gather fuel, particularly in tribal belts and lower strata of the society, had to walk a long distance in a day to collect a load of fuel wood on their back to boil the pot of their family due to the massive deforestation. The employment generated by CPRs is usually estimated by evaluating the working days spent by a household for the collection of CPR products or CPR based activities. Eight working hours by an adult person or sixteen working hours by a child have been considered equivalent to one working day (Singh, 1994 and Jodha, 1986). An attempt is made in this study to compare the contribution of community forest that accrues to poor and non-poor households as well as rural livelihood linkages. There are many studies which estimated the gross household income (Jodha, 1986; Pasha, 1992) but the income data suffered from a lot of errors, as respondents normally hesitated in reporting his/her real income and sources of income. The illiteracy of the respondents in the study area was another obstacle in it. Hence, in order to examine the relative importance of community forest in the household economy, the consumption from them in relation to total consumption was analysed. From the discussion with the villagers, it was known to the researcher that the dependency on CPRs was gradually decreasing year by year. As a reason they said that the villagers were migrating from village to town for livelihood and education. This is due to the fact that higher level of schooling might have better exit options due to high opportunity cost and hence, forest extraction activities might be less attractive for those households. Besides, availability of government sector jobs might well divert people from dependency on forests.

Again we can calculate how much did the unemployed and employed rural people at their own local area depend on CPRs in the study area? In this respect we can apply Yule's Coefficient of Association following Yule method to see correlation between employed and dependency on CPRs as per Table-2.

**TABLE-2: PERCENTAGE OF DEPENDENCY OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED MALE AND FEMALE ON CPRs**

% Dependency on CPRs	Male		Female		Total
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	
Above 50%	5	30	7	60	102
Below 50%	15	10	3	20	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>150</b>

Source: Field Survey

**Applying Yule's method for Male**

Let A denotes employment. Therefore, α would denote unemployment.

Let B denotes dependency on CPRs above 50%. Therefore, β would denote dependency on CPRs below 50%.

**Construction of Table for calculation Yule's Coefficient of Association for Male**

	A	α
B	5	30
β	15	10

$$\text{Yule's Coefficient of Association} = \frac{(AB)(\alpha\beta) - (A\beta)(\alpha B)}{(AB)(\alpha\beta) + (A\beta)(\alpha B)} = \frac{(5 \times 10) - (15 \times 30)}{(5 \times 10) + (15 \times 30)} = \frac{-400}{500} = -0.80$$

Thus, there is high negative association between the dependency on CPRs and employment of male meaning that increase in employment decreases the dependency upon CPRs.

**Applying Yule's method for Female**

Let A denotes employment. Therefore, α would denote unemployment.

Let B denotes dependency on CPRs above 50%. Therefore, β would denote dependency on CPRs below 50%.

**Construction of Table for calculation Yule's Coefficient of Association for Female**

	A	α
B	7	60
β	3	20

$$\text{Yule's Coefficient of Association} = \frac{(AB)(\alpha\beta) - (A\beta)(\alpha B)}{(AB)(\alpha\beta) + (A\beta)(\alpha B)} = \frac{(7 \times 20) - (3 \times 60)}{(7 \times 20) + (3 \times 60)} = \frac{-40}{320} = -0.12$$

Thus, there is low negative association between the dependency on CPRs and employment of female meaning that increase in employment decreases the dependency upon CPRs (Mandal, 2012).

**Finding:** Yule's Coefficient of Association for male and female both are -0.80 and -0.12 respectively. Both are negative association between the dependency on CPRs and employment. But the value for female is much lower than that of male meaning that employment of female can withdraw them very little from CPRs i.e., employment of female would reduce dependency on CPRs very little in comparison to the male. Therefore, employment of male would reduce dependency on CPRs at a large but employment of female would reduce dependency on CPRs a very little. Therefore how to reduce the dependency of female on CPRs is a matter of complexity and the authority has to think about these problem.

**VALUE OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS: THE VALUE OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE COMPUTED BY TWO METHODS: OPPORTUNITY COST METHOD AND OUTPUT METHOD**

Livelihood pattern in a predominantly rural, traditional tribal society from empirical standpoint might mean somewhat different from other part of India. Money income is important in urban areas, whereas access to food and land resources to produce food and other necessities are more important in the given traditional societies, which nevertheless are gradually getting monetized from non-money economies. The concepts of work and occupation, similarly needs redefinition. Whereas work in modern societies is related to employment and monetary rewards, in the instant communities, it might connote different things; e.g. community work, sharing of labour through rotations than by wage payments, use of family labour as a collective endeavours in livelihood system, non-intensive agricultural practices, subsistence agriculture and mixed-farming and inter-cultural techniques that allows for distributed farm-work through-out the

year and results in staggered harvesting throughout the year. Thus, employment or unemployment are an unimportant questions—no one is unemployed and no one is employed (by someone else)—everyone works nevertheless; periods of no work are periods of relaxation and rejoice (Mandal, 2012).

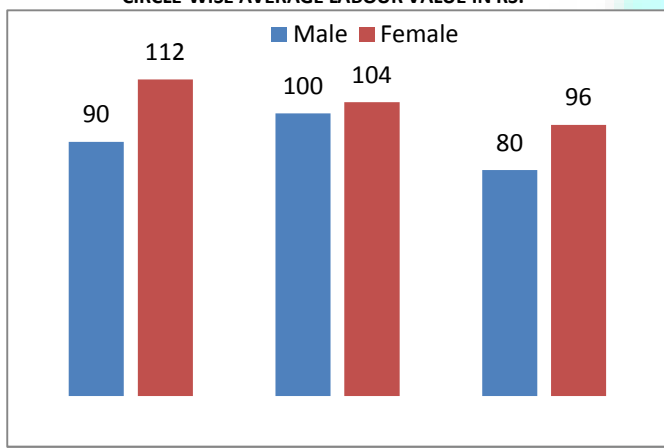
**Opportunity Cost Method:** In this method we can find out the value of CPRs produce with the help of opportunity cost for males and females, i.e., we can find out the labour value if the concerned male/female sales his/her labour in another action for the time for which he/she has already spent for collection of CPRs produce. Organised labour market was absent in the study area. Labours were purchased especially for building and road construction. The researcher heard from the labourers about their labour value per day for male and for female. The contractor generally paid Rs. 250/- for male per day (8 hrs.) and 200/- for female. Accordingly the researcher finds out the labour value as shown in table-3.

**TABLE-3: GENDER DIMENSION IN CPR BASED ACTIVITIES IN TERMS OF LABOUR VALUE THROUGH OPPORTUNITY COST**

Circles	Responde1nts		Total hours spent for collection of different items from CPRs daily for 25 males and 25 females		No. of man-days for collection of different items from CPRs daily for 25 males and 25 females		Total labour value of man-days @ Rs. 250/-per day per male and @ Rs.150/- per day per female for 25 males and 25 females		Average labour Value (Rs.) per male and per female	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pem	25	25	72	112	9	14	2250	2800	90	112
Old Deka	25	25	80	104	10	13	2500	2600	100	104
New Deka	25	25	64	96	8	12	2000	2400	80	96
Total	75	75	232	312	27	39	6750	7800	90	104

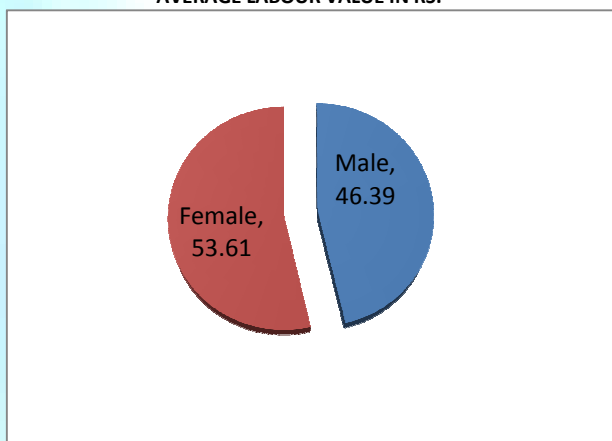
Source: Field Survey

**CIRCLE-WISE AVERAGE LABOUR VALUE IN RS.**



**FIGURE-3**

**AVERAGE LABOUR VALUE IN RS.**



**FIGURE-4**

**Finding:** From the Table-3 and Figure-3, it is shown that male earned Rs. 90/-, Rs. 100/- and Rs. 80/- while female earned Rs. 112/-, Rs. 104/- and Rs. 96/- per day from the collected items from CPRs in Pem, Old Deka and New Deka respectively. In average, male earned Rs. 90/- and female earned Rs. 104/- per day in the study area shown in Figure-4. The earnings from CPRs of males and females differed because of engagement of time duration in collecting CPRs produces.

**Output Method:** In output method, we can find out the value of the collected items from CPRs by selling them in the market. The collected items are easily sold at high prices in the market of urban areas while in the study area there was no such as local market to sell them, if they were sold but their prices were very low. Because, the villagers were very cooperative, their needs were fulfilled with the help of others without money transaction. Any household could get the collected items from CPRs from others at free of cost or at nominal prices. Therefore, it is difficult to get the value of collected items from CPRs through output method. But the researcher heard from the respondents that they could earn handsome money more than labour value from the selling of the collected items in the market of district town. Some herbs collected from the CPRs were sold outside of the state at very prices. The priest/lama in Adi society is generally very wise to cure of all types of ailment by the local herbs. The people generally go first to local herb man/lama/priest for any type of their trouble. They are not so much accustomed to modern allopathic treatment. But actual value of collected items from CPRs is difficult through output method.

**FINDINGS**

Some of the impacts from failure of JFM were described by groups of villagers. With depletion of local forests women were forced to go to other forests for collection of fuel wood etc. where the forest protection committees of those forests were posing a major hindrance. Hence the women were facing great difficulty in procuring minor forest produce for their day-to-day household activities. Locally, an acute scarcity of fuel wood and fodder was expected in the near future. The women were expected to be severely affected in the process. The work performed by Adi women and their contribution in terms of family affairs i.e., household works were unlimited. Forest/ CPR based collection for daily household purposes completely depended on the females in the study area. Women were engaged averagely at least 4.16 hours per day in CPR based collection for their daily household purposes where as the males spent only 3.09 hours daily in CPRs-based activities. Major part of agricultural work including shifting cultivation went on the shoulder of the women. But major works like cutting the trees for shifting cultivation or house construction were performed by the males.

In case of decision making and exercising of authority women took decisions related to child care, children’s education, type of feast to be prepared, purchase of utensils and clothes, house related activities, cooking, upgrading house, extension of house, maintenance and agricultural activities. Thus, decisions related to major issues were taken by husbands, while decisions on activities within the house were dominated by women. Men dominated in taking decisions on number of children to bear, arranging children’s marriage, sale/purchase of animals and land, settlement of disputes, social visits and to some extent voting. Thus, controlling and decision making in important activities were decided by the husbands. In other words, where there was social prestige men dominated, while decisions associated with responsibility and duties of use value were left to women. There was a positive change among younger educated women to participate actively in making variety of decisions. In the study area, it is seen that employment of male would reduce dependency on CPRs at a large but employment of female would reduce dependency on CPRs a very little.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Common Property Resources were very much important and crucial for the economies of the tribal people specifically for the women. Unfortunately development agencies gave little bit interest in the needs and interest of the tribal women in the implementation of any programme and policy. As a result achievement was unsatisfactory. Therefore, attempt should be made to increase the women participation in the management of these resources where they are the actual

users and make them partner of profit earned from CPRs as the employment of women are not so much effective to reduce their dependency on CPRs. Therefore, the authority has to think about this matter to maintain the quantum of CPRs through sustainable development and side by side try to regenerate the rare species in the CPRs.

A participatory approach to indigenous women would empower them to explain their priorities, present their indigenous knowledge systems, their problems and capabilities. On the basis of such information generated, they would be able to plan social forestry programmes along with men and improve their entitlement to forest resources so as to lead their lives with less of hardship and also become custodians of local natural resources as stakeholders in regeneration of forest.

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