



Editorial

Forest Dependent Communities and Non-wood Small Forest Enterprise for Better Livelihood

Long ago millennium development goals commit to reducing global poverty by half till 2015. However, things are not so simple as envisaged. Agriculture, forestry and allied sectors come in forefront, when we talk of reducing poverty. Being a researcher of forestry, I see perhaps nowhere the stakes are higher for meeting such goal in forest dependent communities in tropical countries, where poverty tends to more deeper than in urban and better established rural areas. The development of small forest enterprises provides an opportunity for strengthening the livelihood of forest dependent communities and conserving the natural resource based through sustainable forest management systems and processing of non-wood forest products. I do not see that R&D in this subject are moving in appropriate direction. To make research more accountable in order to achieve the millennium development goals, scientist working on issues related to the interface of forest dependent communities and non-wood forest produce are posing questions such as: Is the research relevant and to whom? Have a range of stakeholder being involved in the research process and at what stage? Does the research pay sufficient attention to local culture and locally defined needs? What outputs and impact pathways are planned? Recently, the need to bridge the gulf between knowledge and action, and to be more accountable to local people, policy makers, researchers and conservationists are emphasizing towards equitable R&D processes by working closely with forest dependent communities on issues of local relevance rather concentrating someone else's agenda. Local communities in the vicinity of R&D, need to participate more fully to research design and agenda setting. Small forest enterprises for the forest dependent communities require concerted action and long term investments among the various stakeholders for high levels of output, productivity, value addition and profit.

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