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Topic - Role of Women in the Sustainability of Forest Products: A Sociological Study of the Tribal Regions in Hazaribagh and Balaghat Districts

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Findings

The findings of the study indicate that the collection and marketing of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is a significant source of income and an important aspect of daily life for forest-dependent tribal people, particularly women. Access to and control over these forest resources are hampered by forest laws, forest degradation, and infrastructural systems, and marketing decisions are typically made by tribal men. NTFPs are mostly stored in homes for easy access and monitoring, and are sold weekly to customers or licensed contractors, who largely determine their market value. The prices of NTFPs are affected by a number of variables, including consumer demand, quality, availability, seasonality, contracting arrangements, government policies, and individual choices. Regarding the sale of NTFPs, tribal members have less negotiating leverage. According to the findings, there is shared belief that selling NTFPs is not profitable and that the earnings are insufficient to meet basic household needs. However, many people continue to rely on forests, and seasonal migration is common among them due to decline in access to NTFPs. Forest policies have been implemented, but there is a perception gap between men and women regarding these policies, with women being less informed and less involved in decision-making processes. However, there are differences in their reach and impact, and some of them do not believe they are effective. Access to NTFPs is negatively impacted by urbanization, and sustainable forest management is essential for protecting forests and the communities that rely on them. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the significance of empowering tribal women to participate in decision-making processes within Panchayats and other social and cultural institutions.

The significance of the role of tribal women in the sustainability of forest products is emphasized throughout the study. For the sustainable management and use of forest resources, it is crucial that women have knowledge and skills in their use. In addition, it has been discovered that women frequently face barriers such as limited access to forest resources, markets, and decision-making processes, which must be addressed to ensure their full participation and benefit from the use of forest resources.