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Issues and processes in NTFP Management : A model for working plans

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ABSTRACT

Hon. Supreme Court of India has made it mandatory that all the state owned forests be managed strictly according to the provisions of “Working Plans” that are prepared for every forest division. Traditionally the Working Plans have been being prepared mainly for timber species. But, in a major departure from the past, the National Working Plan Code (June 2004) made it mandatory to include overlapping working circles for NTFPs also for all the working plans.

There is no standardized methodology in place for resource survey, regeneration survey & stock-mapping of NTFP as it is there for timber species. The present paper is aimed at highlighting the methodology adopted by the author in making proposals for the working plan of South Betul Forest Division of Madhya Pradesh. In doing so, it also highlights the whole gamut of issues involved in the management of NTFP in state owned forests.

In the methodology adopted, the stocktaking was done by SWOT analysis. The results of this analysis, apart from highlighting various issues involved, necessitated treating nationalized and non-nationalized NTFPs at different footings. It, also, tried to take stock of various departmental initiatives in this field and also the various traditional practices already in vogue in various parts of the division in utilizing available NTFP resources.

In the end an elaborate, step-by-step, scheme or model has been proposed for addressing various concerns regarding NTFP in the plan area which can be adopted as a model for making or revision of working plans in general.