

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

Working Paper

Population Dynamics of Some Medicinal Tree Species in High Trade in the Tropical Forests of Central Satpuda Mountain Region of India

Abhay Kumar Patil, IFS, Professor, Faculty of Technical Forestry

ABSTRACT

Medicinal use of plant-parts can easily be reckoned as the single largest use of Non-Timber Forest Produce of tropical forests. Though, the classical texts of Ayurveda (the oldest system of medicine) suggest that there is no plant without medicinal properties, only some plants earn the label 'Medicinal', probably based on the amount & importance of its parts used in the local system of medicine.

In the absence of any exhaustive & authentic survey on the demand & supply of medicinal plants in India, there has been a crippling lack of reliable data for the policy makers or natural resource managers to base their assessments & planning. But with the publication of "Demand & Supply of Medicinal Plants in India" (a nationwide survey commissioned by National Medicinal Plants Board of India & carried out by Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions, an NGO in Bangalore) this gap has been filled to a great extent, though the report itself recommends periodic (triennial) assessment of the demand-supply situation of botanical raw drugs at national level.

Another recommendation of the same survey report suggests assessing "status of Wild Populations of Threatened Medicinal Plant Taxa in high trade". Except for the Forest Resource Surveys of the 'Working Plans' (an exercise to prepare a 10 year management plan for the state owned forests, divided in Management Units called Forest Divisions), there is hardly any other survey which gives us the quantitative dynamics of populations of wild plant taxa, that too in a limited sense only, as they are carried out for the trees only & not for shrubs, herbs, climbers, grasses or parasites.

The author of this paper was engaged in the revision of working plan of the Tropical Forests of South Betul Forest Division of Madhya Pradesh state of Central India, which falls in the central part of Satpuda Mountain ranges, known for their rich biodiversity. This paper endeavours to study the quantitative aspects & mechanisms of the population dynamics over a decade of those tree species of this region which are in 'high trade' i.e. consumed more than 1000 MT annually as per the "Demand & Supply of Medicinal Plants in India" survey report.

In doing so, this study further endeavours to highlight the methodology, limitations, interpretation of the results & to come up with a set of recommendations for the policy makers to read the early signals & adopt a policy to prepare to meet the future demands of these raw herbs.