



Role of Tribal Women in Sustainable Management of Forest Resources in Odisha

Raj Kumar Khosla¹ and Nibedita Mohanty²

¹ Associate Professor of Development Studies, Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

² Associate Professor, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, khosla.rajkumar@gmail.com

Abstract. Forest plays an important role in Scheduled Tribe's life in rural India. Since time immemorial the social, economic and cultural life of tribe has been closely associated with the forest. The relation of tribe and forest has been termed as symbiotic relationship. It is also the fact that the symbiotic relationship has been signified with the socio-cultural identity, customary value system of the tribal community. Moreover, the forest resources are an important sources and support system for survival of tribal family. They collect fruits, leaves, medicinal plants, fodder, fuel wood, gum and other forest products for their survival and maintenance of economy of their family. The tribal women are the primary user of the forest resources. They collect and process the forest resources for direct consumption and sell in the market to earn some money. The socio-cultural value and economic status of tribal family has been maintained by the relentless labour of tribal women in rural area. The tribal women not only dependences on forest resources but also preserving, protecting and managing the richness of the forest cover of our nation. In this context the paper would analyse the role of tribal women in managing the forest resources in ensuring sustainable livelihood of tribal family and maintaining the socio-cultural value of tribal community in Odisha.

Keywords: Tribal Women, Forest Resources, Tribal Culture, Sustainable livelihood.

1 Introduction

The idea of sustainability began to gain its importance at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s soon after the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987 and the Conference on "Environment and Development" (known as Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 (Martin-Garcia, Jorge and Julio Javier Diez, 2012:4). Nevertheless, it had long been understood that natural resources needed to be protected for the use of future generations. The "Brundtland Report" and the "Earth Summit" has provided the groundwork for the idea of sustainable forest management (SFM). Subsequently, number of international initiatives including the "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (1992), the

Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (1995-97), the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (1997-2000), the United Nations Forum on Forests that came into existence in 2001, and the Johannesburg Summit in 2002” (Kant, Shashi and R. Albert Berry, 2005: 1) had given greater attention towards the management of forest resources sustainably at international level.

Since time immemorial, the management of forest has been intended primarily for use of forest products and the services. The major forest products are fruits, fuel wood and medicinal plants that have been used by many indigenous societies even today. Over the years the development of science and technology, the global concerns about the sustainability of human resources and natural resources due to the increasing “global warming, declining energy sources, environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, and deforestation and degradation of forest resources”. It is the fact that forest resources are an essential part of the majority of global population. The international agreements related to sustainability, including the Biodiversity Convention (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (1997), and Agenda 21 (Ibid., 2) delivered an insight into the importance of forest resources and need of sustainable forest management towards the very objective of sustainable development in a global perspective.

In recent decades the human society is facing serious threats due to unsustainable use of ecological resources. Moreover, a health pandemic, economic hardships, food insecurity, poverty, climate change, land and water degradation, and biodiversity loss are major threat human society at global level. Presently, the society realised to make better use of forests resources towards well-being of human and generate income out of the resources, particularly for the rural people (The State of the World’s Forest 2022: 1). The potentiality of forest resources can be valued in a global perspective that it covers nearly one-third of the Earth’s land surface and contain the majority of terrestrial biodiversity. However, forest area continues to shrink despite many steps taken to stop deforestation and restore degraded lands. Further, forests are vital for mitigating climate change. It contains 662 billion tonnes of carbon, which is more than half the global carbon stock in soils and vegetation. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of global gross domestic product has been received from the ecosystem services. It has also clearly mentioned that 33 million people are being employed in the forest sector that is contributing to more than USD 1.52 trillion to the global gross domestic product. Furthermore, 81 per cent of the extremely poor people residing in rural area and 75 per cent of these rural people lives within 1 kilometre distance from the forest cover. However, many rural residents are still having minimal rights to forest due to 73 per cent forest cover controlled by the state (Ibid.: 5). The potentiality of forest changed the global scenario toward the sustainable forest management (SFM) for safeguarding society’s various (social, economic and ecological) needs, both at present and in the future, without endangering the eco-system and the possibility for regeneration of the forest resource base.

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972 emphasized the need to safeguard the environment and involve local people in the conservation of natural resources. The environmental policy in this perspective placed

a strongly focused on the involvement of local communities in resource management. Ironically, local people, especially tribal communities, were prohibited from using forest resources or engaging in forest management operations under Indian forest rules. However, the Joint Forest Management (JFM) provision and the National Forest Policy of 1988 set the standard for community involvement in forest management processes. This was the first indication of the government's concern regarding these communities' participation in forest management activities. In this context, the study was conducted to evaluate the role of tribal women in managing forest resources and ensuring sustainable livelihood for millions of people living in rural areas who depend on forests. Further, the special emphasis of the paper is on the involvement of people in the management of forest resources, particularly tribals' dependence on forests and management practices.

2 Forest and Tribal Communities

The tribal of India have adopted the nature as their habitat. The subsistence pattern, economic system and social institutions, beliefs and practices of the tribal communities have been closely linked with the forest (Sarkar, Amitabha and Samira Dasgupta, 2000: 103). The relationship between the tribal and forest has often been called symbiotic. The tribals depend on the forest and the forest in its turn depends on them for its preservation and continuity. The social, religious and economic, systems of the tribal revolve around the forest. Tribal still like to live in their original natural abode consisting of hills, forests, rivers, soil and practices their traditional way of living. The practice of rituals, customs, dance, music and traditional belief system is also closely associated with the forest. A set of religious myths and social customs were built around the forest to ensure that the economically important trees were protected, human needs were met and the species that were more commonly available were equitably distributed. Given the extent of their dependence, it is not surprising that they built a system that treated forests as a renewable resource (Vidyarthi, L.P. and B.K. Rai, 1985: 25)

Forest is the way of life for the tribal people. Millions of tribal communities depend on the forest products for food, which includes fruits, plants, flowers, etc. Shifting cultivation is a major source of sustenance of the tribal people. It is also referred to as Jhum or slash and burn cultivation. In Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, it is known as Podu cultivation (Deeney, John and Walter Fernandes, 1992: 50). Many tribes in south and central India, Chhota Nagpur and Bengal, slopes of the Himalaya and especially north-east India practices shifting cultivation.

The health care pattern among the tribal is very much connected with the forest. Traditionally tribal depend on forests for medicinal plants (Chaudhuri, Buddhadeb, 1997: 237). Despite well-advanced allopathic health care system in the country today, the tribals mainly depend on forest for their health care. Most medicine-plants which the tribal know and collect from the forest are Gooseberry, Ashoka, Banyan, Guava, Mango, Bela, Jamun, Kendu, Kusum, Neem, Tulsi, Sal etc. The socio-cultural system of the tribal people is closely linked with the forest. In the tribal communities, the

presence of sacred grove is notice. It is such a concept of tribal, which ultimately manifests their world. The tribal believes that the deities, representing various elements of nature such as sun, rain, fire etc. Reside in these sacred groves (Sarkar and Dasgupta, Op. Cit., 2000: 134). The process of socialisation among the tribal inculcates the knowledge and importance of these sacred groves. Moreover, the tribal people do perform rituals on certain trees such as Peepal, Tulsi, Neem, Bel etc. The socio-cultural system of the tribal too is linked with the forest. Their traditional beliefs and practices have helped in the preservation of their age-old culture and along with it the conservation of ecology of this country. Forest is the base of tribal economy. The tribal people collect the Minor Forest Produce (MFP) to meet their household expenditure. The MFP also provides employment to the womenfolk of the tribal society. A large number of tribal collect Sal and Kendu leaves, Mahua flowers, fruits, resins, lac etc. In the states like Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh these forest products support the economy of the tribal people (Chaudhuri, Op.Cit., 1997: 242).

3 Minor Forest Produce and Tribal's Share

Minor Forest Produce provides substantial sustenance to the tribal communities particularly in the backward regions of our country. In some cases, MFPs are the main source of cash income through which they meet the expenses of non-subsistence needs like health and education. The report of the Expert Committee set up by the Ministry of Forests and Environment (1999) accounted tribals' share of MFP. The details are as follows.

Table 1. Tribal Share of MFP Market:

Sl. No.	Commodity	Tribal Share (In per cent)	Procurement Value (Rs. in Crore)
1	Hill Grass	100	150
2	Tamarind	65	60
3	Sal+Mahua+Other tree borne oil seed	100	100
4	Mahua Flower	100	15
5	Tej Patta	100	35
6	Siyali Leaves	100	35
7	Shikakai	100	10
8	Honey	25	15
9	Myrobalan	100	10
10	Sericulture (Muga/Tassar)	100	30
11	Shellac (Lac)	100	75
12	Gum (Karaya) & Others	100	15
13	Other Commodities	100	100
14	Estimated Supply	95	650

Source: Insight Management Consultants (2002). Quoted from Tenth Report, Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment – 2005-06, (Fourteenth Lok Sabha), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Grants-in-Aid to State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations for Minor Forest Produce Operations, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, December, 2005.

In the above table, the report states that tribal families mostly collect MFPs for self-consumption as well as for the sale at the local market to meet their domestic economy. Over the years it has been found that availability of MFPs is being drastically reduced which adversely affects the life style of the tribal families. Earlier they used to collect more amounts of forest products for self-consumption and a minimal amount to sell at the local market. The scarcity of MFPs by illegal commercialisation resulted in stiff competition among the tribal families which leads to the collection of immature plant parts, leaves, flowers, fruit, barks, roots and tubers thereby causing damage to the mother plant and less product returns to the forest-dependent community (Tenth Report, December, 2005: 7-9).

4 Women in Tribal Community: Livelihood protection through forest resources

Women in the tribal community have a vital position. In hunting and food gathering community, they are said to have lower status compared to those in farming society in the country. In Odisha however, the tribes despite the diversity in their means of sustenance seem to hold an identical view on women. No visible difference is noted in the position of women in a hunting and food gathering community and those in agricultural society. Moreover, the position of women in all tribal communities is observed to be identical in spite of differences in their economic activities, social organisations and cultural patterns. Women in tribal societies bear a heavy burden of various responsibilities. They are heavily involved in economic activity in addition to domestic activities. Their primary activities consist of various farming pursuits, gathering forest products, such as firewood, and selling their excess agricultural and forest products. They put in more work than men do in every aspect of society, and they care far more about keeping the family's finances stable than men do.

The gender division in economic activity within tribal communities demonstrates that the tribal economy is frequently focused on women. Traditionally, men were the hunters and women were the gatherers in societies that engaged in hunting and gathering of food. The source of a steady and uninterrupted food supply was the gatherer, not the hunter. Furthermore, food processing was solely a female domain. In addition to working in settled agriculture, the majority of Indian tribal societies employ women who travel great distances to gather small forest products and find fuel wood. As things stand right now, women work primarily in the non-monetised sector of the economy, while male members are primarily involved in tribal economy, which is related to the monetised sector. This is the reason that each of their problems is unique. Industrialisation and environmental degradation have a greater negative impact on women than on men. Tribal women suffer the most when

development project force them to relocate because they are responsible for providing food and fuel for their families (Mohanty and Tripathy, 2015: 37-39).

5 Socio Economic Profile: Koraput

Koraput district becoming a district of Odisha state on 1st April 1936. After reorganization of districts the Geographical area of the district is 8807 Sq. kms. The district headquarters situated 2900 ft. above sea level. The district is bounded by Nabarangpur district in North, Vishakapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh in South, Rayagada district and Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh in the east and Malkangiri district and Bastar district of Chhattisgarh in the west. It lies between 82°5' E to 83°23' E longitude and between 18°13' N to 19°10' N latitude (District Statistical Hand Book – Koraput, 2020: 1).

6 Area and Population:

The district has an area of 8807 sq. kms and 13.80 lakhs of population as per 2011 census. The rural and urban population is 1153478 and 226169 respectively. The level of urbanization stands 16.39 per cent of the total district population as against the 3.23 per cent in the State. The district accounts for 5.66 percent of the state territory and shares 3.29 percent of the state population. The density of population of the district is 157 per sq. kms as against 270 person per sq. km of the state. The district has 2042 villages (including 101 un-inhabited villages) covering 14 blocks, 14 Tahasils and 2 Subdivisions. As per 2011 census the schedule caste population is 196540 (14.2%) and schedule tribe population 697583 (50.6%). The literacy percentage of the district is 49.2 as against 72.9 of the state. The languages spoken by the people of this district are Tribal, Odia, Telugu, Hindi and English (Ibid.: 1). Koraput district has plentiful of forest area that contributed 26.75 per cent of the total geographical area of the district (District Statistical Hand Book – Koraput, 2020: 1).

Table 2. Population Composition of Koraput District (Census 2011):

Categories (in persons)	Male*	Female*	Total Population	Percentage
Scheduled Tribes	337373	360210	697583	50.6
Scheduled Castes	96789	99751	196540	14.2
All Categories	678809	700838	1379647	--

Source: District Statistical Handbook, Koraput, 2020, p. 6.

Source: *: District Statistical Handbook, Koraput, 2020, pp. 16-17.

Table 3. Literacy Rate of Koraput District (Census 2011):

Categories	Total	Male	Female
Scheduled Tribes	697,583	337,373	360,210
Scheduled Castes	196,540	96,789	99,751
All Categories	49.21%	50.21%	32.43%

Source: *Census 2011, Census of India*,
<https://www.censusindia.co.in/district/koraput-district-odisha-398>

7 Lamtaput Block: Socio-Economic Profile

Lamtaput block is situated in the southern part of the Koraput covering 576.99 square kilometres of geographic area (District Statistical Handbook, Koraput, 2001: 7). The block consists of various communities like the Gadaba, Rana, Domb, Paraja, Gauda, Mali and Kamar (Pati, R.N., 2002:195-196). The majority population of the block is tribal. The regional variant of Odia language is widely spoken in this block as well as the villagers are mostly speaking in Desia dialect. The social and cultural life style of tribes and non-tribes of the block differs from one another. Traditionally, the social and cultural life of tribal people is closely link with the nature. As per the 2011 census, the population size of Lamtaput block is 59309, in which 9926 are Scheduled Caste, 27910 are Scheduled Tribes and 21473 people are belong to other caste. There are 15 Gram Panchayats and 186 revenue villages in this block. The majority people of Lamtaput block are primarily dependent on agriculture their livelihood. In the case of tribal people, they depend on both agriculture and forest resources. The majority of people in the block ae falling under below poverty line (BPL) category. In this case, the tribal people are counted as highest in poverty line.

Primarily the majority of population in this block depend on agriculture. The tribal people of this block depending on both agriculture and forest for their subsistence. This block consists of large number of families which are Below Poverty Line (BPL). As per the 2001 census report, the BPL families of the block are 9788 (Lamtaput Block Profile, Koraput district). The poverty line of the block is mainly highest in the tribal communities.

7.1 Sampling Design

Lamtaput block was chosen for the field study primarily based on two reasons that its socio-cultural and economic structure closely linked with forest, and the majority inhabitants are tribal people. In this study, out of four Gram Panchayats, a total of eight villages have been chosen for conducting field study.

7.2 Data Analysis

As it has been discussed earlier that the agriculture does not provide sufficient food grains, thus the tribals have been depending on forest for their livelihood. Also, since generations, the socio-cultural activities of the tribal people revolve around the forest. To know the level of dependence of the tribal people on forest, it is essential to know the socio-economic conditions of the tribal communities with the sample data.

7.3 Socio-economic Background of Respondents:

In the study area, total 8 villages have been selected from the Lamtaput block. In each village, fifteen-sample household has been interviewed. Thus, the total sample household is 120. Out of 120 samples, 97 were males and 23 were females. Of course, efforts were made to take an equal number of female samples but it was not possible as they were not forthcoming to talk to the researcher, unless she was a widow or breadwinner of the family. The respondents of the sample were of different age groups starting from 20 onwards. The age-group wise distributions of the respondents are given in the table below.

Table 4. Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Name of the Village	Age- Group				Total
	20-30	31-40	41-50	Above 50	
Hingaiput	02	05	05	03	15
Bankeiput	03	07	04	01	15
Dasuput	05	06	02	02	15
Kadamguda	04	06	05	-	15
Devgondna	04	05	04	02	15
Bhimariput	04	05	05	01	15
Tusuba	06	07	02	-	15
Gumalput	04	05	04	02	15
Total	32(26.66%)	46(38.33%)	31(25.83%)	11(09.16%)	120(100%)

The above table shows that the majority of respondents were between the age group of 31-40, then the age group of 20-30 comes next. Besides the age-wise distribution of respondents, it was also important to know the level of literacy of the respondents, as is given in the table no - 5.

Table 5. Level of Education of the Sample Respondents

Name of the Village	Illiterate	Primary	High School	Above High School
Hingaiput	09	05	01	-
Bankeiput	12	03	-	-
Dasuput	11	04	-	-
Kadamguda	09	06	-	-
Devgondna	10	04	01	-
Bhimariput	10	05	-	-
Tusuba	11	03	01	-
Gumalput	10	05	-	-
Total	82 (68.33 %)	35 (29.16 %)	03 (2.5 %)	-

The above table shows that out of the total sample the majority of respondents were illiterate. Thus, from the above table it can be judged that the tribal people are

illiterate in large number than the other communities of the block. Of course, the table shows that few respondents have studied up to primary level but they are not aware about the various plans and programmes of the government which is meant for them. Apart from this, it is also important to know the source of livelihood of the tribal people in the sample respondents. As it was already discussed, the source of livelihood of the tribals in the Socio-Economic profile of Lamtaput block that the tribal people are depending on both agriculture and forest product for their sustenance. In the study of the village attempt has been made to know the numbers dependent on various sources for their livelihood. The same is given in the following table.

Table 6. Source of Livelihood of the Sample Households

Name of the Village (* #)	Agriculture	Forest Product
Higeiput	07	13
Bankeiput	06	14
Dasuput	07	13
Kadamguda	09	12
Devgondna	08	15
Bhimariput	10	15
Tusuba	06	14
Gumalput	05	13
Total	58 (48.33 %)	109 (90.83 %)

* Note: The total number of respondents in each village is 15.

Note: As some respondents have given multiple answers to a single question so the addition of the total number of responses is not same with the number of respondents interviewed, i.e., 15, but it is more than that.

The above table clearly indicates that majority of the tribal people are depending on forest resources for their livelihood. As they have been doing agriculture but as discussed in the block profile, it is not providing sufficient food to maintain their family. Therefore, the tribals are primarily depending on forest throughout the year for their livelihood. Thus, it is worthwhile to know the life style of the tribal people and their relation with the forest. Forest and Tribal Life, the tribal, since their generation have been depending on forest for their subsistence. They have been depending on forest for food, construction of house and also for the socio-cultural and religious activities. Also, for fun and games and for fodder, tribals have been depending on forest. Thus, the life of the tribals is closely linked with the forest. In the following table it shows the dependence of tribes on forest in the various stages of their life.

Table 7. Respondents' view on use of Forest Resources in Different Stages

Name of the Village (*, #)	Survival	Household Requirement	Social-cultural & Health care	Commercial Purpose
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Hingaiput	12	14	11	04
Bankeiput	10	15	13	03
Dasuput	11	12	15	05
Kadamguda	12	13	14	02
Dev gondna	13	15	15	07
Bhimariput	11	12	12	03
Tusuba	12	13	10	04
Gumalput	13	15	14	04
Total	94(78.33 %)	109(90.83%)	104(86.66 %)	32 (26.66 %)

** Note: The total number of respondents in each village is 15.*

Note: As some respondents have given multiple answers to a single question so the addition of the total number of responses is not same with the number of respondents interviewed, i.e., 15, but it is more than that.

In the above table, 78.33 per cent of the respondents said that they use the forest resources for their survival. 90.83 per cent said that, they depend on forest for their household requirements. Also, 86.66 said that they depend on forest resources for their socio-cultural activities and for health care. Whereas, only 26.66 per cent respondent said that they use the forest resources for the commercial purpose. Let us discuss in detail about the way of using the forest resources by the tribals as per the above table.

8 Women and Forest

In the tribal societies, women play vital role in contributing to the livelihood of their family. The task of the women is very crucial in all aspects of their family. They are the primary collector of Minor Forest Products (MFP), i.e. various fruits, fuel wood, jungle roots, Siadi leaves, brooms etc. They are not only collecting the MFP for their family consumption but also for their domestic economy. For selling MFP, women use to do the processing and take it to the weekly market for sell. Even in the socio-cultural activities, the women use to play primary role in collecting the forest products. At the same time women in tribal society are more concerned with managing the forest resources, while collecting firewood, they never cut down the trees or cause any destruction of forest because it is providing them food, employment and household requirements.

Table 8. Respondents View on Impact of Forest Destruction on Women:

Name of the Village (*, #)	Lost the Source of Livelihood	Lost Employment	Deteriorated Health Condition
Hingaiput	12	10	09
Bankeiput	13	10	11
Dasuput	15	11	09
Kadamguda	12	09	07
Dev gondana	13	11	08

Bhimariput	15	13	10
Tusuba	14	12	11
Gumalput	13	11	08
Total	107(89.16%)	87 (72.5 %)	73 (60.83 %)

* *Note: The total number of respondents in each village is 15.*

Note: As some respondents have given multiple answers to a single question so the addition of the total number of responses is not same with the number of respondents interviewed i.e. 15, but it is more than that.

However, during the survey it was found that, due to illegal destruction and commercialisation of forest resources, they have lost their sources of livelihood as well as employment. It has also been adversely affecting the health condition of the tribal women. Earlier they used to collect the forest products from nearer of their village but presently they have to go for 6 to 8 K.M. or sometimes spending the whole day to collect the products to meet their requirements.

In the above table, 89.16 per cent respondents said that due to destruction of forest they lost their sources of livelihood. 72.5 per cent respondents said that, they lost their employment due to destruction of forest resources. Earlier they used to engage themselves in collecting MFP and sell it in the market to earn money. Presently, they have lost the opportunity of employment. Also, 60.83 per cent of respondents said that the destruction of forest resources has been causing the deterioration of health condition. Again, they are not getting sufficient amount of food as well as various nutritious product, i.e., fruits, roots and vegetables.

During the survey Laxmi Majhi a woman of the Tusuba village said that due to destruction of forest they are not even getting Phool Jhuti (Thin wood) as firewood. In Devgondna village it was found that in the seven families the women are the primary member of bread winner for their families. While interacting with two women named as Talsa and Budri it was learned that, mostly they use to collect seasonal fruits, i.e., Mango, Guava, Jam koli, Sindhi koli, Kordi, Mushroom, Siadi leaves, various jungle roots, vegetables and fuel wood. The forest products which they collect, use for family consumption and the surplus products sell in the near market. Further they have said that over the year the forest has been declining due to commercialisation of resources. Presently they are not getting the forest resources for their family's consumption. Thus, it clearly shows that the destruction of forest has adversely affected the tribal and their survival. Since the traditional institution of the tribal society has been playing vital role in all matters of the village, let us discuss its role in preserving and protecting the forest resources.

9 Role of Traditional Tribal Institution:

The traditional institution of tribal society is known as Gaon Kutum is apex body of the village. The head of the traditional institution are known as Jani, Disari, Mukhia, or Naik. The villagers have vested an authority to the head of the institution to control and command in all the affairs of the village. If any person violates norms or goes

against the society the institution use to take action as per their Customary laws or rules. Since forest is the primary source for the socio-economic life of the tribal people, they have adopted it as a Common Property Resources (CPR) of their village. In this regard the traditional institution has been preserving the forest and controlling the illegal felling of trees to meet the requirement of their village. Due to the illegal felling of forest resulted scarcity of forest resources. Later the tribal people initiated the Community Forest Management (CFM) system to protect the adjoining forest of their village.

In the study area, among the 8 sample villages, 3 villages constituted forest protection committee in a formal way, i.e., in Devgondna (Maa Nakti Bhairabi Bana Surkhya Samiti), Bhimariput (Jangal Surakya Committee) and Hingeiput (Maa Thakurani Jangala Surakhya Committee). In the Devgondna village the committee, i.e., "Maa Nakti Bhairabi Bana Surakhya Samiti" was registered under the Rayagada Bana Khanda, Rayagada in 1998. The rest 5 villages, Gaon Kutum (the General Body of the Village) is looking after the preservation of forest. These CFM are quite participatory bodies because these institutions are constituted within their homogenous group or a single village. Of course, these forest protection committees are formal institution but they are following the traditional norms and rules of the village.

Although the pattern of management system is differing from village to village but these are working according to their own decision-making process. At first, the villagers select a Dongor (Big Hill) or Kupli (Small Hill), which is adjoining to their village. The pattern of guarding system is quite interesting. The committees or villagers in their respective area decided to protect the forest in Pali basis. In this Pali system, two to three family (one person from each family) use to protect forest for one day. In some village, they have appointed one or two persons as a guard for the protection of the selected forest. In return, the person use to get five to six k.gs. paddy or ragi from each family as a yearly basis. During the survey it was found that, in Dasuput, the guard use to collect three to five Maan (Three Kilo Gram is one Maan) paddy or ragi from each family. Also, the villagers have similar responsibility to keep watch on the forest from its illegal destruction. The positive part of the CFM system is that, the villagers equally use the forest product without causing any destruction. Also, in the CFM system, women have benefited more because they are the primary collector of MFP and firewood.

The CFM Committees or Gaon Kutum have drawn certain provisions that if any person goes against the norm of the village, it will take action under the traditions and norms of the village or the provision of the committee.

However, during the survey it was found that, due to commercialisation of forest resources the villagers lost the sources of their livelihood. Further the forest officials are restricting the tribal people to collect the forest resources but they have failed to protect the forest from illegal destruction by the mafias, timber traders. Moreover, the most worry some part for these committee or Gaon Kutum is that the mafias and traders use to smuggle timber and various forest product in the night. Though, the villagers often lodge complain at the police or forest officials, but no action was taken

so far against those defaulters because of high-handed corruption at the local official level. The tribal people say that, although, the CFM or Gaon Kutum has been preserving and protecting the forest resources, but still the illegal destruction of forest has not been reduced. Thus, the control over the forest by the forest officials has goes against the interest of the traditional rights of the tribal people over forest resource. In this regard, the following table shows the traditional institution has been declining the control over the forest resources.

Though the traditional tribal institutions play a significant role in controlling the forest resources, the present scenario of the tribal areas in different part of the country suggest that the tribal traditional institutions are losing their control over the forest resources day by day. There are numerous factors/reasons responsible for the decline of the role of traditional institutions on forest resources management. The following table points out the reasons of declining the role of traditional tribal institutions in Orissa in general and Lamtaput block in particular.

Table 9. Reasons of Declining the Control of Traditional Institutions on Forest Resources

Name of the Village (*, #)	Control by the Forest Officials	Restriction to use the Forest Products	Commercialisation of Forest Products
Hingaiput	12	14	15
Bankeiput	15	13	13
Dasuput	10	15	13
Kadamguda	15	14	14
Dev gondna	13	09	12
Bhimariput	10	09	15
Tusuba	14	12	13
Gumalput	15	10	14
Total	104(86.66%)	96 (80 %)	109(90.83%)

* Note: The total number of respondents in each village is 15.

Note: As some respondents have given multiple answers to a single question so the addition of the total number of responses is not same with the number of respondents interviewed i.e., 15, but it is more than that.

In the above table 86.66 per cent respondents said that, the forest official has been controlling the forest resources. Whereas, the 80 per cent of respondents said that, tribal people are restricted by the forest officials to use the forest resources freely. Also, 90.83 per cent of the respondents said that, due to large scale commercialisation of forest product, which the forest officials have failed to protect, which has resulted in destruction of the forest. Thus, the above table clearly shows that due to control of forest official over forest and large-scale commercialisation of forest resources the traditional institutions is declining its control over forest. Over the year the forest resources have been destroyed by the timber traders, mafias and industrialist. Due to the large-scale destruction of forest resources and the inability of forest officials to preserve the resources; the Government was compelled to involve the villagers for the better management of forest.

10 Conclusion

The tribal people have adopted the forest as their habitat. Since time immemorial, forest is the habitat of the tribal people and they are still living in close proximity to the forests. The subsistence pattern, economy and social institutions, beliefs and practices are closely linked with the forest. The relation between the tribe and forest has often been called symbiotic. The tribal depends on the forest and forest in its turn depends on them for the preservation and continuity. The social, religious and economic systems of the tribals revolve around the forest and they still like to live in their original natural abode consisting of hills and forests and practise their tractional way of life. The religious myths and social customs of tribal community has been built around the forests to ensure to preserve and protect valuable forest resources.

Traditionally, tribals have their own indigenous knowledge in forest conservation at the grassroots level. Involvement of tribal women in management of forest resources has reflected greater responsibility in tribal community. The tribal women manage forest resources through different approaches like monitoring through community forest management system, regeneration of forest through planting new plants and taking care of them, protection through extinguishing forest fire, conservation through village rules and regulations, manage the forest. Today, large scale destruction of forest cover in every part of country has become a critical issue before world community. The impact of forest destruction led the women to manage the forest and the eco-system vigorously. The tribal women are not the mere beneficiaries of the forest rather, they also protect and manage the forest sustainably. They play a significant role in conserving the ecosystem, protecting nature, and mitigating destruction of natural resources.

The tribal community survival has depended upon forest and vice versa. In order to maintain need of forest resources for tribal community, the foster community and women's participation in forest activities needs to be worked in true letter and spirit. Lack of coordination among the forest departments and tribal community often been manifested is a significant shortfall in achieving the very objective of sustainable management of forest. The village-level institutions like forest management committees should genuinely involve women at the ground level and recognize their efforts in protecting and managing the forest.

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