



Income Generation through Bamboo Basketry in Haryana

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ABSTRACT

The present study is based on economically deprived community of the *Bhanjdas* of *Bargodam*, *Kalka* and *Bowana* villages, who usually depends on bamboos growing in the surrounding forest areas for sustenance. These communities were traditionally practicing the bamboo basketry from three generations. Their earning depends upon the growth of the bamboos in the forest areas. The earning could be enhanced further if they market the produce themselves instead of entrusting the job to money lenders, who charge exorbitant commission. The present study was conducted on 60 households in Kalka region, Panchkula (Haryana) selecting twenty respondents from each village. The monthly earnings from making baskets of different sizes ranged from Rs.2500-3000/- for baskets of the largest size to Rs.1500-1800/-for baskets of the smallest size. The study also indicated that direct selling of baskets by villagers could increase the monthly earnings of the community.

Key Words: Bamboo, Economically deprived, Employment, Forest, Traditional basketry.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian forest has 125 indigenous as well as exotic species of bamboo belonging to 23 genera. Bamboo forests occupy an area of around 10.03 million ha, roughly 12.8 per cent of the total forest area in the country. Bamboo as a resource is used extensively as a source of sustainable livelihood in many parts of the country. The *Bhanjdas* of *Bargodam*, *Kalka*, and *Bowana* depends on bamboos from the surrounding forest areas for sustenance. The *Bhanjdas* have benefited tremendously from the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme since their monthly quota of bamboos has more than doubled, even as royalty has been reduced to less than one-fourth. This helps to enhance their income and, consequently, their sustainable living standards. Members of forest department claimed that the ecology of surrounding forests will improve owing to the care taken by them while extracting bamboos (they cut only three-year old bamboos and decongest the congested clumps). The earning could

be enhanced further if they market the produce themselves instead of entrusting the job to money lenders, who charge exorbitant commission.

Joint Forest Management (JFM) has emerged as an important forest management strategy and the area under JFM now exceeds 14 million ha or 18 per cent of the forest land. The JFM forests of the country are being managed by around 63,000 JFM groups. Although this large area has the potential to meet a substantial part of the country's forest product requirements, it is yet unclear whether JFM forests can or even should be managed to yield any commercial produce (Sarin, 1996).

A very important institutional implication for the HFD in the context of JFM is the change required in style of functioning, structure, and culture of the forest department. It is the cooperative relationship between the state and the local people that the future direction of forest administration lays. It was the only feasible option for meeting the twin objective of ecological security and livelihood

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Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to age and education. (n=60)

Sr. No.	Age (in years)	Frequency	Per centage
1.	Below 35	04	06.66
2.	35-45	10	16.66
3.	45-55	20	33.34
4.	55-65	26	43.34
	Education		
5.	1-5 th	28	46.66
6.	6-8 th	18	30.00
7.	10-12 th	12	20.00
8.	Graduation	02	03.34

security (Dhar 1994). According to TERI 1999b studied on the issue of bamboo basket practicing has been found that monthly earnings from basket making of different sizes ranged from 396 rupees (largest size) to 425 rupees (smallest size). Further, 15 days of employment was created every month from basket making. The study also indicated that direct selling of baskets by villagers could increase the monthly earnings of the community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted on 60 rural women who are engaged in making of bamboo basketry for earning in Kalka region, District Panchkula (Haryana). For the present investigation, Kalka region (Haryana) was purposively selected, mainly because of the striking selection of utilitarian basketry products and special creative and imaginative craftsmanship of Kalka. The present research has been conducted for basketry items for daily routine. The required data for the present study have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through the "Survey Method" with the help of structured questionnaire. Sixty rural women artisans were covered in this survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bhanjdas community of Haryana

Bhanjdas, the basket making community of Haryana, live mostly in the northern part of the state

in the hilly belt of the Shivaliks. For their sustenance and employment, this community is solely dependent on the bamboo from the forest areas for making baskets. After formation of the state of the Haryana, the Haryana Forest Department (HFD) has been issuing permits for bamboo extraction to the *Bhanjda* settlements in *Bargodam*, *Kalka*, and *Bowana* to assist the development of these communities. Due to increasing population pressure coupled with economic growth and the growth of the market economy, jeopardized the ecological sustainability of the bamboo ecosystem in this area.

Socio-personal traits of the respondents

The socio-personal traits of the respondents including age, education, domicile (region), type and size of the family and family income provide fairly good understanding of their background. Distribution of the respondents according to their socio-personal traits has been presented in the Table 1.

The maximum percentage of respondents *i.e.*, 43.34 per cent were in age group 55-65 yr. The minimum number of the respondents *i.e.*, 6.66 per cent was young (below 35 yr) who were making the bamboo baskets. The data pertaining to education revealed that the respondents were not highly educated. It was interesting to note that 46.66 per cent women respondents were educated only up to 1-5th class. Only 3.34 per cent of the respondents were found educated up to graduation level.

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Table 3. Distribution of the respondents according to income and technical know-how. (n=60)

Sr. No.	Income	Frequency	Per centage
1.	3000-5000	15	25.00
2.	5000-7000	15	25.00
3.	7000 and above	30	50.00
	Learned craft from		
4.	Inherited	55	91.66
5.	Learned from friends or others	05	8.34

It was observed that 50 per cent respondents belonged to income range of Rs. 7000/- and above per month while 25 per cent respondents belonged to income group of Rs 3000-7000/- per month.

Mode of learning of the skill

According to 91.66 per cent of the respondents, basketry making was their ancestral work. Only 8.34 per cent of the respondents learned this craft from their friends and others.

Regeneration of degraded forests policies

Joint Forest Management programme in Haryana Shivaliks, and Hill Resource Management Societies (HRMS) were formed comprising the *Bhanjdas* communities of *Bargodam*, *Kalka*, and *Bowana*. An MOU was signed between the HRMS and the HFD for protection and management or regeneration of degraded forests in lieu of shearing the forest resources. Different studies showed on assessing the impact of this unique model of joint management, revealed that there has been marked improvement in the socio-economic conditions in those areas where HRMS has been formed. The bamboo forest areas under joint management of the society worked better and can sustain the supply of the bamboos to *Bhanjdas* in future. This unique system of management of bamboo resources in the Shivalik involves a dynamic process of change, socially, economically and environmentally as well. Livelihood issues of local communities are primarily integrated in the joint forest management policies. However, land tenurial issues are not fully settled and create insecurity among communities. Power relations and equity issues still exists among

various sections of the community as well as between community and government officials. Hence, there is a need for capacity building of local communities and a need for a management structure, which will be based on equity.



Fig. 1. Rural women making bamboo baskets from the bamboo sticks

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Table 4. Monthly income from bamboo baskets.

Sr. No.	Variable	Sizes of the baskets			
		Largest	Large	Medium	Small
1.	Bamboo stalk requirement per day (number)	5.00	4.30	4.00	3.00
2.	Number of baskets made per day (number)	5	8	10	12
3.	Selling price of the baskets (in rupees)	20	15	10	5
4.	Monthly income in months (in rupees)	2500-3000	2200-2000	2500-3000	1500-1800

The data (Table 4) show that different variables effects the incomes of the respondents from the bamboo basket making as most of the basketry products varied in sizes. In respect of the requirement of the bamboo stalks of the different sizes of the baskets 5 number of the bamboo stalks were required for making of the one largest bamboo basket while small size of the bamboo basket was prepared with 3 number of the bamboo stalks. The number of baskets developed by respondents per day *i.e.*, 5 numbers in largest size baskets while 12 numbers of small baskets were prepared by the respondents in a day. In spite of these, the large and medium size of the basketry was developed by respondents *i.e.*, 8 to 10 baskets per day. Further, 15 days of employment was created every month from basket making. The study also indicated that direct selling of the baskets by villagers could increase the monthly earnings of the community depending upon the demands in the market. Selling price of the baskets were Rs 20/- for largest bamboo baskets, Rs 15/- for large, Rs 10/- for medium bamboo basket and Rs 5/- for small size of bamboo basket. Monthly income was found to be quite less, it accounted for about Rs. 2500-3000/- for largest and medium bamboo baskets, Rs. 2200-2000/- for large size of the baskets while Rs. 1500-1800/- for small size of the bamboo baskets (Figure 1).

The traditional procurement of bamboo materials was regularized under JFM programme. At present, each household is given a permit of 100 bamboos per month (from 15 September to 15 June) at a concessional royalty of 7 rupees. For more than a century in India, rural communities and

government forest departments have struggled over the control of forest resources. State bureaucracies have prevailed in circles of law and political power in their attempt to dominate nearly one-quarter of India's land area, but forest villages, because of their traditional rights, number, and proximity, have maintained their position as the principle resource user. This case study provides an example of the new types of co-management systems beginning to evolve in India. Reviewing the experiences of the Haryana Forest Department and rope-making communities, the authors identify points of conflict and compromises emerging as new management agreements are formulated. Points of tension are identified as communities attempt to compete with paper mills and local contractors for grass cutting leases. It is suggested that the grass leases be part of an integrated watershed management agreement that provides incentives to local communities to enhance the productive and sustainable use of the larger forest ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

The bamboo forest areas under joint management of the society are worked better for upliftment of the rural women through their bamboo basketry craft and can sustain the supply of the bamboos to *Bhanjdas* in future. This unique system of management of bamboo resources in the Shivalik forests involves a dynamic process of change, social, economic and environmental as well. Livelihood issues of local communities are primarily integrated in the joint forest management policies.

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