

Fuelwood Dependence around Protected Areas: A Case of Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh

Akash Jaiswal and Prodyut Bhattacharya*

*University School of Environment Management, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University,
Dwarka, Sector 16-C, New Delhi, India*

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ABSTRACT Forests have been very important natural resource for rural livelihood in India providing variety of products and services. In most Indian villages, local people are heavily dependent on forests mainly for fuelwood which is the only dependable energy alternative they have, sometimes it also works as potential cash earning sources for households. This paper examines the nature and extent of fuelwood dependence in the protected area of Suhelwa Wildlife Sanctuary and its buffer area by local people living in nearby villages. In this study, a field survey of 1636 households from 55 villages located within 5 kilometres proximity to forest was conducted for collecting primary data about the basic household's attributes, fuel use pattern, dependency on fuelwood, consumption and collection pattern of fuelwood. Simple descriptive methods are used to analyse the data. The result shows that fuelwood contributes 91.6% of total domestic fuel requirement for cooking in the study area. While comparing various rural energy sources, fuelwood ranked first, followed by dung cakes and crop residues. Similarly the average monthly consumption figures were also high for fuelwood that was 426 kg, 113 kg for animal dung and 69 kg for crop residues while the monthly consumption figure for LPG was found to be 16 kg amongst the LPG users. The mean consumption of fuelwood per capita in the area was 1.8 kg per day while mean consumption per household was 14.2 kg per day. The result shows that fuelwood availability, collection and consumption depend on the family size, distance from forest area, transportation opportunity and economic condition of the household. Nearly 87% of the households fulfil their fuelwood requirement completely from forest while rest procure it from various sources like home gardens, roadside trees, from agricultural farms. After the establishment of the Wildlife Sanctuary local people are facing serious problems in collection of fuelwood from native forests, which has initiated some conflict with the Forest Department.