

## Abstract

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Over a long period of time, India's forest resources and livelihood of forest people are under crisis. Since the independence of India various initiatives including the Joint Forest Management as the last and most recent measure were adopted by the government to make the forest regenerative and sustainable economic base for restoring the natural ecology, but in return it still remains far below the expectation. Therefore, understanding the role of the FPCs as major stakeholders of the system and their livelihood which is said to be intricately related to forest-based economic system is considered as the major objectives of the study. To reveal further the intricacies involved in relation to their dependency where various factors like urban influence, education, forest quality in terms of availability of non-timber forest products, work together in determining the overall system of livelihood. The study has been framed to work out empirically-based understanding. Analytical constructs of the study rests on the grass-root level data collected through purposive and stratified random sampling basis as well as issues revealed through expert-review and physical observation. In total 808 Forest Protection Committee households have been selected from two different forest ranges of Paschim (west) Medinipur district of West Bengal, where the two ranges belong to the same lateritic land zone and deciduous Sal forest but having a qualitative difference in terms of diversity. This was done in order to serve the purpose of inter-forest comparability estimation with reference to location specificity. Major findings of this study as obtained are,

- (i) the geographical entity, location specificity and government and intuitional support matters most in denoting the livelihood in general; (ii) state of the forest stand as almost non- remunerative while (iii) traditional forest rituals is in process of disappearance especially where urban intervention is maximum; (iv) the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of occupations determine the income variations; (iv) increased in livelihood stress detaching forest dwellers from forest, (v) multi-source of earning especially of non-forest related sources, (vi) economic class and community related occupational diversity. Cumulative effects of all determining the ultimate livelihood stress emerge as the most important observation of the study.

**Key Words:** Forest Protection Committees, Deciduous Sal Forest, Location-specificity, Traditional Forest Rituals, Occupational Diversity, Livelihood Stress.