

The Empirical Study of Wild Edible Mushrooms and Bamboo Shoots in Sustaining Liangmai Livelihoods

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Abstract

This paper explores the contribution of wild edible mushrooms and bamboo shoots as critical Non-timber forest Products (NTFPs) in sustaining the livelihoods of Liangmai in Manipur. For centuries, NTFPs have provided sustenance to the community. Also, primary collectors and small traders have been able to meet their financial needs by selling these forest resources. Labour divisions and traditional knowledge play significant roles in collecting, processing, and commercializing these resources. However, increasing commercial demand poses risks of over-extraction and sustainability of NTFPs. Despite traditional knowledge and village councils' autonomy in managing forest resources, there is little local regulation, leading to unsustainable harvesting practices. The paper calls for collaborative efforts between villagers and local bodies to establish sustainable NTFPs harvesting practices. The study concludes that while wild edible mushrooms and bamboo shoots provide economic opportunities, their sustainability is crucial for ensuring long-term livelihood security and preserving ecological balance in the region.

Keywords: Bamboo shoots, Liangmai, Livelihoods, NTFPs, Wild-edible-mushrooms

Introduction

Non-timber forest Products (NTFPs) play a significant role in the sustenance and economic livelihoods of tribal communities, particularly in forested regions. NTFPs include a wide range of products, such as fruits, seeds, medicinal plants, bamboo, mushrooms, resins, etc. derived from forests that do not require timber harvesting. In hilly regions like Manipur, where access to irrigated agricultural land is limited, NTFPs provide critical subsistence and income-generating opportunities. Liangmai in the hills of Manipur is one such group that relies heavily on harvesting and selling NTFPs, including wild edible mushrooms and bamboo shoots.

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