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Indu K. Murthy [™], M. A. Khalid, Vani Sathyanarayan, M. Beerappa, Savithri Bhat, M. Prashant, Sudha lyer & N. H. Ravindranath

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Abstract

Management and conservation of forests are subject to pressures and disturbances. Planning and management of forests for conservation require information on the biodiversity, socioeconomic dependence, forest biomass, and carbon. Long-term studies help generate such information on the structure and function of forests. The current study was conducted in the Uttara Kannada District of Karnataka in the Western Ghats region. The dynamics of forest ecosystems was studied through permanent plots of 1 ha in the evergreen and deciduous forest types, and the socio-economic aspects through household surveys in villages in the proximity of the permanent plots, for assessing the dependence on forests. The biomass estimates for the evergreen forest plots were 301-341 t/ha and those for deciduous forest plots were 258-336 t/ha. This is despite large dependence of households in the range of 10-48% on the forests for food, fodder, firewood, manure, and other NTFPs. Long-term data on the growth and mortality rates of economically important species, forest carbon balance, and the impact of climate change on forest composition are central to effective management. However, this information is rarely integrated within the policymaking process. This data could be utilized through integration at three points—the policy window, the decision window, and the networking window. Creating these policy, decision and networking windows will allow use of information from permanent plots for effective and efficient management of forest ecosystems, making them resilient to systemic and chronic shocks—both climate and nonclimate.

Keywords

Permanent plots Biomass NTFPs Disturbance Forest management