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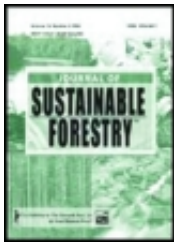
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Can Environmental Services Payments Sustain Collaborative Forest Management?

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Abstract


Collaborative forest management (CFM), where local communities and government agencies collectively manage forests, is anchored on the premise that the communities can protect and manage forests if their efforts in undertaking these tasks are compensated with resultant forest produce such as fuel, fodder, timber, and non-timber forest products. In marginally productive forests under such management, however, these benefits are meager. As a result, villagers' interest in CFM is short-lived. Although improved forest protection and ecological restoration are recognized as potentially delivering environmental services, there is little effort to assess them and little discussion on compensating local communities for rendering them. This paper documents the limited scope for on-site benefits to support CFM and explores opportunities for revitalizing it through a focus on payments for environmental services (PES). It concludes with the observation that PES is a promising alternative in view of its direct and performance-based payment approach.

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Key Words

- Community forest management,
- environmental services,
- direct payment,
- India

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