

## ECONOMIC STUDY OF BANSODS (BAMBOO CRAFTSMEN) OF MUNGELI : A CASE STUDY

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### Introduction

The importance of bamboo to rural communities is well known. Rural people depend on bamboos in numerous ways from house construction, agricultural tools and implements to providing of food material and weaponry etc. It supports a number of traditional cottage industry such as basket making, parquets, furnitures, handicrafts etc. Bamboo-based cottage industry has drawn renewed interests of planners and scientists, as of late, it has been realised that the industry is on the decline which is a shocking scenario in the rural sector. Promotion of bamboo-based cottage industry is inevitable because of its following positive features :

- Potential to generate significant level of employment in rural and urban areas.
- It is based upon a renewable natural resource.
- It holds cultural and artistic values.
- It generates products of daily needs.
- It is vital for the tribal economy.

Bamboo-based cottage industry is almost unorganised which is to the disadvantage to the craftsmen involved in it and might be a cause of its decline. A logical step to peep into this question is to

study the economics of the processes involved and marketing of products. With this point of view a case study of Bansods of Mungeli town in Bilaspur District of Madhya Pradesh has been carried out on the following aspects :

- (i) Socio-economic impact of the activity on Bansods.
- (ii) Market channels of the products.
- (iii) Demand-supply situation of bamboo.
- (iv) Price trend of the products.

Mungeli, a small town in Bilaspur District of Madhya Pradesh is a well known market of bamboo and its products (Tewari, 1992). About 340 families in Mungeli are engaged in making products like baskets, mats, containers, trays, hand fans, cattle guards for the seedlings, furniture etc. using bamboos. This activity is the main source of their livelihood.

### Methodology

(a) A survey of 70 Bansod families was conducted to get complete information about their socio-economic conditions. The survey was carried out using pre-designed questionnaire and every family was individually interviewed. The families were selected randomly.

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(b) Demographic and forest statistics regarding Mungeli and Bilaspur were collected from the Forest Department.

(c) It was found that more than 90% of the products made by Bansods of Mungeli are in the form of baskets, mats, containers, winnower and hand fans. Therefore only these products have been considered for the purpose of study.

(d) Market survey at Mungeli, Bilaspur, Raipur, Bhatapara and Bemetara was carried out to study the prices and market channel of the products.

(e) Traders and middlemen involved in the business were also interviewed to know the cost of transportation, their commission and constraints in the trade.

(f) Work study was done to assess time taken in marketing of the products under study.

### Availability of Bamboo

Source of bamboo supply to Mungeli is mainly the nearby forests in a radius of sixty km. Bansods get bamboos in three ways :

- from Forest Department depots under 'Nistar'.
- from open market or farmers.
- by unauthorised removal from forests.

It was assessed that availability of bamboo in the above mentioned modes is 15%, 75% and 10% respectively. A brief account of the above mentioned supply channels is as below :

(a) *Nistar* : Under 'Nistar' arrangement,

Forest Department has to supply upto 1500 bamboos/year to every registered Bansod family depending upon the availability. Under this arrangement, cost of bamboo to Bansods comes Rs. 1.85/bamboo (av. height 5.5 m and girth 10 cm) which includes royalty, local taxes and cost of extraction. However, the Department is seldom in position to supply the committed quantity. In Mungeli, the Department during the year 1994-95 could supply only 26% of the commitment.

(b) *Open market or farmers* : Bansods have to largely depend upon open market for raw material. There are quite a few private bamboo depots in Mungeli which get bamboos from open auctions of the Forest Department. But the cost of bamboo from this source is very high, on an average a bamboo costs Rs. 11/- in open market. Some of the farmers grow bamboos on their farm bunds which also becomes a source of bamboos at a little cheaper rate though in limited quantity.

(c) *Unauthorised removal from forests* : A small portion of their requirement is met from illegal removal from forests but that too has a small cost to them which can roughly be assessed to be Rs. 1/- bamboo.

There are only 44 registered Bansod families in Mungeli who get benefit of 'Nistar' arrangement whereas remaining 300 families (approx.) have to depend on the remaining two source only.

If we take into consideration proportion of supply from different channels and the respective costs, the average cost of bamboo to a Bansod comes out to Rs. 8.63 per bamboo in case of registered Bansod while for other Bansod it is Rs. 10/- bamboo. Thus a

registered Bansod has an advantage over a non-registered Bansod in terms of profit margin. Since majority of Bansods in Mungeli are the non-registered ones, no separate analysis has been done in respect of registered Bansods.

### Economics

Economics of making the products under study has been worked out in terms of net average profit accrued on one manday (8 hrs/day by an adult). Table 1 shows average requirement of raw material, average time taken in making the article and average selling price of each of the mentioned items. Formula used here is :

Net average profit/manday = (Selling price-cost of raw material)/mandays.

**Table 1**

*Average raw material requirement, mandays in making each product and average selling price in Mungeli market*

Item	Bamboo requirement (No. of culms)	Man-days	Avg. selling price (Rs.)
Basket (size 60 cm dia, 9 kg capacity)	0.5	0.2	9.0
Mat (3.2 m x 2.3 m)	8.0	3.0	150.0
Container (dia 0.9 m, height 1.2 m)	6.0	2.0	95.0
Winnower (60 cm x 38 cm)	0.3	0.14	6.0
Hand fan	0.15	0.10	4.0

(One manday is equivalent to 8 hrs work/day by an adult)

**Table 2**

*Net average profit per manday and per piece.*

Item	Net Av. profit per manday (Rs.)	Net Av. profit per piece (Rs.)
Basket	20.0	04.0
Mat	22.7	70.0
Container	17.5	35.0
Winnower	21.4	03.0
Hand Fan	25.0	02.5

*Bansods and Bamboos of Mungeli :  
A profile*

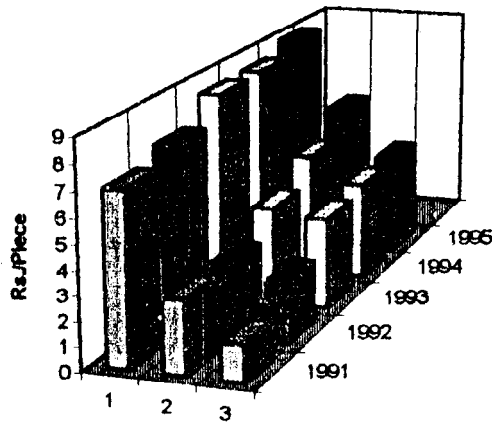
Urban Population	:	27,000
No. of Bansods and Bamboo workers (approx.)	:	340
No. of Registered Bansod families	:	44
Family size (approx.)	:	5
No. of persons engaged in Bamboo works (Average)/family	:	3
Demand of Bamboo from Bansods	:	4,10,000 Nos./annum

*Supply of Bamboo under  
Nistar agreement*

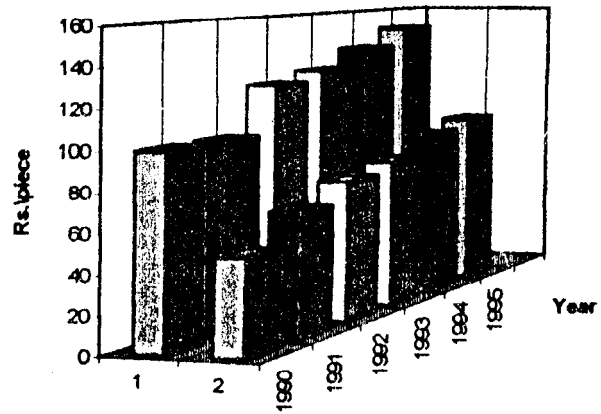
Year	Quantity	Supply
1993	28,000	43.07%
1994	17,000	26.10%
1995	10,000	15.30%

(till December)

## Price Trend of the Products



1. basket; 2. winnower; 3. Hand Fan



1. Mat; 2. Container

**Table 3**

Average Price\* of the Products at different markets

Item	Pandariya & Lormi market (Rs.)	Mungeli (Rs.)	Bhatapara Bilaspur and Bemetara market (Rs.)
Basket	8.0	9.0	11.0
Mat (3.2 m x 2.3 m)	150.0	150.0	180.0
Containers (for grains)	90.0	95.0	100.0
Winnower	6.0	6.0	8.0
Hand Fan	3.0	4.0	5.5

\* Price of one piece of Bamboo made article.

**Table 4**

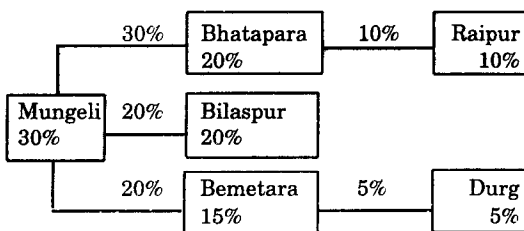
Average number of articles a Bansod family sells annually and expected income

Item	Nos.	Expected income (Rs.)
Basket	500	2000
Mat	40	2800
Container	90	3150
Winnower	1000	3000
Hand Fan	400	1000
<b>Total</b>		<b>11950</b>

**Market Channel**

About 30% of the products are consumed locally in Mungeli and the rest are exported to Bhatapara (30%), Bilaspur (20%), Bemetara (20%). The products exported to Bilaspur are consumed locally

whereas from Bhatapara and Bemetara a part is further exported to Raipur (10%) and Durg (5%) respectively.



### Conclusion

(a) It is seen that net average profit/manday to Bansods is very low (Table 2). Labourers engaged in other activities earn about Rs.30-35 per day whereas Bansods earn between Rs. 17.50-25.00 per day only.

(b) Average annual income from making bamboo articles to a Bansod family in Mungeli is Rs. 11950/- which is a combined income of 2-3 members of a family.

(c) Availability of Bamboo in Mungeli is major constraint. They have to largely depend on open market. Since Forest Department provides only a small fraction of their requirement under "Nistar", there does not exist any proper price regulation mechanism.

(d) If we consider a hypothetical situation that all the bamboo requirement of Bansods are being met by the Forest Department at the prevailing Nistar price (Rs. 1.85 per bamboo), the net average profit becomes substantially higher and appears justiciable. Table 5 compares profits in reality and under the hypothetical situation (must be aimed at).

**Table 5**

*Profits in reality and under the hypothetical situation*

Item	Net Av. Profit/manday (Rs.) (Reality)	Net Av. Profit/manday (Rs.) (Hypothetical)
Basket	20.0	40.6
Mat	22.7	45.2
Container	17.5	41.8
Winnower	21.4	39.6
Hand Fan	25.0	37.5

This analysis indicates that the Nistar arrangement could be very effective in upliftment of the socio-economic status of the Bansods in particular and for the bamboo based cottage industry in general. Though we know that the forests under the control of Forest Department are not in a position to provide the required quantity of bamboos, still there should be schemes of rehabilitation of forests and afforestation of bamboos on degraded lands with an objective of supplying bamboos to Bansods at concessional rates and without observing lengthy formalities.

(e) There is an emergent need to develop a proper marketing channel/system right from the production level to the consumption level.

(f) Institutional finances may also be tremendously helpful to the Bansods in increasing the production of bamboo based products.

(g) Study of market channels reveals that the products are not confined to local consumption only, they are exported to outside markets also. At present the trade is in the hands of few middlemen. If the

Bansods themselves could be organised in the form of co-operative societies, they will earn higher profits and better marketing/production opportunities.

### Acknowledgements

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### SUMMARY

**Bansods (Bamboo Craftsmen) depend on bamboos as raw materials for their livelihood. This case study has been done in the Mungeli town in Bilaspur District of Madhya Pradesh. Availability of bamboos is very poor and Bansods earn only between Rs. 17.50 and Rs. 25/- per day. There is an emergent need to develop bamboo availability prospects, proper marketing channel and form cooperative societies to enable the Bansods to earn higher profits and better production opportunities.**

### मुंगेली के बंसफोडों [बांस कारीगरों] का आर्थिकी अध्ययन - एक विशेष अध्ययन

परेश विश्वकर्मा, बिपिन बिहारी व एस० आशुतोष

#### सारांश

बंसफोडे [बांस कारीगर] अपनी आजीविका के लिए कच्चे माल स्वरूप बांसों पर आश्रित हैं। यह विशेष अध्ययन मध्यप्रदेश में विलासपुर जिले के मुंगेली कस्बे में किया। बांस बहुत कम मिलते हैं और बंसफोडों की आमदनी 17.50 रु० और 25 रु० के दरमियान है। बांसों की उपलब्धता बढ़ाने, समुचित विपणन धाराएँ खोलने और सहकारी संघ विकसित करने की आवश्यकता अनुभव की जा रही है ताकि बंसफोडों को अधिक लाभ और श्रेष्ठतर उत्पादन अवसर प्राप्त हो सकें।

### Reference

Tewari, D.N. (1992). *A Monograph on Bamboo*. International Book Distributors. Dehra Dun. 497pp.

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