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**Who Collect Resources in Degraded Environment? A Case Study from Jhabua District, India, Neetu Chopra, Supriya Singh, Shreekant Gupta, Urvashi Narain and Klaas Van't Veld**

**Abstract**

This paper examines the impact of the variation in stocks of three resources, namely, water, forests and fodder biomass, on resource collection time of rural households in India, especially women. Using household level data from 543 households across 60 villages in the Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, we estimate reduced form gender-specific time allocation equations derived from a household production model. An increase in groundwater scarcity makes women and children spend more time in water collection. An increase in the total biomass availability in the commons increases the time spent by men and women in grazing activity in addition to making men and women more likely to go for fuel wood collection. The results taken together indicate significant time impacts of natural resource scarcity. Our analysis has important implications for natural resource management initiatives such as community forestry and watershed development programmes, and these programmes have the potential to alleviate poverty by affecting the time allocation decisions of rural households, particularly women. This paper also tries to understand some of the trends emerging from the quantitative/econometric analysis using insights from social anthropology.

**Key Words:** Dependence on commons, Rural India, Time allocation decisions, Gender differences, Natural resource management initiatives, Anthropology.