



Role of Government in Development of Minor Forest Produce in Chhattisgarh State

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ABSTRACT

Chhattisgarh, is often referred to as the “Herbal State” of India, which is rich in forest resources and provide a wide variety of Minor Forest Produce (MFP). These are non-timber forest products (NTFPs) that include items like tendu leaves, sal seed, lac, tamarind, mahua, honey, chironji, and medicinal herbs. Where, In Chhattisgarh, over 44% of the state’s geographical area is under forest cover, and a significant portion of its population, particularly tribal communities, are engaged in the collection and processing of MFP. Recognizing, the importance of these resources, from socio-economic point of view, the Government has implemented various schemes to ensure fair prices, value addition, and marketing support for collectors. This paper tells about Minor Forest Produce, and market condition MFP in Chhattisgarh. By studying this paper it is known what are the challenges faced by Chhattisgarh minor forest produce and what are the opportunity and Government schemes to overcome it.

KEY WORDS

MFPs, Sustainable Development, Value Addition, Minimum Support Price, TRIFRED, Van Dhan Yojana.

INTRODUCTION

Minor Forest Produce (MFP): Minor Forest Produce (MFP) means the produce/product from various forest plants & species in the form of fruits, seeds, leaves, barks, roots, flowers and grasses etc., which include entire plant of medicinal herbs/shrubs. It refers to non-timber forest products (NTFPs) that are gathered from forest areas by local and tribal people. Unlike timber, which involves cutting trees,

MFPs include all other forest products that are collected without harming the forest ecosystem.

The forest of Chhattisgarh are very rich in these MFP. There are many MFP species of commercial importance in the state. These produce are used by rural communities as medicine, food supplements and moreover, the rural communities earn substantial income especially during non-agriculture season through the collection and sale of these produce. Currently, trade in specified MFP is organized and controlled by the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (T & D) Co-operative Federation through three tier Co-operative bodies of MFP pluckers.



(Source: <https://trifed.tribal.gov.in/non/timber/msp-mfp>)

Review of Literature

Haresh Kumar Giri, (2024) “Prospects And Challenges Of Minor Forest Produce In Jharkhand: A Critical Review” the study shows what are the major problems faced by the Minor Forest Produce, in Vedant forest of Jharkhand.

Misra, K. K. and Siviah, N. Venkata (2019), “Minor Forest Produce and the Problem of its Ownership by the Gram Sabha in the Scheduled Areas of Andhra Pradesh” In this paper the author, investigates the role of the Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabha in managing minor forest produce (MFP) under the PESA Act in Andhra Pradesh. Which focus on a sample of 27 Gram Panchayats, the study explains the ownership and collection processes of MFP, highlighting the economic reliance of tribal communities. It examines issues which is establishes in empowering Gram Sabhas, the dependency of households on MFP, and variations in collection and sale, while suggesting improvements based on local community insights. The research also assesses the implementation of the PESA Act’s provisions for tribal ownership of forest resources.

Pinki Maurya, “Issues Related to the Management of Minor Forest Produce and Possible Solutions” this study, clearly and deeply defines about the tribal people and tribal areas, according to constitution of India and had highlighted several issues related to the management of minor forest produce like issues related to collection, procurement, processing and marketing etc. also, this paper discuss about various initiatives taken by Government to deal with these issues at various levels. Some of the states like MP have prepared the roadmap to utilize and protect the minor forest produce in the larger interest of community and environment.

Sekar, C.; Vinayarai, R.S. & Ramasamy, C. (1996), “ Role of minor forest products in tribal economy of india: a case study”, this study examines the role of minor forest products (MFPs) in the tribal economy of India, focusing on the Adi Dravidar community in Tamil Nadu. Conducted by the Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam, and the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, it finds 83% of tribals collect MFPs for 8-10 hours daily, earning Rs. 11,180 annually per three-member household. Amla leads revenue at Rs. 24.57 lakhs, followed by broom grass and tree moss. Two inefficient marketing channels due to monopsony are identified, with suggestions for improvement.

Objective of the Study

1. To identify ,Government initiatives and support.
2. To study the Trade practices, value chain and pricing pattern of MFPs.
3. To identify the challenges & opportunities for market development.

Research Methodology

The study is based on secondary data. The materials were collected from Government Reports of CGMFPFED and TRIFED various journals, newspapers and relevant websites have been consulted in order to make the study an effective one.

Limitations of the Study

1. Based on only secondary data.
2. Mfp is found in many states of the country, but for study, only Chhattisgarh state has been selected.
3. Government runs many schemes to develop MFP but in this study only two schemes have been selected.
4. Government has taken several initiatives but paper shows only four initiatives.
5. Out of 67 MFP data has been shown for only 14 MFPs and even that is for year for 2024-25.

Challenges of Minor Forest Produce Market of Chhattisgarh State

1. **Weak Markets Link:** This challenge of MFP market is very crucial, as the collectors of MFPs, do not have any direct link with the customers, they lack market information, and have limited access to price trends and demand making it difficult for collectors to negotiate fair prices for their produce.
2. **Lack of Infrastructure:** Another challenge faced is, lack of proper infrastructure, Insufficient storage facilities, transportation networks, and processing infrastructure effects the marketing of MFPs, which lead to losses due to spoilage or damage.
3. **Exploitation by Traders:** It is also, a main challenge, which is faced by the, Indigenous collectors, who are often the primary gatherers of MFPs. The traders and the middle man purchases the product at very low cost, and sell them at higher cost in market. This, reduces the income of the collectors and undermines their livelihoods.
4. **Lack of Value Addition Skill:** Value addition in MFP refers to enhancing the quality, processing, or packaging of products which could increase the profitability of tribal gatherers and communities. But unfortunately, the gatherers lack this skills which again make it a big challenge.
5. **Competition from Cheaper Alternatives:** As our market is very broad, and there are numbers of brands and companies selling variety of products, at cheaper price and quality, increasing the competition. The availability of cheaper, non-indigenous alternatives can diminish the demand for MFPs.

Oppurtunities/ Suggestions for Market Developement of MFP

1. **Exploring e-marketing Platforms:** Exploring e-marketing platforms involve utilising, various digital platforms to connect with gatherers and buyers. or else, we can educate and train the pickers and gatherers how to utilise the digital platforms for marketing so that they can boost their livelihood and the value of MFPs. his can include platforms like online marketplaces, e-commerce sites, and social media for marketing, product promotion, and sales.
2. **Promoting Organic Certification:** Promoting organic certification for Minor forest produce may have various benefits for sustainable forests management and its conservation. Also, improving the livelihood of forest dependent communities.
3. **Establishing Process Units near Forest Area:** Establishing proper processing units near forest will help the gatherers in many ways. It will increase the infrastructure, with proper equipped machinery and other facilities for processing. making it more convenient. And making it effective and efficient.

4. **Encouraging PPP Model:** PPP-Model stands for Public-Private Partnership model. Leverages private sector expertise for processing and marketing while relying on Government support for infrastructure and enabling environment. This approach will help the tribal's to increase their efficiency and making their work effective.

Government Schemes and Initiatives for MFPS

1. **Van Dhan Yojana:-** Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY) or Van Dhan Vikas Yojana (VDVY) is a scheme launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, with the aim to improve the livelihood of tribal communities in India. This, scheme focuses on developing value chains for forest-based products and enhancing the income of tribal communities by providing them with skill training and capacity building. Under the Van Dhan Vikas Yojana, tribal communities are taught to make a group and start their own processing unit to increase their values. These clusters are provided with necessary infrastructure, such as tools and equipment, and training in value addition and entrepreneurship. The scheme also provides market linkages to the tribal communities for their products through various channels, including online platforms. In Chhattishgarh there are 2,085 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras operating under the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Yojana, which are structured into 31 clusters or districts, where there are 41,700 gatherers and pluckers in Chhattishgarh are employed as per the latest available data of March 2022.



(Source: <https://trifed.tribal.gov.in/pmvdya>)

2. **MSP for MFP:** MSP stands for Minimum Support Price, a policy of the Indian Government to support farmers and the gatherers by setting a guaranteed minimum price for certain agricultural products. This scheme ensures that farmers will not suffer losses due to market fluctuations and can rely on a minimum income from their harvest. This scheme is started by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) Government of India, in 2013-14. The primary objective of this scheme is to ensure fair and remunerative prices for MFP gatherers, thereby improving their livelihood and economic security,

MoTA has announced following MFPS collected in Chhattisgarh, purchased under MSP scheme Year 2024-25 (As on 31.12.2024)

S. No.	Name of MFP	Estimated Quantity (in quintals)	Actual Collected Quantity (in quintals)	Expenditure (Rs. in crores)
1	Bael Guda (Dry)	1,200	2.70	0.0007
2	Baheda Kachariya	5,000	5.95	0.0012
3	Chironji Guthli (Dry)	30,500	895.07	2.9213
4	Harra Kachariya	5,000	215.185	0.0538
5	Honey	1,400	278.34	0.8449
6	Kaju Guthli (Dry)	8,500	80.33	0.0840
7	Kalmegh / Bhuineem (Dry)	800	40.00	0.0140
8	Kusumi Chhili Lac (Dry)	500	6.642	0.0199
9	Mahua Phool (Dry)	52,000	521.453	0.1564
10	Mahua Seed	1,700	164.47	0.0520
11	Mahul Patta	1,150	1.57	0.0002

12	Nagarmotha (Dry)	1,100	5.40	0.0016
13	Saal Seed (Dry)	1,60,000	2,333.74	0.4200
14	Shikakai Phalli (Dry)	50	1.50	0.0008

(Source: https://www.cgmpfed.org/new/msp_scheme.php)

Initiatives Taken by the Govt. For MFP

- 1. TRIFED:** The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) was established in 1987, under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984. This body works for the social and economic development of the tribal people of the country. with the aim of bringing about socio-economic development of tribal's of the country by establishing the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) collected/ cultivated by them.
- 2. CGMFPFED CO.:** The Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading & Development) Co-operative Federation Limited (CGMFPFED) is a key organization in Chhattisgarh, India, dedicated to the trading and development of minor forest produce (MFP) such as tendu leaves, sal seeds, harra, gum, and various medicinal herbs. Established under the Chhattisgarh Co-operative Societies Act, the federation functions as an apex body with the primary aim of improving the socio-economic conditions of forest-dependent communities, particularly tribal populations. Headquartered in Raipur, CGMFPFED operates through a structured three-tier cooperative system comprising village-level Primary Forest Produce Co-operative Societies for collection, District Unions for coordination, and the State Federation for overall management, marketing, and policy implementation. The organization plays a vital role in empowering local communities by generating income opportunities through MFP collection, offering bonuses and incentives—especially to tendu leaf collectors—and supporting Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to encourage collective economic ventures and entrepreneurship. It also emphasizes sustainable forest management and skill development, making it instrumental in enhancing both the livelihoods and capacities of forest dwellers.
- 3. Forest Right Act (2006):** The Forest Rights Act, India or the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act is also known by other names like the Tribal Rights Act or the Tribal Land Act. It deals with the rights of the communities that dwell in the forests (including Scheduled Tribes), over land and other resources, which have been denied to them over the years because of the continuation of forest laws from the colonial era in the country.
- 4. PESA ACT 1996:** The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, commonly known as the PESA Act, is a landmark legislation in India aimed at empowering tribal communities in Scheduled Areas by extending the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (related to Panchayati Raj institutions) to these regions, with specific adaptations to protect tribal rights and culture. The PESA Act was created to give more power to tribal communities, especially in villages located in Scheduled Areas, by allowing them to manage their own resources, protect their culture, and govern themselves. The law ensures that these communities have control over their land, forests, water, and minor forest produce, helping to prevent their exploitation and promote fair development. It applies to ten states in India that have tribal-dominated regions, including Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra. The Act is based on Article 243M of the Constitution, which allows special rules for tribal areas, different from regular village governance. Its main goals are to strengthen Gram Sabhas (village councils), protect tribal rights, support sustainable use of natural resources, and preserve traditional customs and ways of life.

CONCLUSION

The Chhattisgarh Government has significantly boosted the development of Minor Forest Produce (MFP), making it a key tool for empowering tribal communities and supporting rural economies. Through

programs like the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme, Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs), and a strong procurement and marketing system under CGMFPFED, the state ensures fair prices, adds value to products, and creates sustainable jobs, especially for women.

By including more MFPs in the MSP scheme, supporting Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and building processing facilities, the Government has created a strong system that uplifts tribal livelihoods and protects forests. MFP-related income has grown from ¹ 250 crore to over ¹ 1,200 crore, showing the success of these efforts. Moving forward, continued innovation, skill training, and better market connections are essential for long-term success and prosperity for Chhattisgarh's forest communities.

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