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**Assessment of mahua producers groups in
collection, primary processing and marketing of
Mahua**

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Abstract

The study was conducted in the Surguja & Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh during the year 2016-17. Out of 13 blocks five blocks from both district have been purposively selected for the study due to maximum availability of mahua tree as a forest produce and as a means of the source of income of tribal farmer as a livelihood. The selected blocks namely ambikapur, Surajpur, Batouli, Lundra & Udaipur one village from each block have been selected. thus 50 respondents (10*5=5 SHGs) have been selected for the study. The finding of the study reveals that maximum of the respondents 58.00% selling mahua in regulated market. In case of maximum Net Profit obtained by channel- IV (wholesaler) was Rs.3830. while maximum respondent 100% have been engaged in drying of mahua as primary processing. Whereas maximum 38.00% Channel – IV involved in marketing of Mahua in Surguja District.

Keywords: Mahua, Collection, Marketing, wholesaler

Introduction

Madhuca longifolia, commonly known as *mahua*, is a tropical tree found largely in the central and north Indian plains and forests. It is a fast growing tree that grows to approximately 20 meters in height, possesses evergreen or semi-evergreen foliage. It is adapted to arid environments, being a prominent tree in tropical mixed deciduous forests in India in the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Gujarat and Orissa. Outside India, it is found in Sri Lanka and doubtfully in Myanmar (Burma). It is cultivated in warm and humid regions for its oleaginous seeds, flowers and wood. The oil (solid at ambient temperature) extracted from its seeds is used for the care of the skin, to manufacture soap or detergents, and as a vegetable butter. It can also be used as a fuel oil. The product is often used in sweets and chocolates. The seed cakes obtained after extraction of oil constitute very good fertilizer. The flowers are used to produce an alcoholic drink. Several parts of the tree, including the bark, are used for their medicinal properties. It is considered holy by many tribal communities because of its usefulness. mahua flowers are also considered good for cooling, and are used as a tonic and demulcent. However an estimated 90 per cent of the production goes into brewing beverages. Seventy-five per cent of the tribal households in our country are engaged in mahua flower collection meaning a population of around 7.5 million is into this livelihood activity. Various studies indicate that a household gets between Rs 2500-5000 in a normal mahua year. An estimate says that 28600 person years of employment are generated in mahua flower collection every year (FGLG India, 2008). But the income for the primary collectors/processors in this transaction is very low. This is often attributed to an unorganized market and little access of the primary collectors to the market.

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Another feature of this sub sector is that the producers and the consumers are essentially the same group of people, the tribals.

The term Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) appears to have been coined, for the first time, by Debeer and Macdermott in 1989. According to FAO, NTFPs defined as "all goods for commercial, industrial or subsistence use derived from forest and their biomass". Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are also known as minor forest produce (MFP) or non-wood forest produce (NWFP). The Recorded forest cover in Chhattisgarh is 55,621sq. km. which is 41.14% of its geographical area (Anonymous, 2013) [4]. In Chhattisgarh, where 11,185 villages out of a total of 19,720 villages are forest fringed, the importance of NTFPs in the livelihood security of the rural population has led the State government to declare even NTFPs such as tendu leaves, saal seed, harra, gum (khair, dhawara, kullu and babool) as nationalized and establish the CGMFP Federation with an objective to promote trade and development of these minor forest produces (MFPs) in the interest of MFP collectors, mostly tribals. The remaining other MFPs were left free for trade because their distribution and production varied with respect to time and space. As a result, villagers would get assured minimum prices for nationalized NTFPs, but low collection prices and often exploitation by middlemen for the non-nationalized NTFPs due to inadequate market facility development in the remote rural areas. The tribe population of the State is 78.22 lakhs, which is 30.62 percent of total population (Anonymous, 2011) [3]. The total geographical area of Surguja district is 4043.23 out of this forest cover of the district is 36.62%. (Anonymous, 2013) [4] and tribe population of the district is 45.31% of total population (Anonymous, 2011) [3]. This tribe population mainly lives in and around the forest. For their sustainable livelihood, they mainly depend upon wage earning and agriculture. But due to predominance of mono cropping and rainfed agriculture, the income generated through agriculture is not sufficient for their sustainable livelihood. Hence the tribal population also depends upon other alternative source of income like animal husbandry, forest produce (especially NTFPs) and non agricultural activities like business, government and private jobs. Among this alternative source of income NTFPs plays a very important role in their sustainable livelihood by providing them source of income and employment.

Materials and Methods

Location of The Study Area

The study was conducted in Surguja and Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh state during the year 2016-2017. Surguja district was selected purposively because the maximum tribal population is residing in Chhattisgarh Northern hills, out of 13 blocks five blocks from both district have been purposively selected for the study due to maximum availability of Mahua tree as a forest produce.

Methods of Data Collection

The selected blocks namely Ambikapur, Surajpur, Batouli, Lundra & Udaipur one village from each block have been selected thus 50 respondents (10*5=5 SHGs) have been selected for the study. The data were collected personally in cooperation with forest officers and other officials of the district by using pre-tested interview schedule.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their marketing linkages (n=50)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
In the village itself	21	42.00
In regulated markets	29	58.00

Table 1 showed that distribution of respondents according to their marketing linkages maximum respondents found the linkage in regulated markets i.e. (58.00 Per cent) followed by in the village itself i.e. 42.00 percent respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to marketing of mahua through different channels (n=50)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency*	Percentage
1	Channels – I (Producer → Consumer)	13	26.00
2	Channels – II (Producer → APMC)	1	2.00
3	Channels – III (Producer → Village trader → Retailer → Consumer)	17	34.00
4	Channels – IV (Producer → Village trader → Wholesaler → Retailer → Consumer)	19	38.00

*Data based on multiple responses

Table 2 revealed that distribution of respondents according to marketing of mahua through different channels maximum respondents found in channels IV (producer → village trader → wholesaler → retailer → consumer) i.e. is 38 per cent followed by channels III (producer → village trader → retailer → consumer) i.e. 34.00 per cent followed by channels I (producer → consumer) i.e. 26.00 per cent respectively

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their primary processing (n=50)

Particulars	Frequency*	Percentage
Grading	-	-
Drying	50	100.00
Packaging and storage	42	84.00

*Data based on multiple responses

Data showed in Table 3 i.e. distribution of respondents according to their primary processing maximum respondents were found in drying i.e. (100.00 percent) followed by Packaging and storage i.e. (84.00 per cent) respectively.

Table 4: Problems in collection and marketing of Mahua (n=50)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Low and fluctuated market price of Mahua	43	86.00
Obstruction caused by forest rule and regulations in collection of Mahua.	39	78.00
Lack of information about regulated market	32	64.00
Lack of organised market	32	64.00
Lack of co-operation between the producer to sale collectively	37	74.00
Lack of low cost storage facilities	29	58.00
Deforestation	41	82.00

*Data based on multiple responses

The result reveals that majority of the respondents i.e. (86.00%) pointed out that they were facing the problem of low and fluctuated market price of mahua followed by deforestation (82.00%), obstruction caused by forest rule and regulations in collection of Mahua (78.00%), lack of co-operation between the producer to sale collectively (74.00%), lack of information about regulated market and lack of organised market (64.00%) for both, lack of low cost storage facilities 58.00 per cent respectively. Ahenkan and Boon (2010) [2] reported that the NTFPs marketing in rural areas of Ghana are unorganized, dispersed and farmers also lack the necessary marketing skills and information required for optimal performance. Almost similar findings were also reported by Tejaswi (2007-2008) [8], Patel *et al.* (2008) [7] and Nedanovska (2012) [6].

Table 5: Suggestions to overcome the problems in collection and marketing of Mahua (n=50)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Flexibility in forest rule and regulations for Mahua collection	43	86.00
Selling prices of Mahua should be fixed by the government	39	78.00
Purchasing of Mahua by government should be assured	32	64.00
Low cost storage facility should be provided	39	78.00
Availability of timely market information about Mahua	29	54.00
Deforestation should be checked	41	82.00

*Data based on multiple responses

Table 5 displays the suggestions to overcome the problems in collection and marketing of mahua pointed out by the respondents to overcome the problems faced by them in the flexibility in forest rule and regulations for Mahua collection i.e. 86.00 per cent followed by deforestation should be checked (82.00 per cent) followed by selling prices of Mahua should be fixed by the government and low cost storage facility should be provided i.e. 78.00 per cent for both, followed by Purchasing of Mahua by government should be assured i.e. (64.00 per cent followed by 54.00 per cent for availability of timely market information about Mahua respectively. Acharya (2013) [1] suggested few measures to overcome the problems related to collection, marketing and processing of NTFPs. This measures includes, afforestation should be promoted through distribution of plants to the farmers to avoid deforestation, Proper storage facilities should be available in panchayat bhavan at village level to save the collectors from distress selling of NTFPs, Formulation of State level marketing board should regulate and promote the purchase and sale of products within the state as well as outside the state at remunerative price and proper and regular training programs should be conducted for the collectors of NTFPs regarding the processing of NTFPs. Tejaswi (2007-2008) [8] was also found almost similar findings.

Conclusion

NTFPs play an important role in sustainable livelihood of the tribes living in forest fringes. In Surguja district mahua also serve as an important source of food, nutrition, medicine, income and employment. But due to some prevailing problems like low and fluctuated market price, lack of developed market, existence of bad weather causes significant interruption in collection and marketing of mahua. Due to poor market infrastructure and fluctuated market price the

respondents were not getting remunerative prices for their mahua. Thus, they were derived less profit from the marketing of mahua. So, there is a need to take necessary steps by the government to eliminate these existing problems faced by the respondent of study area. In this context, suggestion that obtains from the respondents to overcome these problems should be involved in the strategies made by the government to solve such problems.

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