

# Importance of Minor Forest Produces in Rural Economy of Chhattisgarh

JITENDRA KUMAR SHARMA<sup>1,\*</sup>, DR. SUDHIR KUMAR SHARMA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Vishwavidyalaya Koni, Bilaspur (C.G.), India

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Prof., Department of Commerce, Naveen Govt. Girls College Mungeli (C.G.), India

<sup>2</sup>Research Guide & Principal, Govt. Pataleshwar College, Masturi, Bilaspur (C.G.), India

*Email Address:* [jitendrasir.05@gmail.com](mailto:jitendrasir.05@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Chhattisgarh has the third largest forest in the country. The state is surrounded by forests in Madhyapradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Telangana. The forests of Chhattisgarh are very rich in minor forest produce. Minor forest produce is a subset of forest produce and got a definition only in 2007 when the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, was enacted. Section of the above mentioned Act defines Minor Forest Produce (MFP) as all non-timber forest produce of plant origin and includes bamboo, brushwood, stumps, cane, Tusser, cocoon, honey, waxes, Lac, tendu leaves, mahua flowers, medical plants and herbs, roots, tuber and the like. In Chhattisgarh, minor forest produce plays a vital role in the livelihood of tribes and forest dependent communities. The collection, processing and trade of minor forest produce provide employment and income opportunities for millions of people.

**Keywords:** *Minor Forest Produce, subset, non-timber, plant origin.*

## 1. Introduction

Chhattisgarh has 44% of its land covered by forests which makes its natural resources vital. The forests of Chhattisgarh are very rich in minor forest produce [1]. Minor Forest Produce means the produce from various forest produce in the form of fruits, flowers, leaves, seeds, barks, roots and grasses etc. including entire plants of medicinal herbs/shrubs. Minor forest produce is very crucial in Chhattisgarh because it provides essential nutrition, household supplies and a significant source of income especially for tribal communities, boosting the rural economy. The government of Chhattisgarh has increased the number of minor forest produce purchased at a support price to support the forest dwellers. On February 8, 2022, the Forest and Climate Change Minister informed that the number of minor forest produce for purchase at the support price in Chhattisgarh has been increased from 52 to 61. Bal Harra, Mahua Phool Kacha, Chhind Jhadu, Kodo,

Kutki,(black), Kutki (brown), Ragi, Amchur (white) and Amchur (brown) are newly added minor forest produce [2].

## 2. Various Minor Forest Produces in Chhattisgarh

In Chhattisgarh, minor forest produce is an important source of livelihood for several communities particularly for those living near forest areas [2]. The collection and trade of minor forest produce provide employment and income opportunities for millions of people. Here are some examples:

### Bamboo

In Chhattisgarh, bamboo is a significant minor forest produce. The state government is focusing on its cultivation and trade to benefit local community's particularly tribal households. Bamboo is a major species on which local people depend for their livelihood. Chhattisgarh has a significant amount of bamboo-bearing area within its forest area. Forest dwelling communities have rights to manage, collect and sell minor forest produce like bamboo under the Community Forest Rights (CFR) framework [3]. The Bansods of Chhattisgarh are known for their bamboo basketry with Bastar tribes making different types of beautiful baskets. In Chhattisgarh bamboo holds a special place in the lives of the people. Bamboo has been used for making fishing nets, in building homes, kanwad (load carrying poles), musical instruments and food. More than 10000 recorded uses of bamboo have been found worldwide.

### Lac

In India, Chhattisgarh is a major lac producing state. Near about 4000 MT lac is produced annually and lac is considered a significant minor forest produce. The primary lac producing districts in Chhattisgarh are Jagadalapur, Kanker, Mahasamund, Gariaband, Korea, Sarguja and Kabeerdham. Collecting, processing of lac is an important source of income and livelihood for many communities in

Chhattisgarh. Lac is cultivated in trees like Kusum, Palas, Ber and used for various purposes such as medicine, food preservation, the production of varnish, polish and decorative items. Since ancient times lac dye has been used in India and neighbouring areas as a wood finish, skin cosmetic and for wool and silk. Lac based products manufactured in Chhattisgarh include Seed lac Button lac, Shellac, Bleached lac, Dewaxed Shellac Lac dye, Aleuritic Acid etc [4]. Lac cultivation is a subsidiary source of income for rural and forest dwellers in Chhattisgarh. The state government is focusing on increasing lac production and providing income to farmers through lac cultivation.

### **Tendu Leaves**

In India, Chhattisgarh is a leading producer of tendu leaves. Tendu leaf is an important minor forest produce of Chhattisgarh. The state collects approximately 1.67 million standard bags of tendu leaves which is about 20% of the country's total production. The season for the collection of tendu leaves in Chhattisgarh starts in the third week of April and continues until the second week of June. A standard bag of tendu leaves in Chhattisgarh consisted of 1000 bundles with each bundle containing 50 leaves. The Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading and Development) Co-operative Federation is responsible for the collection, trade and management of tendu leaves in the state. Various schemes are implemented by the state government for the family of leaf gatherer such as free footwear distribution, scholarship schemes, insurance schemes, and distribution of profit from the trade of tendu leaves. Tendu leaves are primarily used as wrapper for bidis. Tendu leaf collection and bidi production are vital source of income and employment particularly for tribal communities during lean months [5]. Tendu leaves are also called "green gold" in tribal areas due to their economic importance. The leaves are collected, dried and then used to wrap tobacco for bidi production. Apart from bidi making, tendu leaves have been used in traditional medicine for health issues like diabetes, fever and diarrhoea. The leaves are also used to treat cuts bruises due to their antimicrobial properties. The flowers are used in skin diseases and urinary disorders.

### **Mahua Flowers**

In Chhattisgarh mahua flower is one of the significant minor forest produce. Near about 5 lakh quintals of mahua flowers are collected annually. Mahua flowers are a vital source of income and food for many tribal communities in Chhattisgarh especially during the non- agricultural season. The Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce Cooperative Federation Limited plays a key role in collecting, processing and marketing mahua flowers. The collection and sell of mahua flowers contribute significantly to the rural economy of the state, Mahua flowers are used for

various purposes including food, oil, alcoholic beverages, medicinal properties etc. The collection and processing of mahua flowers provide employment opportunities for rural communities and self help groups. Mahua flowers are also famous in national and international markets, with a UK-based private institution purchasing mahua flowers for the production of various products.

### **Tamarind**

Tamarind is considered a minor forest produce in Chhattisgarh. The state has been actively collecting and procuring it along with other minor forest produce at minimum support price. Tamarind is used for various purposes. Tamarind pulp is a key ingredient in various curries and stews. Tamarind pulp can be used as a natural preservative. In some regions tamarind seed powder is used as a feed for livestock. Tamarind has a long history of use in traditional medicine. The different parts of the plant are used to treat various ailments including constipation, liver, gallbladder problems, stomach issues, cold and fever. The bark and leaves of the tamarind tree are used for wound healing in some traditional practices. In Chhattisgarh, Bastar district is famous for tamarind. Here there is a village named Chitapur where the tamarind tree is a living currency for the people [4]. The village of 800 households have over 1700 tamarind trees and the residents of the village measure their economy by the tamarind trees. Tamarind from here is exported to some 54 ₹. Tamarind is particularly an economy of the poor that fetches good earning.

### **Sal Seed**

In Chhattisgarh, sal seed is a major minor forest produce, particularly in the areas like Bastar. The Chhattisgarh Minor Forest Produce Co-operation Federation Limited manages the collection and trade of sal seed. The entire area of collection is divided into units, which are sold through tenders and auctions by the MFP Federation, Raipur. Funds for collection are provided to District Union by the state level MFP Federation, who then provide funds to Primary Societies for procurement. Collectors are given cards and their daily collections are by the head of the Primary Society at every collection centre. Payment for collection charges is made weekly and entries are made in the collector's card. Important sal seed producing District Union in Chhattisgarh are Jagadalapur, Keshkal, South Kondagaon, East Bhanupratappur, Gariyaband, Dhamtari, Dharamjaigarh, Korba, Jashpur, Balrampur, Sarajuja and Korea. Sal seeds contain valuable edible oil which can be used for cooking and as a substitute for butter or cocoa butter in confectionary and chocolate manufacturing. Sal oil is used for soap making by blending it with other softer oils. Sal fat is used in the production of vanaspati ghee [6]. Sal oil is also used in the production of lubricants and auto oil. The

oil cakes remaining after oil extraction are used for cattle, poultry and fish. Sal seeds are major source of income for rural and tribal communities in Chhattisgarh.

### Harra

Harra is an important minor forest produce in Chhattisgarh. The annual production of harra in Chhattisgarh is near about 50000 quintals, though the actual production can vary. It is a crucial source of income for forest dwellers. The districts famous for harra production in Chhattisgarh are Kanker, Keshkal, South Kondagaon, East Bhanupratappur, Jagadapur, Rajnandgaon, Dharamjaigarh, Raigarh, and Jashpur. Harra is commonly known as harad which has multiple ayurvedic health benefits. It is a very useful herb that can be helpful in controlling hair loss and promoting hair growth due to the presence of vitamin C, iron, manganese, selenium and copper which provides optimal nourishment to the scalp. The use of harra is beneficial for eyes and general weakness. It also helps to reduce body ache. It is also helpful in reducing cough and its associated problems like breathlessness. It also helps to relieve digestive problems. Oil obtained from harra seeds is useful in case of chronic constipation. Harra powder helps to boost the immune system by reducing cell damage due to its antioxidant properties [7]. Harra powder along with coconut oil in the form of paste is used to heal wounds. Harra is a major source of income for the people living near forest areas.

### Chironji

Chironji is a significant minor forest produce in Chhattisgarh. Chironji kernels are a valuable source of income for forest dwelling communities in Chhattisgarh. The trees are typically found in forests and require care to ensure a good yield. Chironji seed is rich in iron, calcium, phosphorus and vitamins like vitamin B1, B2 and C [6,7]. The essential oil obtained from Chironji seeds has a medical property which is used for curing various health issues. Chironji seed is considered as substitute for almonds. It is added to sweet dishes and topped with deserts to enhance flavour and nutrition. Along with its rich, delicious properties, Chironji seeds are used for various health benefits. The rich fibre content in the seeds helps in digestion and regulates the bowel system by preventing bloating and constipation. Its antacid properties prevent acid formation and helps in the treatment of ulcers, gastritis and indigestion making it highly effective in treating digestive disorders [8]. Chironji seeds are helpful for healing wounds, mouth ulcer. It is also good for heart health and detoxifying the blood, keeping bones healthy, helps in managing diabetes, boosts immunity and reduces weight. Chironji is an important source of income for the tribal

people of Chhattisgarh. The Chironji nuts have also very high demand in international market.

### 3. Conclusions

India is considered as a treasure of minor forest produce used for medicinal and other purposes since ancient times. The government of Chhattisgarh has declared the state as a “Herbal State” with the objective of conserving minor forest produce resources including medicinal plants and promoting sustainable harvesting and processing. The Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce Co-operative Federation Limited plays a key role in collecting, processing and marketing of minor forest produce of the state. In Chhattisgarh, tribal people and rural communities depend on the collection and sale of minor forest produce for livelihood throughout the year. The collection and sale of minor forest produce are the part of the Van Dhan Scheme which aims at improving tribal income. TRIFED sphere heads the implementation of Van Dhan across India. Minor Forest Produce provides essential nutrition to the people living near forest areas and is used for household purposes, thus forming an important part of their non-cash income. For many tribal communities who practice agriculture, minor forest produce are also a source of cash income during slack seasons.

### Acknowledgments

Both Author's thank to all the online data resources, websites and research papers mentioned in the references for their valuable support in preparing this article in present form.

### References

- [1] Retrieved from <https://www.cgmpfed.org>
- [2] Retrieved from <https://www.myupchar.com>
- [3] Retrieved from <https://www.kviconline.gov.in>
- [4] Chandel AS, Yadav DK, Jhariya MK (2017). Economically and Traditionally Important Non-Timber Forest Products of Saraju Division. *Bulletin of Environment, Pharmacology and Life Sciences* Vol. 6 Issue 5, pp. 32-39.
- [5] Retrieved from <https://www.downtoearth.org.in>
- [6] Retrieved from <https://textbook.com>
- [7] Malhotra KC and Prodyut Bhattacharya. Forest and Livelihood. Published by CESS Hyderabad, 2017.
- [8] Shiva and Mathur. Management of Minor Forest Produce Sustainability. Oxford & IBH Publishing Co.Pvt.Ltd.1986