

Availability and price of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) at local haat bazar (markets) in West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand.

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ABSTRACT

Forests in West Singhbhum district comprise biological and geophysical diversities. Due to variations of altitude and rainfall, diverse types of species are available. Forest produce plays a vital role in the life of the tribal family whose women and children are involved in collection and trading activities in different seasonal periods of the year. Many species are economically important for the people living in and around the forest areas. The people, mainly Ho tribals, are engaged in the collection of, barks, leaves, gums, flowers, fruits, roots and whole plants from the forests for livelihood out of which many species are medicinally and industrially important. The main problem with the tribal people is the rate at which they sell the MFPs and other medicinal plants. The traders in the region collect huge quantity of MFPs and other medicinal plants in exchange of small amount of money. The tribals are paid very less than the actual value of the product. Keeping this in mind a preliminary field survey of the local haat / bazar/ was conducted in 18 Blocks of the district on random basis to find out the availability and price range of MFPs being sold in the market. The data was collected through questionnaire survey which were arranged at different stages from forest department people, MFP merchants, local traders, village people, and BMC members. Availability of total 81 MFPs were observed at local haats (market). The minimum price observed was those of Chirchiri (*Achyranthus aspera*) and Chakor seeds (*Cassia tora*) @ 10/kg each whereas the maximum price was that of seed lac (*Kerria laca*) @ 600/kg respectively.

Keywords: Minor Forest Produces, local haat, West Singhbhum, Jharkhand.

INTRODUCTION

In India over 50 million people are dependent on MFPs for their subsistence and cash income Shaanker et al. (2004) (Hegde et al., 1996). The MFPs provides 50% of household income for 20 to 30% of rural population particularly to tribal population. Around 3000 forest species are found to be useful, but only 126 have marketability (Maithani, 1994). Around 50% of forest revenues and 70% of forest-based export income of the country comes from MFPs. In this way MFPs forms one of the mainstays of income and sustenance for many tribal communities (Rao, 1987; Chopra, 1993; Mallik, 2000). The forest fringe communities use MFPs for diverse purposes like medicinal, edible fruits, vegetables, oilseeds, ornamental, cottage industry, fuel wood, fodder,

dyes, tannins, narcotic, drinks, housing materials agricultural implements, weapons, fibers, furniture items, packing materials, matches, sports goods, lac, floss etc. (Saha and Sundriyal, 2012). MFPs collection and sale are often viewed as a marginal activity, though in reality the trade of these products provides significant economic benefits to many rural households and communities (Chamberlain et al., 1998). MFPs play prominent roles in improving living standards through variant socioeconomic services such as source of food to households, income generation potentials, provision of safety-net or insurance in times of a tragedy, preservation of cultural heritage and spirituality and financial saving by households (Shackleton and Pandey, 2014).

Tribal people in India have enjoyed the right to collect MFPs by tradition. In the beginning they used to collect MFPs only for consumption, but later they started selling them for cash income. The produce acts as a mini bank for the family for fulfilling their needs. The tribal areas in Singhbhum and Santhal Parganas are rich in MFPs like Kendu leaf, Sal seeds, Mahua flowers and seeds, Kusum, Karanj seeds, Palas flowers, Harra fruits, Bahera fruits, Amla fruits, Neem, Honey, Wax, Gum etc. Much of the MFPs are sold in raw form. In the forests of Singhbhum region medicinal plants, such as Amla, Harra, Bahera, and herbs such as Satwar, Papuravi, Amarlata, Anantmul, and Kalmegh, are highly valued. Two especially important forest products in this region are Lac and Tussar, which provide employment to thousands of tribal people living within and around the forest. Hence the tribals and forests can be understood to be interdependent and interrelated. (Verma and Paul, 2019)

Background

Forests and the resources derived from it are life sustaining elements for people living in and around forest areas. Forests, as one can imagine, form an intricate element of the social and cultural life of tribals, and it is estimated that in West Singhbhum, about 70% of tribal and other local people depend on forests for their subsistence and livelihood. With such a large population dependent on forest resources, the MFP is largest unorganized sector.

Section 2(4) of the Indian Forest Act 1927 defines only "forest-produce" and this term connotes to those products whether found in, or brought from a forest such as

- a. Timber, charcoal, caoutchouc, catechu, wood-oil, resin, natural varnish, bark, lac, mahua flowers, mahua seeds, kuth and myrabolams,
- b. trees and leaves, flowers and fruits, and all other parts or produce of trees,
- c. plants not being trees (including grass, creepers, reeds and moss), and all parts or produce of such plants,
- d. wild animals and skins, tusks, horns, bones, silk,

cocoons, honey and wax, and all other parts or produce of animals, and

- e. peat, surface soil, rock and minerals (including lime-stone, laterite, mineral oils), and all products of mines or quarries;

In short, the essential condition to be qualified as a forest produce is that the products should be either found in or be brought from forest.

MFP, under the FRA (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers [Recognition of Forest Rights]) Act, 2006, has been defined as, "all non-timber forest produces of plant origin including bamboo, brushwood, stumps, cane, tussar cocoons, honey, wax, lac, tendu or kendu leaves, medicinal plants and herbs, roots, tubers and the like". The forest dwellers are now even legally empowered with the ownership and governance of the MFP through PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, and the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The FRA, 2006, gives the "right of ownership, access to collect, use and dispose of minor forest produce which has been traditionally collected within or outside village boundaries". Yet the tribal and other local people dependent on forests remain underprivileged and poor. The information on the extent of resource availability is scarcely available and requires detailed studies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

Jharkhand State is categorized into Chotanagpur hill and Chotanagpur plateau. The West Singhbhum district comes under the Chotanagpur plateau region and is one of the oldest landmasses on earth, which is composed of Precambrian rocks which are more than 540 million years old. Rodgers and Panwar (1988), in their Biogeographic Classification of India, recognized this plateau as part of province 6B (Deccan peninsula). The West Singhbhum district, a part of the erstwhile Singhbhum district, came into existence when Singhbhum was bifurcated in 1990 to form Pashchimi and Purbi Singhbhum. The largest district of the State lies in the South Chhotanagpur division and is situated in the south eastern part of Jharkhand

state falling under eastern plateau and hill region (Fig. 1). The district is situated at a height of 244 meter above the sea level and has an area of 5351.41 Sq. Kilometers. The district is bordered on the north by Khunti district, on the east by Saraikela-Kharsawan district, on the south by Keonjhar,

Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh districts of Odisha and on the west by Gumla district of Jharkhand and Sundargarh district of Odisha. Chaibasa is the district headquarters. The district spread over $21^{\circ} 58'$ and $23^{\circ} 36'$ north latitude and $85^{\circ} 0'$ & $86^{\circ} 54'$ East Longitude.

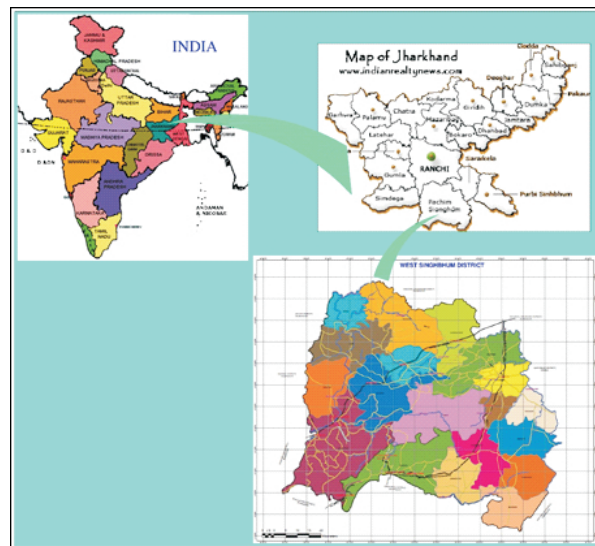


Fig. 1 Location map of the study area

Forest types of the West Singhbhum district

Champion and Seth (1968) classified the vegetation of the West-Singhbhum district into following major two types:

- Northern Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests
- Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests

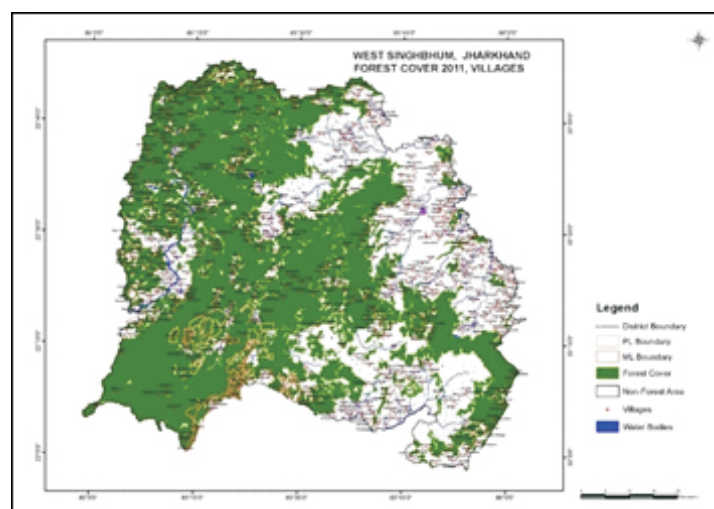


Fig: 2 Forest cover of West Singhbhum district. (Source: FSI, 2011)

Methodology

A preliminary field survey of the local haat/ bazar was conducted in 18 Blocks of the district on random basis to find out the availability and price range of MFPs in the market. Survey was conducted in the month of November, 2020. Questionnaire survey were arranged at different stages were questioned/interviewed forest department people, MFPs merchants, local traders, village people, and BMC members. Apart from this, secondary sources were also used. Previous research reports, Government annual report, newspaper and journals articles, books and manuscripts were followed.

Result and Discussion.

In, West Singhbhum district many MFPs are being traded but are not documented properly. Also, there is no control over the trade of MFPs by the State Government. Many outside traders from other districts/states are involved in illegal marketing of MFPs. An urgent need for sustainable harvesting and preventing overexploitation of bioresources is required. Proper awareness about Biological Diversity Act, 2002 should be spread among the local people. Many Important medicinal/ economical herbs and plants species have become RET locally which need to be conserved.

Table. 1 Details of haat/ bazar organized in West Singhbhum district

SL No.	Name of Block	Name of Haat/Bazar	Day
1	Jhinkpani	Saniwar haat Jhinkpani	Saturday
2	Tonto		
3	Kumardungi	1. Kumardungi haat	Thursday
		2. Andhari haat	Sunday
4	Manoharpur	Manoharpur bazar	Sunday
5	Sonua	Sonua bazar	Thursday
6	Manjhari	1. Bharbhariya bazar	Friday
		2. Rakund haat	Thursday
7	Chaibasa	Mangla haat	Tuesday
8	Khuntpani		
9	Goilkeria	Goilkeria haat	Thursday
10	Tantnagar	Tantnagar haat	Thursday
11	Manjhgaon	1. Khairpal haat	Tuesday
		2. Jayntgarh haat	Saturday
		3. Manjhgaon haat	Thursday
12	Chakradharpur	Chakradharpur bazar	Wednesday
13	Bandgaon	Bandgaon bazar	Wednesday
14	Anandpur	Anandpur bazar	Tuesday
15	Gudri	Gudri bazar	Wednesday
16	Jaganathpur	Jaganathpur haat	Thursday
17	Nouamundi	Nouamundi haat	Sunday
18	Haatgamhariya	Haatgamhariya bazar	Monday

SL No.	Minor Forest Produce (MFP)	Botanical name	MSP declared by GOI (in Rupees per Kg.)	Approx. rate in Market (Retail)
1	Chanothi/ Gunja seeds	<i>Abrus precatorius</i>	45	30/kg
2	Shikakai Pod (Dry)	<i>Acacia concinna</i>	50	10/4 piece
3	Chirchri plant	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i>	28	10/kg
4	Bael Pulp (Dried)	<i>Aegle marmelosa</i>	30	25 /kg
5	Mushroom Dry	<i>Agaricus bisporus</i> , <i>Agaricus sp.</i>	300	300/kg
6	Banlahsun	<i>Allium hookeri</i>		10/piece
7	Kaju	<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>		10/4 piece
8	Kalmegh	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	35	5/bundle
9	Matta sag	<i>Antidesma diandrum</i>		10/Pila (small)
10	Wild Honey	<i>Apis dorsetta</i> , <i>A. cerana</i> , <i>A. floera</i> , <i>Trigona spp</i>	225	300-400kg
11	Jac fruit seeds	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i>	45	20/kg
12	Shatavari Roots (Dried)	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	107	15/bundle
13	Neem Seeds	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	27	10-15/kg
14	Mohlan/Sial leaves	<i>Bahunaia vahllii</i>		35/bundle (100 piece)
15	Banslochan	<i>Bambusa sp.</i>		10/20 piece (Approx.)
16	Tagar	<i>Bauhinia semla</i>		10/ pila (Small)
17	Koinarphool	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>		10/kheja
18	Guggul (Exudates)	<i>Boswellia serrata</i>	812	50/pila (small)
19	Chironjee pods with seeds	<i>Buchananial anzan</i>	126	80-90/kg
20	Palash flower (dried)	<i>Butea monosperma</i>		10/kheja
21	Kathkaranj	<i>Caesalpinia bonducella</i>		10/5 piece
22	Amaltash seeds	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	13	50/kg
23	Chakor seeds	<i>Cassia tora</i>	16	10/kg
24	Malkagni	<i>Celastrus paniculatus</i>		10/packet
25	Tejpatta (Dried)	<i>Cinnamomum tamala and Cinnamomum sp.</i>	40	5/ packet
26	Sanai phool	<i>Crotalaria juncea</i>		10/kheja
27	Banhaldi (Kali haldi) tuber	<i>Curcuma caesia</i>		10/root
28	Nagarmotha	<i>Cyperus rotundas</i>	30	10/root
29	Tendu	<i>Diaspyros melonoxylon</i>		12-20/kg
30	Badarikanda	<i>Dioscorea floribunda</i>		10/2 root
31	Bamboo (Karil)	<i>Edible species of Bamboos</i>		20-30/ kg

SL No.	Minor Forest Produce (MFP)	Botanical name	MSP declared by GOI (in Rupees per Kg.)	Approx. rate in Market (Retail)
31	Bamboo (Karil)	<i>Edibl species of Bamboos</i>		20-30/ kg
32	Phutkal (leaf bud dried)	<i>Ficus geniculata</i>		10/pila (small)
33	Kokum (dry)	<i>Garcinia indica</i>	29	29/kg
34	Kalihari (dried tubers)	<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	31	20/piece
35	Gudmar/ Madhunashini	<i>Gymnema sylvestre</i>	41	20/bundle
36	Aitha	<i>Helictresisora</i>		10/6 piece
37	Anantmul	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	35	20/3pices
38	Korya (dried bark)	<i>Holarrhena pubescens/ Holarrhena antidysenterica</i>	31	10/bundle
39	Jatropha	<i>Jatropha curcas</i>		10/5 piece
40	Seed Lac	<i>Kerria lacca</i>	677	300-600/ kg
41	Rangeeni lac	<i>Kerria lacca</i>	200	220/ Kg
42	Kusumi Lac	<i>Kerria lacca</i>	275	420/kg
43	Gijangond	<i>Lannea coromandelica</i>		30/pila
44	Muchri saag	<i>Limnophila conferta</i>		10/kheja
45	Tisi	<i>Linum usitatissimum</i>		30-40/kg
46	Mahuwa Seed	<i>Madhuca indica M. latifolia, M. longifolia</i>	29	30/kg
47	Mahuwa Flower (Dried)	<i>Madhuca indica M. latifolia, M. longifolia</i>	30	55-60
48	Bakul (Dried bark)	<i>Mimusops elengii</i>	46	30-35/kg
49	Noi/Aal (dried fruits)	<i>Morinda citrifolia</i>	17	10/4 piece
50	Kaunch seeds	<i>Mucuna pruriens</i>	21	10/pila (small)
51	Van tulsi seeds	<i>Ocimum gratissimum</i>	16	10/ packet (Small)
52	Ban Tulsi Leaves dried	<i>Ocimum tenuiflorum, Hyptis suaveolens</i>	22	10-15/packet
53	Sonapatha pods	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>	21	10/piece
54	Dried Amla Pulp (De-seedes)	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	52	50-60/kg
55	Pipli	<i>Piper longum</i>		10/5 piece
56	Karanj Seed	<i>Pongamia pinnata</i>	22	12-15/kg
57	Bijasal	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i>		10/ piece (small bark)
58	Sargandha root (dried)	<i>Rauvolfia serpentina</i>		10/root
59	Soap Nut (dried)	<i>Sapindus emarginatus</i>	14	10/5 piece
60	Kusum seed	<i>Schleichera oleosa</i>	23	10-12/kg

SL No.	Minor Forest Produce (MFP)	Botanical name	MSP declared by GOI (in Rupees per Kg.)	Approx. rate in Market (Retail)
61	Eksira	<i>Schrebera swietenoides</i>		10/2 piece
62	Marking Nut	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>	9	10/5 piece
63	Sal Seed	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	20	10/kg
64	Sal Leaf	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	35	20-25 (Per 100 pc.)
65	Makoi (dried fruits)	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	24	10-12/kg
66	Gum Karaya	<i>Sterculia urens</i>	114	20/ Pila (small)
67	Kuchila	<i>Strychnos nux vomica</i>	42	10/4 pieces
68	Jamun dried seeds	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	42	25-30/kg
69	Tamarind (With Seed)	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	36	5/kheja
70	Tamarind (De-Seeded)	<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	63	10/ kheja
71	Arjun Bark	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i>	21	10/ 100 gm
72	Bahera	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	17	15-20/kg
73	Myrobalan/harre	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	15	15-20/kg
74	Hill Broom Grass	<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i>	50	30-40/piece
75	Giloe	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	40	20-30/kg
76	Gokhru	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>		10/4 piece
77	Katai saag (dried leaf powder)	<i>Vangueria spinosa</i>		10/pila (small)
78	Van jeera	<i>Veronica antheilmintica</i>	70	10/25 gm (Approx.)
79	Aswagandha roots	<i>Withania somnifera</i>		20/6 pieces
80	Dhavaiphool dried flower	<i>Woodfordia floribunda</i>	37	25/kg
81	Banadrak	<i>Zinziber zrubet</i>		10/piece



Fig: 3 Availability of MFPs in local Haat / Bazar

The list clearly brings out the low and inadequate return received by the local tribal people. Some of the reasons and issues identified during the survey are flagged here: -

a. Fluctuation in Production-

Due to irregular seasons and being an unorganized sector, the production of MFPs sees huge fluctuation range from 4% to 500% whereas in spite of irregular monsoon, the agricultural production varies in range of 20% to 50% only.

b. Lack of Uniformity-

MFPs are not managed in uniform manner. Neither advance technology nor organic seed sare used in promotion of these products. It depends upon the location, temperature and rainfall in different sessions. So, the production is not in uniform manner. Shape, size, colour, and other properties vary year to year and location to location which leads to reduction in selling price. The traders and industries, based on these products require uniform quality and quantity. This is a major disadvantage of promoting marketing activities and establishing MFPs product in market.

c. Irregular collection-

The MFPs collection is irregular as it is found in a scattered form. The quantity available at far off places makes collection and transport un economic. The low and irregular supply of MFPs reduces the bargaining power of the sellers causing lower returns.

d. Seasonal Collection-

Most MFPs are collected seasonally. Whereas the demand for some MFPs may be throughout the year. Local selling in the peak season depresses the price. Lack of proper transportation and storage causes damage of product. So, the vendors allow low selling price for MFPs in market.

e. Competition with Substitutes-

Many MFPs have lost their natural market due to competition with packaged synthetic products. These products look nice in packets and are long lasting. For example, awala available in the forests is cheaper than its synthesized by-products like muraba and

achar. Another example, is of Chironjee available in market is cheaper (80-90/kg) than packaged product (1000-1200/kg).

f. Fluctuation in Demand-

The business trends are changing and export environment is being created for these products. Due to uncertain production and uncertain demands, sometimes it is advantageous for small gatherers but disadvantageous for big traders

g. Discrimination in Gender-

The women of village are traditionally assigned and burdened with other roles in family so their activities in market are restricted. Irregular collection, poor quality, and low production provide small gain from these products.

h. Poverty of Gatherers-

The villagers who are involved in collection of MFPs are mostly poor. Mostly they are dependent on middlemen and they work on the instructions of vendor. Thus, unorganized rural markets and extreme poverty of villagers influence the consumption of MFPs at a low price.

i. Too Many Intermediates-

There is a big chain between gatherers and consumers of MFPs. There are local traders who work on commission basis for vendors. They supply products to wholesalers, who then supply to other wholesalers in state and outside of state. Despite the long chain of middlemen, gatherers do not have much choice of intermediaries. In a competitive market there should be a choice between several buyers who can provide good cost of these products.

j. Nature of Buyers-

The middlemen are capable of maintaining a very strong chain in the marketing network. Sometimes they meet the personal requirements of primary gatherers. Due to this ability the bond between the two is very strong. The payment is normally made by middlemen at the time of delivery. Mostly MFPs are collected from gatherer's point. Different factors affect middleman's control on gatherers like poverty

of the gatherers, language and transportation facilities, poor communication, ineffective agencies etc. strengthening the middleman. Unorganized and unbalanced bargaining power between sellers and buyers make middlemen more profitable.

Lack of Government interventions, inadequate policies, lack of advertising and organized marketing system are also some of the major cause for low profit to the tribals.

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