

Mahua Flowers and Seeds: A Livelihood Strategy of Tribal's in Mayurbhanj District of Odisha, India

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Abstract: Mayurbhanj is one of the tribal dominated districts of Odisha, which has been declared as the fully scheduled district of the state and its population is 56.67 percent of the total population of the district. The Santal, Kolha, Munda are the major tribe of this district. These tribes are generating their livelihood status based on collection of Minor Forest Produces (MFPs), like Sal leaf, Mahua flowers, fire-wood, weaving, and handicraft. The availability of Mahua tree for most covers of this district which provides livelihood security to the tribal's in general. The products obtained from tree are consumed by these communities itself or sale in local and regional market. Tree having great spiritual, cultural, medicinal, and ornamental and multiple utility. The problems faced by the tribal's are lack of access to forest product, inadequate market linkage of the product and exploitation by the Middleman. As consequences it has affected the pattern of livelihood among them and forced them to migrate in search of livelihood. The present paper attempts to investigate the livelihood strategy of the tribals through Madhuca Indica and the problems relating to the collection and selling of the product market

Key words: Mahua, Livelihood, Miner Forest Produces,

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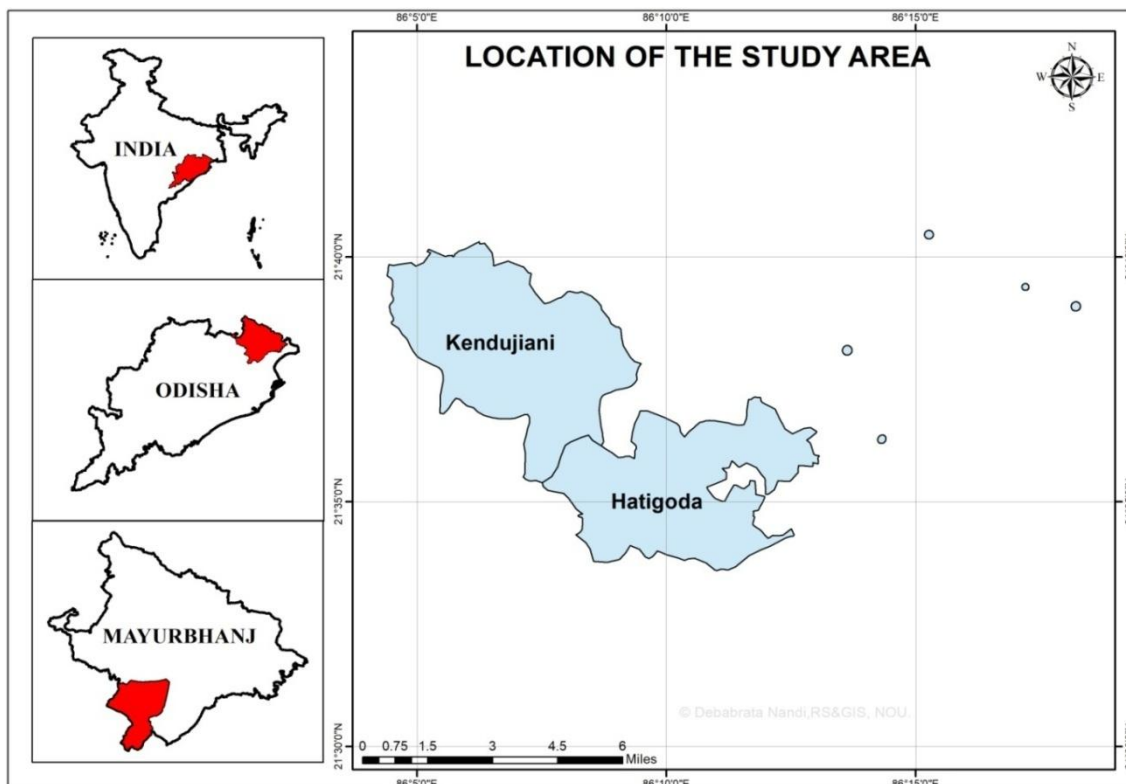
I. INTRODUCTION

The country is a home for more than 400 tribal groups, who still depend upon traditional agriculture and forest for their livelihood and survival (Mishra et al., 2001). Tribal people fully depend upon nature and have developed a symbiotic relationship with surrounding ecosystem. Millions of people, particularly tribal and rural communities in many developing countries still collect and consumed a wide variety of wild plant resources to meet their food requirements (FAO, 2004; Balemie et al., 2006; Bharucha et al., 2010; Dobriyal et al., 2015). There are many tree species which play vital role in tribal livelihood; *M. indica* is one of them. *M. indica* is the most important tree species in tribal point of view as it is used for varieties of purposes (Kala, 2011). It is having great spiritual, cultural, medicinal, and ornamental and multiple utility. Mahua seedlings in first two or three years grow slowly but in later years It treat as a fast growing tree attain height up to 20 meter and having evergreen to semi evergreen foliage according to site condition (Pankaj et al., 2008). In Odisha, Mahua flowers and fruits are found in most of forest areas. It is also a major source of income for the forest dwellers. Especially, in the district of Mayurbhanj, keonjhar, Kandhamal, Nayagarh and Sambalpur , the tribal are very much dependent on this tree. Most of the tribals along forested area of Orissa depend on such products for sustaining themselves for around six to seven months in a year. by Sarda Lahangir. In Mayurbhanj around 40% of the Tribal's depending on the Mahua flowers and fruits as a measure source of their livelihood. Basically the Mahua flowers are used for preparation of liquor which is high demand in the tribal area due to low price of the sail of the products as a result the tribal's are affected economically. The present paper makes an attempt to investigate the livelihood strategy of the tribals through Madhuca Indica and the problem while collection and selling of this product in the market.

II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Study area: The present paper is limited to Mayurbhanj district which is a land- locked district with a total geographical area of 10,418 Sq. Km. It is situated in the Northern boundary of the state of Odisha with district Head quarter at Baripada. The district lies between 21^o 16' and 22^o 34' North latitude and 85^o 40' and 87^o 11' East longitudes. The district is surrounded in the North by Midnapore district of West Benagal, Singbhum district of Jharkhand in the South, Balasore district in the west and Keonjhar district in the East.

Sampling techniques: The sample size consists of 120 households of tribal people those are collecting Mahua flower and fruits Tula nearby forest. The study is confined to the probability sampling. The respondents are selected on random basis. The data has been collected during March and April, 2018 covering kendujiani and Hatigoda GP of Thakurmunda block. The data have been analyzed by using descriptive statistics like percentage, table and frequency distribution pertaining to the objectives.



Significance of the study:

The green Mahua flowers are collected mainly by women nearby forest of Similipal Biosphere area. During the month of February, Mahua trees are full of flowers and the flowers are automatically down to earth. In the initial stage the tribals for collecting the Mahua flowers, knowingly burn the ground of the mahua tree through which ground will be clear and if the fire will move to the jungle automatically the jungle will burn. The tribals are collecting flowers during March to May. They go to forest early in the morning and return by 11 am. About 6 kg of flowers are collected by the tribals. It is quite very difficult to collect the flowers from the ground. No inter village conflicts have been known to occur on the issue of collection.

The process of drying the flowers is most important aspect for hoarding and sailing in the market, the flowers collected from the forest are first kept in an open space for 5 to 6 hours for drying continuously up to 5 days. The time should not exceed more than this as it could reduce the weight, flexibility and quality of the product. The drying place is usually located either in the front or back of the house and is made up of mud and cow dung. Very few households can afford to have concrete drying yards.

The tribals sail of the dried flowers in the local hat, Kendujiani and Thakurmunda. The Flowers are usually transported by bicycle or a van depending upon the volume. Generally, the traders are in regular contact with the tribal village level agents who procure and sometimes store flowers on behalf of the traders. A few village level agents also directly purchase and sell the flowers to Thakurmunda traders on their own. Where as the study insights about the status of Mahua flower profession by tribal people in the study area and expected to give current and timely information about the socio- economic challenge of tribals in the study area.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Responses: Description of the characteristics of the target population gives basic information about the sample population involved in the study area, thus the following tables contains about the general, educational, economic status and attitude of tribal communities whose profession depends up on Mahua flowers and seeds.

Table No. 1 Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Age, Marital Status and Education

| Sl. No. | Characteristics of responses | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Age | | |
| A | Below 20 | 17 | 14.16 |
| B | 20-30 | 42 | 35 |
| C | 30-40 | 46 | 38.33 |
| D | Above 40 | 15 | 12.50 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |
| 2 | Marital Status | | |
| A | Married | 72 | 60 |
| B | Unmarried | 26 | 21.66 |
| C | Widow | 22 | 18.33 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |
| 3 | Education Status | | |
| A | Illiterate | 34 | 28.33 |
| B | Class-1 to class- vii | 43 | 35.83 |
| C | Class-vii- class x | 24 | 20 |
| D | 10th above | 19 | 15.83 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |

Source- Primary data

1. Age: The table - 1 shows that 38.33 percent of respondents belong to the age group of 30-40 year old, where as 14.16 percent of them come under the age group of below 20. While 12.50 percent of them belong to the age above 40 and 35 percent of them come under in two ages groups 20-30. Thus, from the above analysis it is learnt that most of them belong to the age group above 30-40 .is near to middle age who are deeply involved in Mahua flower and seed collection.

2. Marital status: The table – 1 also indicates that 60 percent of respondents are married, where as 18.33 per cent of them are widow, While 21.66 per cent of the respondents are unmarried. Thus, from the above analysis it is found that majority of the respondents 60 per cent are married and involved in the Mahua flower and seed collection profession.

3. Educational Status: The table-1 shows that regarding educational level, among the respondents 28.33 percent are Illiterate and 35.83 percent from primary education background, where as 20 per cent of them are belongs to Class-vii to class x and 15.83 percent of respondents are above 10th class. From this table we can understand that the majority of respondents 35.83 per cent are from primary educational level.

Table No. 2 Distribution of respondents on the basis of collection, source of income and sale

| Sl. No. | Characteristics of responses | No. of respondent | Percentage |
|---------|---|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Amount of collection in a day | | |
| A | 4kg- 6 kg | 51 | 42.5 |
| B | 6kg- 8kg | 46 | 38.33 |
| C | 8kg to Above | 23 | 19.16 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |
| 2 | Flower and Seed as main source of income | | |
| A | Yes | 87 | 72.5 |
| B | No | 33 | 27.5 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |
| 3 | Place of selling the leaf plate | | |
| A | Home | 48 | 40 |
| B | Both Market & Home | 72 | 60 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |

Source – primary data

1. Amount of collection in a day: The table-2 reveals that 42.5 per cent of respondents collected 4kg-6 kg of flower in a day, whereas, 19.16 percent of them collected 8kg and above of flower in a day. While 38.33 percent collected 6kg to 8kg of flower in a day respectively. Thus, from the above analysis it is found that majority of

the respondents (42.5 per cent) & above is the finding of this analysis.

2. Mahua Flower and Seed as main source of Income: The table-2 shows that 72.5 per cent of respondents feel Mahua flower and Tula is the best way of livelihood, whereas, 27.5 per cent of them say no. This shows that majority of them like this profession and feels that it is the best possible way living is the finding of this analysis.

3. Place of selling the Flower and Seed: This table-2 reflects about the place of selling the flower and seed, 40 per cent of respondents sell the leaf plate at home itself, where as 60 percent of them sell it in both market & home Thus, from the above analysis it is leant that majority of them sell their material at home is the finding of this analysis

Table No. 3 Distribution of sample respondents on the basis of place of sailing of flowers and Tula income and saving

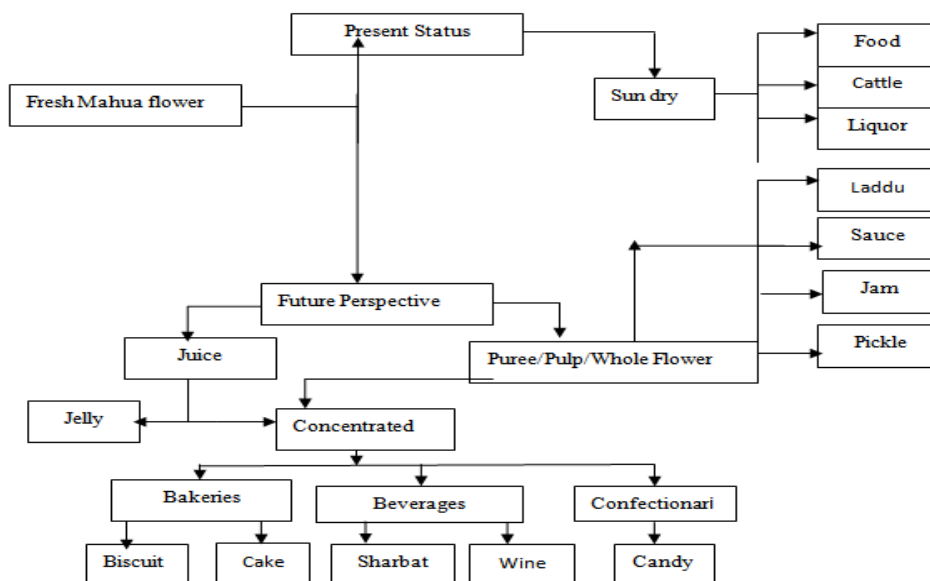
| Sl. No | Characteristics of responses | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|--------|---|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Monthly income from business | | |
| A | Less than 2000 | 52 | 43.33 |
| B | 2000-3000 | 47 | 39.16 |
| C | Above 3000 | 21 | 17.5 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |
| 2 | Monthly Saving from the Business | | |
| A | Yes | 49 | 40.83 |
| B | No | 71 | 59.16 |
| C | Total | 120 | 100 |

Source- Primary data

1. Monthly Income from Business: In the table- 3 presents respondents monthly income from this business. 39.16 per cent of respondent have monthly income out of their business in between 2000-3000, where as 43.33 percent of them have monthly income less than 2000.while 17.5 percent of the respondent belongs to the above 3000 monthly income. Thus, from the above analysis it is leant that majority of them have income below 2000 in a month is the finding of this analysis.

2. Monthly Saving from the Business: From the above table it is found that 40.83 percent of them go for saving, where as the rest 58.16 percent of them don't save from their income .Thus, from the above analysis it is leant that majority of respondents (40.83 percent) go for saving is the finding of this analysis.

Fig .1 Uses of Mahua flowers in different types of food products.



The above figure-1 shows that the mahua flower and its seed uses in different purposes. The tribals are using it for mahuli and use it as food which is the traditional system for their livelihood but its future perspective is something different, this product can be used for the preparation of finished product like ladu, sauce, jam and pickle. The finished products are produced from the mahula flowers that is, jelly, biscuit, cake, sharbat and wine. The seed of mahua tree are used for different purposes the finished oil can be trashed from the mahua seeds and the tribals are used it for preparation of curry and possess high medicinal value however mahua flower and seed need higher scientific research to know about the medicinal value.

IV. SUGGESTION

1. Mahua flower and seed is something which every one requires for the preparation of Bakeries and Beverages product like wine, sarbat, pickles etc. but the tribals income from the Mahua flowers is very minimal. If the government will collect these products from the tribals directly and provide due price so that their income can be increased.
2. The flowers and seed are being collected by all the members of family but it should be considered as a family business. Accordingly all family members should get involved in the business one way or other, so that the business will improve.
3. The rate of flowers and seed in the village is still in the traditional pattern; it should be upgraded or increase the rate as per the demand in the market, if so it will be a benefit in terms of income for the tribals.
4. If the Non-governmental organisation and community based organisation provides adequate knowledge about training on processing, develop marketing strategy then livelihood of the tribals can be developed.

V. CONCLUSION

The Mahua tree is a nature reward to tribal's communities in India. The tribal communities depend on this profession of Mahua flower and Tula will go a long way even if the income does not satisfy the community. The continuity of this business is a necessity as its products required in different purposes like bakeries and beverages, wine, pickles sarbat etc for every community in our society. Therefore, the government should recognize the importance of this product and encourage in terms of providing fixed price to those who are involved in this profession. If it is done so, then the sale volume of this product will increase, the customer will be benefited and, moreover it would be a great support financially to the tribal community especially in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

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Appendix

Fig.2. (A) Tree of M. Indica, (B) Processing of Mahua Flower. (C) Lots of Mahua flowers on the Tree. (D) Tribals women are for final processing and Marketing of flower.(E) Traditional method for oil preparation from the Mahua Seed by tribal girls.



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