

ORISSA:

How Sal seed trade is beneficial for primary collectors?

Orissa has a rich depository of Sal seeds accounting for 25% of production in the country. It forms primary ingredient for number of products such as oil, soap, animal/ poultry feed, cocoa-butter that forms a substitute for manufacturing chocolates and tanning purposes etc. For primary collectors Sal seed selling has been an important source of earning both amount-wise and time-wise as seeds are sold in agricultural lean seasons of May & June. The state is rich in Sal forest and Sal trees are seen in most parts of the state except the coastal belt. Total Sal forest areas of the state as per working plan data is 26,18,915 sq. km out of which good Sal forests are found over 19,26,879 Ha. Average seed production per Ha is estimated to be 720 kg in a good seed year.

The financial importance of Sal seed is based on its tremendous and uncharted export potentiality. Though in the neighbouring states of MP and Bihar considerable headway have been made in realising and exploiting export potentiality of Sal seed, Orissa lags behind in this direction. During 1988, there were 10 solvent extraction plants in the State with a combined capacity of more than 1 lakh metric tons.

Till 2006 February, the state government had the monopoly of procuring and marketing of Sal seed ever since it was declared a nationalized item in 1983. Prior to March 2006 Sal seed was collected through agents by paying them commission. As a nationalized item, the price of Sal seed was fixed at Rs.0.90 per Kg which, over a period of time rose to Rs 2.50 to 3.00 per Kg. However, the actual price offered at the primary collectors' level was much less than official declaration.

In March 2006 Sal seed was deregulated and brought under the purview of Gram Panchayat. The reasons behind deregulating sal seed, as cited by the state, are different. At the same time neighbouring states like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh continues monopolizing Sal seed. Visualizing possible threats in the management of sal seed due to different policies in different states. RCDC along with the Solvent Extractor's Association of India, Mumbai, a two-day multi stakeholders' consultation on Sal Seeds was organized in



Raipur during 25th and 26th May 2006. Around 25 participants from Chhattisgarh Forest Department, State MFP federation, industries, solvent extractors association, traders, research institutions and NGOs participated in the meeting. The issues discussed were Sal seed policies and operations, harvesting and post harvesting measures, trade promotion and legislations, conservation, research and development etc. During the consultation some traders had shown interest to come forward and buy Sal seed from Orissa, if some agencies would facilitate the process. With a hope to provide increased price to the primary collectors, RCDC in Orissa planned to facilitate the procurement of Sal seed and subsequently numbers of Buyers- Sellers meetings organised at state and district level. It was planned that local NGOs in different districts should facilitate the procurement of Sal seed through SHGs and other village level institutions.

Banabhuin, a self- help cooperative in Lanjigarh block in Kalahandi district, has been promoted by RCDC. It has been registered under the Orissa Cooperative Registration Act in 2005. Since its promotion, the groups have been involved in trading of different NTFP like tamarind, harra etc. The members of the cooperatives were trained by RCDC and the local counterpart CHARM to get into Sal seed trade. Number of meetings/ trainings were organised to make the members of the cooperatives aware about the policy change, process of procurement etc. The cooperative finally took a lead role in the area and started collecting sal seed. In the mean time the traders were asked to check the quality of the seeds and accordingly price was fixed. The cooperative operated in 4 panchayats of Lanjigarh block of Kalahandi district namely Lajigarh block namely Lanji, Kandhapari, Trilochanpur and Benigan. The price, the traders offered to the groups registered a steady increase of their level of income. The successful operation made by the groups helped them to facilitate in other districts especially in Koraput. SPREAD a local organization in Koraput helped them in collecting Sal seed from Koraput area and the cooperative managed to market the produce at higher prices. The volume of transaction made during the season by the cooperative is discussed in the table below.

Sl	Area	Total Village	Population	Amount collected (quintal)	Price (Per quintal)	Collection price	Sell price	Profit
1	Lanji	15	285	800	550	440000	480000	40000
2	Kandhapari	20	725	700	550	385000	470000	85000

3	Trilochanpur	10	195	500	550	275000	300000	25000
4	Benigan	10	95	400	550	220000	240000	20000
5	Koraput	6	-	200	500	100000	110000	10000
		61		2600	-	1420000	1600000	180000

At the end of the season, the cooperative could collect 2600 quintal of Sal seed from Lanjigarh area through its SHGs and 200 quintal from Koraput district. In both the areas the collection price was Rs.5.00 and the sell price was Rs. 5.50. In total the cooperative earned a profit of Rs. 1, 80,000 which was shared among the members of the cooperative.

The entire process has built the confidence of the primary collectors and their cooperatives to deal with NTFP, Sal seed in particular, especially on procurement and trade. At the same time RCDC is also emerging as a leader in Sal seed management in Orissa after its denationalization in March 2006. Efforts made in facilitating sustainable trade of Sal seed in changing scenario and creating a viable platform for good trade relationship between the buyers and sellers has made it possible to sell the produce at higher prices by the primary collectors and their organizations. The process has helped in identifying mechanisms to ensure more meaningful link between the primary collectors, their support organizations with trading community and develop a viable linkage with the market. The process has also helped the cooperatives in strengthening their bargaining power for collective interventions in Sal seed.

NTFP management in tribal areas- some success stories .

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Priyanka Mahila Mahasangha, Koraput district

Nature has bestowed beautiful resources on Koraput district of Orissa for which the district has special importance in the state. Number of researchers and tourists visit the districts for its natural resources including Non Timber Forest Produces (NTFPs) and especially medicinal species. The forest is rich with harra, bahera, amla, Dhawai flower, pipala, satabari, sarpagandha etc. The dependency of tribal people on these produces is much more and in the

agriculture lean season these communities totally depend on forest for social, cultural and economic uses.

An organisation named, NEWS, has been working in Koraput and Dasmantpur block of this district. Its major objective is to form Self Help Group (SHGs) in the villages and also to promote them for management of non-timber forest produces. In both the blocks several groups are formed by and it was felt by the groups that there is lack of coordination among them and they need to be united. 51 SHGs from both the blocks had come forward to form their own federation and named it as Priyanka Mahila Mahasangha. The federation started functioning on 5.01.04 with a 7 membered executive body (president, secretary, treasurer and rest members). The general body of the federation consists of 100 members from 51 SHGs and Rs 50 is being fixed as entry fees for the members. The federation aims to work on social as well as economic development of the poor people in the region. As the federation is in its inception phase it first take the initiative of NTFP marketing as most of the people are dependent on it. The federation made contact with NEWS for management of NTFP in their area. Though both of them, NEWS and the federation, have limited financial resources they asked RCDC, a state level organisation, also working in Koraput district, for financial as well as marketing help.

Priyanka Mahila Mahasangha and NEWS started documenting the NTFPs available in their region. They also examined the current trade arrangement of those produces in the local area. It was seemed that Dhawai flower is one of the potential NTFP and largely available in the area. Although all parts of this herb possess valuable medicinal properties but there is heavy demand of flowers only. It is collected and marketed for both industrial and medicinal purposes. The flowers yield yellow and red dye. It also produces gum, which is used as substitute to gum-tragacanth. Barks and leaves are used for tanning. It is large deciduous 1m straggling shrub, bark pale-brown, peeling off in fibres, young parts with small black glands, leaves sub sessile, linear-lanceolate, 3-10 cm long, flowers in fascicled axillary racemes. Petals are small and red. Stamens much exserted; filaments filiform, red, ovary 2-celled. Fruits ellipsoid and enclosed by persistent calyx-tube.

In Koraput climate it flowers during mid December and continues till April. The flowers have multi purpose uses and this is the reason for its high demand in the domestic as well as global market. These flowers are traded in the region in two ways; one is exchanged with cash and the other with salt. The primary collectors generally prefer to exchange with salt first and then with cash. The traders give one kg of salt for two kg of flowers and also Rs 2 for each kg of flower.

Priyanka Mahila Mahasangha tried to provide more income to the primary collectors of these flowers and also started procuring through SHGs. It borrowed Rs 50,000 from Chacha and Jharigaon (both are regional forums of Nabarangpur district) without any interest. This money had been distributed among the groups and they groups started procuring Dhawai flowers in the region. RCDC helped those groups in marketing the produces by establishing a linkage with a trader at Chhattisgarh. The trader signed in an agreement to buy the produces at Rs 3.40 per kg. Based on this agreement the SHGs started procuring from the primary collectors at Rs 2.75 – 3.00 per kg. By this arrangement the primary collectors got double profit than the previous. Some of the SHGs also invested their own money in the business. Nine groups were involved in this trade, invested Rs 97,200 and earned profit of around Rs 8,800. The details have been given in the table.

Dhawai flower traded by different groups in the season 2003-04

Name of the village	SHGs	Money borrowed	Quantity collected	Collection price	Selling price	Profit
Banuaguda	Dhengadasil and Bhiriki	13,940	8.5	26,400	28,000	1600
Panas	Madibudi, Nialimali, Sankular	8,190	4.03	12,900	14,500	500
Bisali	Taraprasad	9,978	5.07	17,100	19,100	1050
Nandigaon	Jodimali, Gupteswar,	5,000	5	18,000	20,400	1150
Kharaguda	Kanyachhuan	14,000	7.03	22,800	24,000	1400

Future plan

By the success of Dhawai flower trade, Priyanka Mahila Mahasangha now plans to get involve in other forest produces in future. It also plans to give more income to its groups and the primary collectors who are totally dependent on NTFPs. It will also need the help of RCDC and NEWS for training and information on collection, value addition and marketing of NTFPs. It will also try to double its business in the next crop season.

Mahadev Mahila Mahasangha, Rayagad district

Though not significant, some changes have been seen in the life style of the tribal people in Rayagada district. Goyalkana village is one of the best examples of it. There is a federation consisting of four SHG groups in the village named Mahadev Mahila Mahasangha. The village is situated in Bisam Cuttack block of Rayagada district. The total House Holds in the village is 69 out of which 67 families belong to Kondh tribe and the rest OBC. The village can be located on the way from Raygada to Bhawanipatna road. The language that has been practised by the kondh tribes is kui and the major source of income of the people are daily labor and forest based resources.

The effort made by the villagers and an organisation named "Vikas Niketan" has brought a sea change on the life of these people. The inspiration and the financial support of the organisation have lot of impact on the change. There is a village level forest protection committee in the village and the committee has been protecting forest of around 40 acres decades before. A good number of forest produces were available in the forest long ago but due to the illiteracy and simplicity of the tribal people the local traders had been undervaluing the produces and the tribals also.

After the intervention of the organization and the change in attitude of the tribal people there is a little change in the situation today. The tribal people are getting to some extent the right price in comparison to before on produces like siali leaf, bamboo, tamarind, amla, harra, bahera, different tubes and roots. Their dependency on forest produces gradually increases. The people are now more conscious on their rights and duties. In order to fight against the exploitation they form SHGs in the village. Vikas Niketan has helped the villagers in organizing these four groups. In the village Goyalkana, a social worker named, Amita Kutka, is able to organize all the SHGs and has brought into an umbrella named Mahadev Mahila Mahasangha. Rupika Kikka is the president of the Mahasangha and Amita Kutruka is the secretary. After the formation of this federation, the villagers especially the women are able to be united and think for holistic development. The Mahasangha has been able to take lot of income generation activities like candle making, agarbati making, khali stitching and marketing of turmeric powder etc.

Decades before

The tribal people of this village have been depending on forest long time before. By increasing

deforestation the tribal could not get adequate amount of produces from the forest and as a result they depend on the local landlords (sahukars) for their livelihood. They started borrowing. Once they got loan, they had to refund it with 3-4 times more than the principal amount. As they were not able to refund the loans on time it gradually increased and was very difficult to refund. As result they had to give all the forest produces to the landlords and sometimes their land had been captured. Today most of the cultivable lands of the village are in the hand of the local businessmen. The villagers didn't have any idea on value addition and marketing of the produces also for which they could not be able to earn more money from the produces. There was no storage facilities available in the village to store the produces and on the way to local haats they were caught by kutchias and the latter exploit them by under weighing their produces and paying fewer prices. Some of the produces had been bartered with salt.

The situation today

The villagers are able to know the rules and regulations of government, value addition, marketing etc. The organization Vikas Niketan based at Muniguda block of Rayagada district, is constantly engaged in dissemination of NTFP information to the people. The most successful story of the village is the increase of income level by stitching of siali plates. Among the forest produces available in the nearby forest, siali leaf, locally called sunar patra, has much importance for the tribal people. These leaves are available in the forest round the year and based on the importance of the leaf Vikas Niketan organized a training programme for the members of the Federation in Sarangaguda village of Phulbani district. The members were trained how to stitch plates. After getting trained they have been able to earn around Rs 20 to Rs 25 per day individually. They are not selling the plates and leaves to the local traders at low prices. Even they collect the leaves from the neighboring villages and are able to store with adding value at their level. The youth association in the village is actively involved in the business. Once a bulk of plates prepared, Amita Kutka, sell those at Bhubaneswar and Raipur markets. She has established a good market link with important traders based at different cities across the country.

Today the people are not facing any difficulties in marketing of siali plates. The profit earned in the business is being distributed equally among the members of the federation. Impressed by the collection, processing and marketing activities of the Mahasangha DRDA has granted Rs 25,000 loan to the Mahasangha with a subsidy of Rs 10,000.

The way ahead

The dream of the Mahasangha is to be a model one in the state. All the members of the Mahasangha have dreamt this. Regarding the future plan of the Mahasangha Amita Kutka, the secretary of the Mahasangha says, “ we have to make different types of plates using advanced technologies and try to sell in the neighboring states. We have to increase the income of the Mahasangha any way”

Hitamayee Dei- a grass root leader

Hitamayee Dei, a ST woman married in 2004, has been able to mobilize more than 550 women to form a cooperative in Kalahandi district. She is able to provide organizational success to the cooperative. The real story began when the then Chairman Mr. Farooq of Antodaya, a voluntary organisation, arrested. He was the live helper of the tribals at Thuamul Rampur block of Kalahandi district. He had been constantly encouraging the tribals to fight against government tyranny and monopolistic attitude of the traders operated in the area for NTFP trade. In January 1993 he was arrested by the mafia group with hand in gloves of the forest department, police, TDCC etc. This incidence punched the mind of the tribal girl named Hitamayee and also inspired her to fight against those groups. She was so fired at that time that she came forward with her fire bard tone to rescue her leader and also shouted against the illegal activities.

Koriguma village is located at 40 km away from Bhawanipatna to Thuamul block where the tribal lady resides. Initially 35 young tribal girls united in the village who totally depend on forest and its produces, and started assembling hill brooms and tamarind. But the law did not permit them to process those though they have the harvesting right.

With the way of time, Hitamayee felt that unless and until they united and have their own organisation it is very difficult to fight against those mafias. So she roamed village to village, motivate the villagers on the need of a community based organisation and finally able to manage. Initially she organized a group in Kaniuma village and Antodaya people helped her a lot to go ahead.

Initially she faced lot of hurdles but self-determination and self-confidence led her to organise the cooperative by collecting Rs 15 from each member and developed their own community

enterprise. The soul aims of the community are:

To run micro finance programmes to meet the financial need of the women

- Fight against NTFP trade exploitation
- To safe guard their natural resources like forest, water, land etc.
- Provide social security to women

Keeping all these objectives in their mind a women cooperative organisation was established by her industrious effort from 1994 to 1996. The lady believes in decentralised governance and their federation was established with an elected board of directors for its management. The general body of the federation known as Banashree Mahila Sanghathan elected Hitamayee as secretary. Then the secretary and the rest members decided to explore viable enterprises that would have sustainable and positive impact on the poor.

Some initiatives

Hill broom, the untapped local resource was chosen by the organisation for procurement and marketing through proper understanding among the members. They thought that with a little bit of value addition on hill brooms could make them more beneficial and they also succeed. The success of the initial activity and the benefit sharing mechanism adopted by the members inspired them to get into tamarind, amla and harra. But they could not get more benefit from amla due to both internal and external factors. Hitamayee set herself to revive the process based on the weak points of the team.

Gradually the process of value addition and marketing of forest produces get popularized and the lady became role model for the

other women. The group was able to process and market hill brooms at Rs 25 per kg. The lady then tried to bring the rest clusters under the federation, Banashree Mahila Sanghathan. In 2004 she got married in Karada Padar village. There also she tries to work on the water related issues in the village and the other women are supporting her. She is quite happy that she is being able to give a good shape to the organisation. Hitamayee received an award from the CM of Orissa for her outstanding social work. She says “ achieving a target is only possible by a group effort and not individual’s.”



Hill broom collection in Orissa .

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Khajuri village is located at Bisam Cuttack block of Rayagada district of Orissa. The village is located at 4 km away from the Bisam Cuttack Railway station towards Chantikona waterfall. The village is surrounded by a good forest area. The village is named as Khajuri as number of Khajuri trees was available in the village earlier. The village has a total of 73 households out of which 53 belong to Dangaria Kandha and the rest belong to Scheduled Castes. The total population in the village is 375. The language that has been practised by most of the villagers is kui. Most of the population in the village are dependent on a food item extracted from salap tree. There is good harmony among the villagers but due to the less awareness on collection, processing and marketing of non timer forest produces, which have been available with a tune of lakh of rupees around the forest, they have to borrow money from the local land lords at the time of abject poverty.

Siali leaves and hill broom are vastly available in the nearby forest area but due to lack of access of markets and knowledge on processing technologies among the villagers, they were collecting a small portion of the produces from the forest. Even the produces like turmeric, pineapple etc. is sold in the nearest Chatikona weekly market at throw away prices. The female members work as daily labourers but they are not paid properly.

To address all the above issues, Dangaria Kondh Development Agency (DKDA) has floated a group consisting of 15 women on 15th September 1999. The group as named Khajuri Mahila Sangha, chaired Wakada Kamareddy as Chairperson and Sikka Teladi as secretary of the organisation. Each member of the organisation paid Rs 20 in every month and the money was deposited at Koraput Panchabati Gramya Bank at Chatikona. The organisation constantly met in every month to discuss the issues related to forest protection, the civic amenities of the village etc. Convinced by the organised and systematic effort of the group, DKDA and DRDA helped them financially. While the former provided a loan of Rs 5,000 first the latter an amount of Rs 25,000 of late. To collect and process forest produces in the area DRDA organised a seven days training programme on processing of hill broom in 2002.

The organisation for the first time in 2002-03 started collection of hill broom. The trained members of the organisation collected 1000 kg of hill broom, made them 3000 pieces and sold @ Rs 12/- per piece in the same year.

1. Total cost of the hill broom @ Rs 20 per kg for 1000 kgs	= Rs 20,000
2. Binding cost approximately 150 labour days @Rs 40 (15 members of the organisation engaged in 2 months for at least 1-2 hours per day and approximate) 150*40	= Rs 6,000
3. Transportation, plastics, storage etc.	= Rs 6,000
Total expenses	= Rs 32,000
Total income 3000*Rs 12/-	= Rs 36,000
Net Profit	= Rs 4,000

The profit was distributed equally among the members of the organisation and the organisation is now planning to get into the market for other produces in large scale