

Guideline for GP to manage NTFP.

MFP play an important role in the livelihood support system of tribal and forest dwellers in terms of subsistence and income generation. When agriculture is gradually ceasing to be reliable, MFP sustains millions of tribals by providing an alternate source for food and income. The dependence is maximum on produces like kendu leaf, mahua, char, tamarind, amla, etc. Despite the fact that MFP are a major source of income, the tribals continue to suffer at the hands of the greedy and dishonest traders as nothing positive and pro-tribal has been achieved at the policy and more at the implementation level. Provisions of Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 commonly known as PESA a historic move by the Union Government clearly endows the Gram Sabha the ownership right over Minor Forest Produces, which is the major source of livelihood for millions of tribal people in the Scheduled Areas. Following the prescription of PESA government of Orissa handed over 68 items of MFP to GP in the year 2000 and 2002 and rules have been made for the GPs to own, control and manage the MFPs in their area.

For effective management of MFP, a guideline needs to be circulated among the GPs that might educate them to understand the meaning of ownership, control and management of MFP, formulate rules, fix prices for MFP, monitor the procurement process etc.

In the table below some important points have been discussed that may help Gram Panchayats to develop their system for ownership, control and management of MFP.

Ownership	Control	Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Power to make rules and regulations for control and management of NTFPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulate the implementation of rules and take appropriate measures for changes in these	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create awareness among the members of Gram Sabha on rules and regulations for management of NTFPs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power to impose tax/levy/cess on different NTFPs • Power to decide which NTFPs to be harvested and not to be harvested • Power to decide who would be given right to harvest the produce • Power to decide to whom NTFPs would be sold – allow traders to operate in the area • Power to fix up the minimum support price for NTFPs • Power to punish the violators – both traders for not paying minimum support price 	<p>rules and regulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of collection of taxes and proper use of resources raised from NTFPs. • Cancellation of licenses of different traders or agencies involved in procurement and trade of NTFPs or restrict any trader from procurement of NTFPs from the area because of violation of rules/norms. • Restrict members of Gram Sabha from collection of NTFPs for any destructible practices in harvesting of NTFPs. • Control destruction of forest and take appropriate measures. • Regulate proper pricing of NTFPs and check exploitation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create mechanisms for implementation of these rules. • Implement these rules and regulation. • Collection of taxes for traders/enterprises. • Maintain proper accounting and book keeping system. • Develop human resource capacity of the Gram Panchayats/Sabhas to manage NTFPs properly. • Negotiate with Forest Department and other resource institution for technical support for silviculture, forestry development, processing of NTFPs and marketing. • Negotiate with the traders and market promotion agencies for value addition and marketing of NTFPs. • Negotiate with MFP Federation or Tribal Development Corporations for proper
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<p>and primary collectors for not adhering to sustainable management principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power to raise funds for management and trade of NTFPs and setting up small enterprises. 	<p>primary collectors by the traders.</p>	<p>management and trade of NTFPs.</p>
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For effective ownership, control and management of NTFP, GP has to make a committee/ task force of 3-4 persons comprising forester, local NGO/CBO, local leaders etc to look after the process. The composition, powers and functions of the committees will be decided by the Gram Panchayat.

Roles and Responsibilities of the committee

- Preparing a brief business plan for a year
- Ensuring price realization
- Maintaining records
- Ensuring sustainable harvesting practices
- Develop parameters for post-harvesting grading and processing
- Ensuring taxation/ royalty
- Develop rules on fair and efficient trade system

Responsibilities GP has to take

Step – A

GP has to start a process for delineation of forest boundaries, assess the forest situation, asses

potentiality of NTFP and its availability in both forest and revenue area, enumerating forest dependent communities/ artisans, traders, SHGs, experts/ their skills, infrastructure/ storage etc. This process may be done by GP by engaging volunteers, ward members, youth clubs, SHGs, NGOs etc.

Step –B

A set of rules for control, management and trade of NTFP in that area may be done. GP has to make a committee of 3-4 persons comprising forester, local NGO/CBO, local leaders etc. to frame the rules. The issues like forest/ specie protection and regeneration, good harvesting, volume of transaction of MFP in the area, fixation of target of MFP to be transported, fixation of price of MFP, negotiation with the traders, taxes, royalties and registration of MFP, storage, transportation/ transit structure, rule for filing returns to GP, penalty structure need to be highlighted while framing the rules.

The above two steps need to be carried out by each GP immediately. GP has to identify key persons ideally one/two representatives of NGO (s) working in the area, two persons from GP (Executive officer, sarpanch or ward member), one/two local leaders. This team or task force has to carry out the above two steps immediately which would be presented in the GP meeting/ Gram Sabha and then finalized. After finalization the rules or the guideline need to be circulated widely.

Steps to be followed for potential assessment

- Potential survey will be conducted under the guidance of the above committee
- The committee may engage some volunteers to carry out the potential assessment
- The committee may meet local traders, NGOs, CBOs, Kutchias, foresters etc for the assessment
- The committee may consult neighboring GPs and village leaders for that
- The committee has to compile the data and produce the report in the GP meeting

At the time of potential assessment the committee may divide the produces into three conservation categories (Abundant, Medium and Endangered) based on their availability and

document those for sustainability. Similarly GP has to document the forest dependent population in its territory, the artisans, local skills involved in the management of forests and NTFPs, infrastructure available in the area. All these data should be presented in the GP meeting and based on that rules and regulation should be framed.

Rules and Regulations GP Has To Frame

The committee has to fix some rules and regulations for the medium and endangered species for the traders who will operate in the area. GP has to issue notices to the forest department, marketing organizations etc.

Special Restriction rights for medium category

GP has to fix a maximum limit for collection and issue licenses to few selected traders.

Special restriction rights for endangered categories

GP has to decide whether to give license or not. The discretionary power will remain with the committee. The committee also has to decide the number of traders to whom licence has to be issued.. And for each trader they will assign one SHG. The SHG's duty will be to strictly see the collection operations of the trader. GP has to strictly monitor the process.

Rules related to Good Harvesting Practices (GHP)

Good Harvesting Practices (GHP) literature has to be prepared for all the produces irrespective of quantity available. This can be done with the help of beat guard, local vaidyas or any local NGO involved in forestry activities. While preparing the GHP utmost care has to be taken of considering indigenous knowledge and technology for sustainability. Processing units available locally can also be contacted. For implementing GHP, VSS, Mahila samitis and SHGs can be encouraged first. The committee has to develop GHP leaflets with the help of local NGO's for the marketable MFP and distribute to all SHGs, VSS's and Co-operatives prevalent in the

Panchayat area.

Sample of good harvesting practices

<p>Amla</p> <p>What needs to be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Collect brownish yellow fruits-Harvest the fruit either by a hook or by shaking the tree-Within collection of 48 hours processing has to be done-Sell the dried Amla within one year of collection-Pack the Amla in a clean and dried sack <p>What shouldn't be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Damaged and immature Amlas not to be mixed with the mature and good ones-Not to collect green Amlas-Not to collect Amla by cutting the tree-Not to store Amla at a cold or wet place	<p>Harida</p> <p>What needs to be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Collect the fruit between 15 th December to 15 th January-Collect the fruit by shaking the tree-Differentiate the yellow fruits from the green ones-Dry the fruit for 4 days under sun-Dry the broken fruits also for 4 days-Pack the fruits in a clean and dried sack
<p>Char</p> <p>What needs to be done</p>	<p>Tamarind</p> <p>What needs to be done</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Only mature fruits to be collected -After drying it is to be cleaned in warm water -To protect the fruit from the pest, its to be stored in cold storage <p>What shouldn't be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not to cut the trees for collection -Not to collect the immature fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Collect only mature fruits -Collect the fruits between 1 st Mar to 15 th April -If collected after 15 th April, then it has to be stored in the cold storage -To avoid fungus fruit has to be dried in a dry place -Between collection and deseeding, the fruit has to be dried for two days under sun
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The harvesting practices can be discussed at the GP meeting for the awareness of the villagers and traders may be intimated about the process

Records

Records have to be maintained by the secretary of the GP, one nominated literate person from the panchayat can help the secretary in maintaining the records. Records to be maintained at the official level every year

1. Detailed registered trader's list
2. List of SHG's involved in NTFP marketing and trade
3. Potential and production assessment figures for each produce available
4. Monthly reports of traders
5. Annual report of traders will be made from the monthly reports

6. Vaidyas list
7. Revenue collection details
8. Stock transit trade (produces transported from Panchayat area by traders)

Price fixation

Based on the potential assessment and availability of NTFPs, discussion among traders, kutchias etc GP has to send suggested prices to PS for the price fixation of MFP in September.

Monitoring of procurement, storage and transportation

GP has to issue letter to SHGs / FPCs/ VSSs/ ward members informing them about the list of traders registered in the GP for procurement of NTFPs and their procurement centre. GP has to empower the above functionaries to enquire and check the procurement of MFP and payment to the primary collectors. GP has to ensure weights and measures, price paid by the traders, verification of registration, transit permit etc. Receipt of complaints would be the GP office. Discussion on the complaints need to be done in the GP meeting and after the discussion GP has to give the feedback to the traders. If the traders violate the rules again GP may take penal measure against the traders like cancellation of registration or any other legal action as discussed below.

Penalty rules

Terms and conditions for penalty:

- If the trader do not stick to the prescribed harvesting and collection methods as provided by the standing committee
- If the trader do not report transactions timely
- If the trader found practicing unfair weighing methods

- If the trader found purchasing at a rate lower than declared rate
- Or reported any other exploiting techniques

Penalty measures GP may take up

The traders operating in the Panchayat area has to be asked to give details of purchases made by them on or before a stipulated date of every month. If they failed to do so, they can be charged a nominal fine as decided by the gram sabha and will be given extra time (for say one week) to file their report. If they failed to do it again, they can be called for a meeting and asked to furnish the details of their business.

In case of irregularities in the trade, the committee can ask for on the spot show cause, if the trader unable to do this, then produces can be seized there only and the person can be asked to show cause there itself.

Immediately after the seizure of the produces, the solution to the problem will be finalized through the committee meeting. It is the duty of the committee to bring forth the issue to the Gram sabha. If GS and committee unable to solve the problem, then help can be taken forest dept. officials (rank of ranger) and one person from a state level NGO working on trade issues.

If the trader found guilty, he/she shall be told to complete the process of purchase in the presence of the committee members and deposit a security as decided by the committee, and after that he/she can continue the process ever after. But if the same trader does it twice, then his/ her license can be cancelled permanently until the next review as decided by the committee.

In case of transportation of produces by the traders a GP challan will be issued in duplicate and one copy shall be submitted in the nearest forest check gate, this challan duly signed by the GP authorized officer of the GP.

Committee can propose a levy of taxes and fees in the Gram sabha on the traders for the development of various GHP. The levy can be amended from time to time.

A time line for GP which need to be done in every year

1. Potential assessment of MFP needs to be done in August/ September.
2. Negotiation with traders need to be done in August/ September
3. Discussion with neighboring GPs need to be done August/ September
4. Negotiation with NGOs/ SHGs/ VSSs/ VFPCs etc need to be done in September
5. GP has to suggest prices of different NTFPs to Panchayat Samiti in August end. In the price fixation meeting of MFP GP has to help PS to fix the prices
6. The fixed prices should be widely circulated in September/ October
7. Process of registration of traders need to be started from October to April/ May.

The process of registration may follow the following steps:

- Notice in the GP notice board for inviting applications
 - Notice circulated through the ward member
 - Notice to the local SHGs/ Traders
 - Receipt of application
 - Review of application in the GP meeting and finalisation of terms and conditions
 - Issue of registration certificate
 - Circulation of a notice to all the villages / SHGs through ward member
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8. GP has to maintain the records
 9. GP has to file returns to PS and forest department