Procurement of NTFPs in Kalahandi District of Odisha

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to study the trend of procurement of NTFPs in Kalahandi district of Odisha. The study is exclusively based on secondary data collected from various published sources such as journals and articles and unpublished source such as Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation (TDCC), Bhubaneswar. The data has been used for the periods of eight years (2005-06 to 2012-13) and simple statistical techniques have been applied in order to draw the inference of the study. From the analysis, the study found that the trend of procurement of NTFPs is not impressive in Kalahandi district of Odisha as they have a constant trend of fluctuation during different periods. The present study is limited to procurement of major NTFPs found in the district during the given period of times. However, it can be extended to other districts of the state. Moreover, the future study can be carried out by linking NTFPs with their marketing or capturing other products as available in a region.

Keywords: *NTFPs, Procurement Agencies, Kalahandi, Odisha*

Introduction

Non-Timber Forest Products (hereafter NTFPs) constitute one of the important sources of livelihood for millions of people living in and around the forests across the world. All the forest products other than timber are collectively referred to as NTFPs. The NTFPs include bamboo, mahua flower, neem, amla, silk, tamarind fruit, sal seeds, kendu leaves etc. Among these products some products are used as food while others are used as medicine or any other purposes. The huge employment opportunities are created to the people who depend on NTFPs through collection and processing of these products. At global level, more than two billion people are dwelling in forest, depend on NTFPs for subsistence, income and livelihood security (Vantomme, 2003). In India about 7.5 million people are engaged in collection of kendu leaves as part time job and another 3 million are engaged in the work of processing of the leaves to *Bidi* (local cigarette) (Arnold, 1995). Thus, the forest dwellers and rural poor people are partly dependent on NTFPs in deriving their livelihood. Odisha is a forest-rich state in India covering over 31% of geographical area (FSI, 2003). The state is a major NTFPs producer in the country. The NTFPs not only supports consumption requirement but also plays an important role in providing employment and income during the leanest season. The state has the largest number of forest dependent people including tribal in particular. Nearly a half of the state population is dependent of forest. Among them, a good number of people are Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes. It is found that about 15 million of people in Odisha, mainly tribal people, are directly and partly dependent on NTFPs for maintaining their livelihood (TRIFED, 2000 and Bhattacharya, 2006).

Nearly half of the total geographical area of Kalahandi district (4962 sq.kms) is covered with forests. In this district, tribal people living in and around the forests derive their livelihood support from the collection of NTFPs. The important NTFPs found in this district are bamboo, mahua flowers and seed, neem, kendu leaves, siali fibre, tamarind and different types of other fruits and seeds. It is noted that except a few, most of the NTFPs are restricted to a particular season and they are not common to all seasons. In all, it is stated that the NTFPs are the basic means of sustenance and livelihood

for tribal households in the district. Under this backdrop, the present study tries to study trend of procurement of NTFPs in Kalahandi district of Odisha.

Procurement agencies of NTFPs

In Odisha, the procurement and marketing of selected NTFPs was initially done by developmental agencies i.e. TDCC, OFDC, cooperative like AMCS and many others and joint sector companies like UFP till 1999. These agencies are as follows.

Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation (TDCC): The TDCC was formed in 1973 after winding up the then forest produce marketing cooperative society dealing with NTFP. It has given rights on NTFP in 11 out of 13 undivided districts in the state. Besides, it has also given the exclusive rights to 4 MFP items – Tamarind, Hill Broom, Honey and Mahua in all the 27 forest divisions of the state. The objective of TDCC was to procure the Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) and NTFP at fair and reasonable prices. It procures these products from tribals from its own employees in local markets and villages.

Orissa Forest Development Corporation (OFDC): Orissa Forest Corporation (OFC), a fully government owned and managed public limited company, was created in September 1962. It is the sole authorized agency to trade in kendu leaves and shares the responsibility with TDCC in case of sal seeds. In 1991, it was renamed OFDC with merger of Orissa Plantation Development Corporation, Simlipal Forest Development Corporation and later Orissa Composite Board also merged into it. Broadly, OFDC deals in Kendu (Monopoly), Sal seeds (duopoly), sal leaf, honey, arrowroot etc.

Utkal Forest Product Limited (UFPL): UFPL incorporated in 1989 associates with the agenda of systematic collection and processing of NTFP in Orissa. For operational, it has classified into four regions, subdivided into 27 division and each division comprising of 3-8 ranges. The range is the basic collection unit consisting of 50-60 collection centres looked after by commission agents. There are 29 seed types of NTFP fall under its purviews.

Large Size Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS): LAMPS was formed in 1977 on the recommendation of Bawa committee, each covering a population of 10000-20000 when it was realigned that the tribals were not enjoying fruits of their labour in the forest produce collection. Many of the existing primary agricultural cooperative societies were converted to LAMPS. Some were attached to TDCC, OFDC and some are functioning independently. However, with the implementation of NTFP policy 2000 these developmental agencies were no longer taking responsibility for procurement and marketing of NTFP rather it was transferred to Gram Panchayat (GP).

Gram Panchayat: For quite sometimes NTFP trade was monopolized mostly by private business houses that were granted lease on a long term basis to procure specific forest produces from specific forest divisions. This created problems of low payment to tribal, erratic and arbitrary procurement, and revenue loss to the state. Therefore, in order to streamline the system of collection and disposal of NTFP, which are major source of livelihood of the rural poor, especially women, the state Government came out with a new policy guideline on 31.03.2000. This gives ownership rights to the Gram Panchayat not only in the scheduled areas but also in the entire state.

NTFP Policy of 2000: The government of Orissa came out with a new policy guideline on 31 March 2000 and vested the ownership and control right to GPs to regulate the purchase, procurement and trade of NTFP as well as abolish monopoly lease system in interest of proper price realisation by primary gatherers. In the new policy, the GPs are given the power to register the traders at the local level and also to monitor their functions with regard to procurement price. Further, the GPs are now vested with the authority to cancel the registration of any trader in the event of procuring NTFPs at a rate lower than the minimum procurement price fixed by the government for that product. There is no restriction on the traders on number and volume of produces that they want to trade and transact provided they pay the registration fees. As per the policy, the GPs cannot use their discretion in registering the traders though they can always reprimand unscrupulous ones involved in low payment, irregular procurement etc. However, in the process of empowering GPs to regulate the procurement and trade of NTFPs since 2000, the government is still in the process of making desired amendments/formulating a set of rules under the GP Act and Orissa Timber and other Forest Produce Transit Rules 1980.

Dependency of people on NTFPs

NTFPs constitute one of the important sources of income for the large number of people living in and around the forests and those who are involved in the processing and transport of these products. Some of the major evidences concerning it are given as follows.

Pradhan (1995) made a study on collection of NTFPs in Keonjhar district of Odisha. The study revealed that sal seeds were collected by men, women and children. Sal leaves were basically collected by women while tassar and weed for building materials were by men. But all other NTFPs were procured mainly by women and children. Another study made by Patel, et al (2008) focused on collection of minor forest products in Gujrat. The study found that there is high variability of these

products in the collection. A decreasing trend was noticed in the collection of products like tendu leaves, mahua flowers and doli. However, the procurement of gum and other products had increased. Thus, the study concluded that the overall decrease in collection of the products was observed. This was mainly due to the depletion of forest resources. Appasamy (1992) stated that the majority of NTFPs collectors were males in the Palani hills of Tamil Nadu. The higher proportion of NTFPs was sold for generation of income rather than for home consumption. It was found that about 50 % of the firewood was used for home consumption and the rest was sold. Similarly, a carried out by Sawhney and Engel (2003) in Bandhavgarh National Park, India revealed that majority of the sampled households (97%) were involved in collection of NTFPs. Mostly, they used to sell their procured products. Overall, the sale of NTFPs constitutes the most important source (26%) of cash income for the households. From the sale of different NTFPs, the highest amount of income is generated from amla product (42%). This is followed by Tendu leaves (41%), mahua12 (12%), fuel wood (4%) and Chironji (1%). The NTFPs helped to sustain the people especially landless and marginalized groups during lean season. Besides, these products also supplement their total income. The study found that NTFPs have made a significant contribution (86%) to the annual income of the households. Apart from the economic value of NTFPs, local communities were also enjoying several qualitative benefits from the forest. These benefits are received by them to meet their medicinal, religious and aesthetic needs (Vidyarthy and Guptha, 2002).

From the above discussion, a vacuum was found that rare study has carried out in Kalahandi district of Odisha with regards to procurement of NTFPs. Thus, in order to fill the research gap, the present study is carried out with the objective to study the trend of procurement NTFPs in the study area. The study is exclusively based on secondary data. The data are compiled from official records of TDCC, Bhubaneswar during period from 2005-06 to 2012-13. Besides, information related to the present study gathered from other secondary sources i.e., PCCF, OFDC, Ministry of Forest Department and DFO of Kalahandi Division. The simple statistical tools have been used to derive the conclusion of the present study.

Procurement of NTFPs in Kalahandi

Kalahandi district is covered with dense forest (28.54 % of total geographical area) where the tribals and poor people living in and around the forest depend on the NTFPs for deriving their livelihood. Though the district has 13 blocks, but NTFPs are found in blocks. The NTFPs found in the district are harida, bahada, amla, tamarind, kendu, char, kendu leaf, siali leaf hill broom, mahua flower, mahua seeds, sal seeds, thorn, bamboo etc. In the present study, the major NTFPs found in the district are reflected in Table 1.1. These products are summarised as follows.

Kendu leaf: Kendu (*Diospyros Melanoxylon*) is one of the most important non-wood forest products. The leaves are used for wrapping Bidis. The use of bidis is more popular among the poor native people. The kendu leaf is a nationalized product. Odisha is the third largest producer of kendu leaf next to Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in India. It is primarily collected by the pluckers and then starts processing through different stages. After processing, the products are delivered to OFDC in the state. The procurement and processing of kendu leaf are done by the wing of forest department.

Sal seeds: Sal seed (shorea robusta) is a nationalized product since 1973. The trade of sal seed is directly controlled by the Government of Odisha. It is one of the important product obtained from sal tree, which is predominantly available in state. Sal seed is basically used for the extraction of the oil, which is used mainly in manufacturing of chocolate and other fashionable items.

Mahua flowers: Mahua flowers (Madhuca latifolia) have a special status among NTFPs. These are mainly used for brewing liquor. Besides, these are also consumed as food both for cattle and human (tribal people). It can be processed into several other products such as candies, squashes, pickles, and vinegar. These flowers are naturally fallen from the trees. The flowers are mostly collected by the people, especially Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes during the period generally from March to May. The processing (drying and cleaning) of mahua flowers is quite time-consuming (over 41 hours on an average). The procurement of mahua flowers is very common in western and south-western parts of Odisha.

Mahua seeds: Besides flowers, mahua seeds also have a significant contribution to the life style of tribals. The oil of mahua seed is used as edible oil by the tribals. It is particularly used in the preparation of "Pitha" a local rice cake. These seeds are traditionally processed in Ghanis and Chappas (plank press) to obtain oil. Now, its oil is extracted from power mills. Generally, extraction of this oil was traditionally done by "teli" caste (Other Backward Castes). Mahua seed oil is also increasingly being used in manufacture of laundry soap in particular.

Tamarind: Tamarind fruit (Tamarindus indica) is one of products collected from the tamarind tree. The fruit is tamarind is used as a flavoring agent. Besides, it is also used to make medicine for constipation, liver and gallbladder problems and stomach disorders. India

holds the first position in the world in procurement of tamarind. In Odisha, many primary collectors of tamarind are forced to sell at very low rates to the local traders. A major proportion of tamarind is exported to Andhra Pradesh.

Amla: Amla (emblic myrobalan) is an edible fruit. It is used for formulations of Ayurvedic medicine. It is one of the components of "Trifala" (a mixture of Amla, Harrida and Beheda) mixture. Trifal is used as laxative in treatment of enlarged livers, piles, eye pains and other stomach complaints. Fermented liquor is used in treatment of indigestion, anaemia, jaundice and certain heart problems and for promoting urination. It is probably the richest source of Vitamin C. Besides, the fruits are also largely used in formation of hair shampoos as well used as herbal beauty products.

Harida: Harida (Chebulic Myrobalan) is the third constituent of trifala. The dried fruit pastes can be applied externally on chronic ulcers, wounds and scalds. It is also used in gargle in case of inflammation of mucous membrane of mouth. It is beneficial in blood pressure and as cardiac tonic. The power of the fruit is used as dentifrice for strengthening the gums.

The procurement of these major NTFPs in Kalahandi district is reflected in Table 1.1. In fact, there are several NTFPs found in the district. Of them, the major products which are commonly found and procured in large quantity are taken into consideration for the present study. These NTFPs are kendu leaf, sal seeds, mahua flower, mahua seeds, tamarind, amla and harida. It is apparent from Table 1.1 that the procurement quantity of these products followed a trend of fluctuation every year during the period from 2005-06 to 2012-13. If we look at the trend of each product, it makes clear that a huge quantity of kendu leaf was procured as compared to other products during the same period.

Table 1.1: Procurement of major NTFPs in Kalahandi (2005-06 to 2012-13)

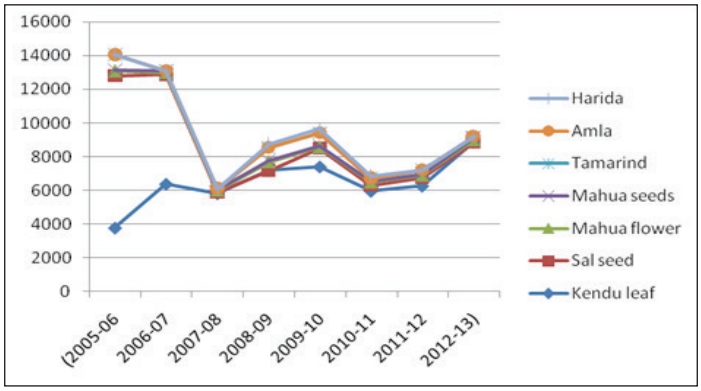
Year	Quantity procured (in quintal)						
	Kendu leaf	Sal seeds	Mahua flower	Mahua seeds	Tamarind	Amla	Harida
2005-06	3767.99	9050.1	280	43	908.69	0.9	5
2006-07	6381.46	6527.3	97	82	4.9	2.37	NA
2007-08	5822.24	82	100	49	49	1.27	4.34
2008-09	7203.33	NA	500	66	768.4	2.85	240
2009-10	7413.77	1102.8	66	66	768.4	2.85	240
2010-11	5963.71	330	200	70	150	19.26	160
2011-12	6270.38	481.66	150	93	220.32	1.86	1
2012-13	8881.92	NA	128	78.8	51.88	73	7

Source: TDCC, Bhubaneswar; NA: Not Available

The maximum quantity (8881.92 qtl.) of kendu leaf was procured in 2012-13 and minimum (3767.99 qtl) in 2005-06. The high procurement is recorded in those years in which there is a normal weather condition during the process starting from tender kendu leaves before plucking to dying and storage of the leaves. On the other hand, the low procurement is recorded in those years in which the abnormal weather conditions like hill storms and heavy rain fall damage the kendu leaves before they are plucked from the plants. The cloudy weather also harms the leaves due to improper dying of the leaves. Thus, the fluctuation of procurement of kendu leaves depends mainly on weather condition. Similarly, the procurement of other products rises and falls in different years depending upon the nature of bump crops and weather condition. The low procurement of sal seeds, mahua flower, mahua seeds, tamarind, amla and harida was recorded in those years in which there was no bump crop and bad weather condition. However, the huge procurement of these products was due to bumping crop and good weather condition during the entire process of procurement.

The procurement of these products except kendu leaves was seen from the table that sal seed was maximum (9050.1 qtl) in 2005-06 and minimum (82 qtl) in 2007-08. Likewise, the highest procurement of mahua flower, mahua seeds, tamarin, amla and harida was recorded with 500, 93, 908.69, 73 and 240 qtl. in 2008-09, 2011-12, 2005-06, 2012-013 and 2008-10 respectively and minimum was recorded with 66, 43, 4.9, 0.9 and 1 qtl in the years 2009-10, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2005-06 and 2011-12 respectively.

Figure-1.1 Trend major NTFPs in Kalahandi (2005-06 to 2012-13)



Source: Constructed by the author

It is clear from Figure 1.1 that almost all the products except kendu leaves have a decreasing trend from 2006-07 to 2007-08. Then, they have an increasing trend till 2009-10 and again have downward trend in 2010-11. Thereafter, there is further an increasing trend till 2012-

13. It may be said that the procurement trend of NTFPs in Kalahandi district is not impressive as they have a constant trend of fluctuation in the different time periods.

Conclusion

NTFPs play an important role in supporting livelihood of the people who depend on these products as their alternative source of income. The major NTFPs found in Kalahandi district are kendu leaf, sal seeds, mahua flower, mahua seeds, tamarind, amla and harida. These products are commonly found and procured in large quantity in the district. The present study focused on the trend of procurement of these limited products. From the analysis, the study concluded that the trend of procurement of NTFPs is not impressive in Kalahandi district of Odisha as they have a constant trend of fluctuation during the periods from 2005-06 to 2012-13. The present study is focused on procurement of major NTFPs found in the district during the given period of times. Beyond the scope of the study, future research can be done in other regions and it can be linked NTFPs with marketing. Moreover, it can be carried out by capturing other products as per the availability in the study region.

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