



## Importance of Minor Forest Produces In Tribal Development

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### ABSTRACT:

Real India lives in rural area therefore Mahatma Gandhi said to focus on rural economy. In 2024, 63.4% of population is residing in rural India. All these rural people are directly dependent on Agriculture, forest, and natural resources. According to the India state of forest report 2019 about 300 million tribal and local people depends on minor forest produces (MFPs), forest and related activities for their employment, livelihood and subsistence. More than half of this population is tribal. This paper has details of Minor Forest Produces, importance of MFPs in livelihood of Tribal's. Also, this paper focuses on increasing MFPs production, activities important for making it market friendly. Proper management of MFPs. Government initiatives to minimize risk factors like market factors, climatic factors, loss of MFP producers, Minimum Support Price (MSP) for MFP. Also MFPs role in tribal development and livelihood. Some solutions to avoid vulnerability of minor forest produces & tribal to climate change issues.

**Keywords:** Minor Forest produce (MFPs), Forest dwellers, Livelihood of tribal, Government initiatives, Tribal development, Minimum Support Price (MSP).

### Introduction:

If you want to know real India, go to rural India, visit villages in India's remote most parts. Indian Rural population leads most important part of India. In 2024 about 63.4% of Indian population resides in rural area. This diverse rural population is real face of Indian economy. Indian economy is rural and agrarian economy. About 700 million rural people are directly dependent on climate sensitive sectors like Agriculture, forest, and natural resources. Out of them up to 300 million are tribal and local people. Out of this population than half population is Tribal. After setting up separate Tribal affairs Ministry in 1999 by bifurcation of Ministry of social justice

and empowerment aiming to providing more focused approach on integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes. Still till date our Goal of Tribal development is far from achievement. The Government of India have focused on Tribal's education, health, Scholarship programs, skill development, and fellowship programs, forest produce processing training etc. Also, some very essential acts like forest right act, atrocities, etc. are in strong need of reformation and research. Our Tribal people's development needs the powerful, realistic and successful implementation of policies by GOI.

**Role of Minor Forest Produces in Livelihood of Tribal's:**

India has an estimated diversity of 3,000 plant species from which NTFPs, generally known as Minor Forest Produces (MFP). Majority of the tribals live in the forest areas and depend to a large extent for their livelihood and income generation on Minor Forest Produce which form a major source of subsistence and cash income for the tribal community. Minor Forest Produces also form a major portion food, fruits, medicines and other consumption items for tribals. The forest dwellers are 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. Under Forest Rights Act, 2006, "minor forest produce" includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin including bamboo, brush wood, stumps, cane, tussar, cocoons, honey, wax, lac, tendu or kendu leaves, medicinal plants and herbs, roots, tubers and the like products. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 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". The Act was enacted to protect the marginalised socio-economic class of citizens and balance the right to environment with their right to life and livelihood. However, several problems abound. Tribal's depends mostly on natural sources, forest, rivers, plantations for their daily needs, food, house building, livestock protection, maintenance etc. As the tribal economy is a subsistence

economy, its economy is totally independent economy. Every tribal village mostly produces what they need. The main occupation for the majority of tribes is agriculture but it fails to provide them with full sustenance. The tribal's largely depend upon the minor forest produce that they collect and preserves and partly consume. Also, they then market the remains with which they enhance their income. In this context, the collection of food, medicines, vegetables, MFPs so that they could assure their source of subsistence and livelihood during off season for Minor Forest Produces. For off season they preserve wild veggies, mushrooms, wild honey, tree wax, cocoons, fruits, leaves, meat, fish, roots, blossoms etc. with different traditional techniques and drying, smoothing. In rainy season they collect different organic, healthy, medicinal vegetables, crabs, fishes, shoots, flowers, different types of mushrooms, leaves etc. Most part of it they consume and save their daily expenses on food.

Tribal households with less than five acres of land mainly depend on the collection of MFPs. The contribution of MFPs to the income of the tribal households is achieved through the collection of MFPs in different states ranges between 5.4 to 55 per cent. One of the studies shows that 35 per cent of the earnings of the tribal's in the Panchmahal district of Gujarat were from the collection of MFPs (Report of the Committee on Forests and Tribes in India, 1982, p.20). Another study conducted in the Bastar district (1981) indicates that an average household (having two adult members, at least one child and an old person, on average earns Rs. 1,500/- a

year (against a total annual income of Rs. 1,750/-) from the sale of Minor Forest

Though Tribal population mostly depends on forest and minor forest produces for their livelihood and subsistence, these sources are more sensitive to climatic factors like thunder storm, cloud burst, drought, heat wave, irregular rain, flood, cloud burst, frost, also epidemics and market factors too. All

### **Vulnerability Of MFP's To Climatic Factors: -**

Climate change issues affect every population and global community but mostly rural population, forest dwellers and tribal's are more vulnerable. In 2019 The Earth experienced hottest day ever due to global warming. If such climate change issues increase, it will empower climatic challenges like heat wave, storm, drought, flood, epidemics. Climatic extremities affect agriculture, forests, vegetation very badly. In short it damages tribal's income source too much than any other farmers, this is big challenge while achieving tribal development. In India due to crop loss on every day 10 farmer commits suicide. Suicide rate is highest in Maharashtra, because of drought and rain shed area. tribal gets badly affected due to very minute change in climatic conditions caused due to global warming. But most of sources, socialists, and economists concludes that it's very pleasure that Tribal farmer never commits suicide though there is any miss-fortune for their farm or economy. While studying challenges of climate changes, we can conclude that such extremities could not be controlled but its effects i.e., losses incurred due to it could reduce with helping hands. Also, researchers found some effective and helpful techniques to

Produces (Ibid, p.20).

factors affect minor forest products production, means indirectly on their means of livelihood and daily needs. Man made activities like forest fire, deforestation, mining etc. too are responsible for lessening their sources, means of their livelihood

farmers, these can be used for MFPs too. Effects of epidemics can be minimized by using medicines like fungicide, insecticide etc. and adopting green technologies. Fungi, bacteria's, viruses, parasites, insects, termites, becomes more powerful in extreme conditions, while regular damp and wet Environment due to irregular precipitation causes ecological loss to timber, minor forest products, trees etc. Heat wave affects forest products, crops and also threatens life of tribal's, their livestock and big trees. we adopt modern technologies like dripping irrigation, sprinkling and pest control methods to face climate change but these technologies are useless for MFPs. Disasters like flood, landslide, storm, tsunami; hailstorm thunderstorm causes heavy loss to all tribal's and forest dwelling Populations too.

Even during covid19 epidemic minor forest produce collection, processing, marketing caused big hit. Tribals were not able to send their products in market, shops remain closed, and everything was worse than ever. Some products like ayurvedic medicines, sanitizer and laddu made from mahua flowers etc. Were in high demand. Thus, we can conclude that climate change and issues related to it hits minor forest produce its economy, also livelihood of tribal and forest dwellers.

**Need Of Managing Minor Forest Produce:**

In India natural resource management issues have attracted increasing attention in recent decades. In response to a sequence of forest fires like Amazon Forest, Australian forest, war crises and allied crises in oil sector, energy, food, water, mining and other resources global warming issues are increasing. Climate change challenges are creating direct effect on minor forest produce collection, preserving, processing and marketing. So Effective governance and management of MFPs have always been important. MFPs management have become increasingly challenging in the time of changing climate, its affecting livelihoods, and market pressures. Countries like India, China and many other Asian nations are destroying their natural resource base for the sake of development; consequently, our world is facing various environmental challenges. The pressure on forest produce has potentially been aggravated

**Importance Of Msp Scheme For Minor Forest Produce:**

The tribal and other local people dependent on forests still remain underprivileged and poor and are deprived of fair returns. To ensure fair returns to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers and as a solution to problems they were facing such as perishable nature of the produce, lack of holding capacity, lack of marketing infrastructure, exploitation by middlemen, and low government intervention at the required time, the scheme, "Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce(MFP)

as well as MFPs too by the development of infrastructure, advancement in techniques, and expanding product markets. The quality of land, water, and forest also got threatened. The regenerating capacity of forests and forest products is on the way of resources paralysis. Unlimited use and the conflicts of over use for minor forest products cause serious threats to the biodiversity, viability and sustainability of the natural resources. These conflicts over forest are arising the dual challenges to the government and the tribal community for both preservation, utilization of forests and minor forest products.

Dealing with different types of commons, including minor forest produce, water, biodiversity, and ecosystems, helps to identify what is potential of forest and importance to its dependents. While managing issues of climate change, it requires integrated methodologies considering the environment as well as social conditions of tribal.

through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP" was formulated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs as a measure of social safety for MFP gatherers was implemented in 2013.

The Scheme for MSP for MFP and development of value chain was started by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Mo TA) in the FY 2013-14 with an objective of providing a fair price to MFP gatherers, enhancing their income level and ensuring sustainable harvesting of MFPs. The objective of the MSP for MFP scheme is to establish a framework for ensuring fair prices for the tribal gatherers, primary processing, storage, transportation etc.

while ensuring the sustainability of the resource base.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED has advised the States Governments to undertake procurement under MSP for the MFP scheme. The Ministry has also revised minimum support prices for almost all MFP items by May 2020 with the purpose of providing enhanced incomes in the hands of tribal gatherers. Further, additional 47 MFP items have also been included in the list of MSP for MFP Scheme to expand the ambit and coverage of the scheme by 26 May 2020, November 2020. Presently 87 MFPs are covered under MSP for MFP Scheme. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of

### **Solutions To Avoid Vulnerability Of Minor Forest Produces & Tribal To Climate Change Issues:**

Minor Forest Produces are main source of livelihood of tribals and forest dwellers. So Transparent public governance and effective public service delivering system plays important role in emphasizing its management. Government agencies like TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs plays important role in fulfillment of rights and needs of Tribals. Minor forest product must be managed for its efficient use. Adopting modern scientific methods and technologies for collecting, processing, packaging, marketing. Skilling, training and employing population instead hidden unemployment through increasing reliance of population on minor forest produce or forest. There are too many policies for tribal development but still we are on backfoot to achieve the Goal of Full employment, empowerment of tribal. Self Help Groups can play very important role as employment generating tool.

India had released/sanctioned Rs 319.65 Crores towards working capital/ revolving funds to the 18 State Procuring Agencies implementing Agencies designated by concerned State Governments for procurement of Minor Forest Produce on declared Minimum Support Price. The Ministry has also released an amount Rs. 85.61 Crores to the State Implementing Agencies for Infrastructure Development to the 15 States. The States have initiated procurement of MFPs from the existing funds available with them under the scheme through the primary procurement agencies at the Haat bazaars and through tribal gatherers.

Empowering SHG's will generate extra income. After making groups tribal can collectively run processing, packaging, marketing of MFPs. Trainings will be conducted to teach them grading, separating, measuring, packaging, preserving of MFPs. UN Builds strong fund for cooperative development, inclusive development, poverty reduction, R&D in conservation of forest's, streams, biodiversity, clean air, land etc. .it must be enforced.

Prime ministers Van Dhan Yojana, MSP for minor forest produce must be implemented properly by avoiding middlemen between tribal and customers. Proper storage capacity building, strengthening transport facilities, empowerment of local communities, rehabilitation of degraded forest can play vital role in minimizing vulnerability of tribal & MFPs from climate change issues. Amazon haat, Trifed wyapar, different online platforms for marketing of tribal products and Minor Forest Produces will be one step forward move. Proper

publicity of MFPs will lead to empowerment of tribal population. Small scale enterprise development, focusing forest right act, skill building of tribal youths All these solutions will neutralize effects of climate change on minor forest produce and tribal development.

MFPs production must be facilitated with storage capacity building, fulfilling of marketing need, tribals should be provided easy credit facility, training of small-scale enterprises, and government policy should be formulated for exporting MFPs. Forest and minor forest produce plays important role in livelihood of tribal. Tribal development can be achieved by formulating policies with respect to minor forest produce and

Climate change issues could not be controlled but our helping hand will give them power to rise from any disaster. TRIFED is working very well to enhance tribal livelihood and minor forest produce collection, packaging and marketing. 100% application of TRIFED initiatives will lead to long cherished dream of tribal development but this route goes through minor forest produce, tribal agriculture and forests.

Setting up new processing units for MFPs in the gatherers area will be

**Conclusion:**

While concluding the facts Minor Forest Produces are non-timber products produced in forests used for livelihood and income generating source for forest dwellers, tribals and dependents of forest. Most of forest dependent population is tribal population. Their economic activities mostly are centered to agriculture and MFP. All these sources are more vulnerable to conditions caused due to factors of climate change. Also, market

forest right. Now a days climate change issues are affecting both factors much more than other issues. Disasters, pandemics and challenges due to climate change gives negative effect on collection, marketing, packaging, grading of MFPs. Effect of climate change issues on tribal development and MFPs production can be overcome by skilling tribals, empowerment of SHG s, rehabilitation of degraded forest, effective implementation of forest right act and Van Dhan Yojana are best initiatives taken by Government of India. different online platforms for marketing, advertising of tribal products and Minor Forest Produces will be one step forward move to achieve goal.

boon for tribals .e.g. if Harada processing unit and buying unit gets available in the respected area most of problems of MFP gatherers will be solved .setting up more local markets will provide them proper chain to main stream their products.

There is more need of Skill development trainings for tribals to handle MFPs ,Its processing, marketing promoting ,preserving.

factors to increase vulnerability of MFP that can be reduced with proper minor forest management, enforcing some Govt of India Initiatives like MSP for MFP. Van Dhan Yojana, Forest right act, PESA Act. Encouraging local markets, SHGs markets, haats also will be more ground levelled initiative for real time help of tribals. Empowering apex institutes like TRIFED, Tribal development project offices. Setting up processing units ,factories ,high-tech storages ,proper marketing chains and trainings will bw milestone in the journey

of tribal development and MFPs management.

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