

Impact of Minor Forest Products on Sustainable Livelihoods Framework in Rural Tribal Communities: A Study in Kondagaon District of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract:

This study focuses on sustainable livelihood frameworks (SLF) in rural tribal communities and the role of small forest produce within them. A sustainable livelihood framework is a people-centered approach that seeks holistic development without harming natural resources. It is primarily based on five types of capital: human capital (skills, knowledge, health), social capital (community organizations, self-help groups), natural capital (forests, biodiversity), physical capital (equipment, roads, storage), and financial capital (income, savings, market linkages). Strengthening these five contributes to sustainable use of natural resources, increased income, health, reduced social vulnerability, and food security. The focus of this study is Kondagaon district in Chhattisgarh, where, according to the 2011 census, approximately 70% of the population is tribal (mostly Gond, Mudia, Madia, and Halba communities). The tribals here depend on non-timber Forest products such as fruits, leaves, flowers, herbs, etc., which are obtained without harming nature. Studies have found that approximately 70-80% of tribal families earn income directly or indirectly from these forest products. People understand the importance of forests and want to protect them for the future. Government schemes (such as MSP, Van Dhan Kendra) are helpful in this direction, but the local market structure is weak and dominated by middlemen and unorganized businesses, due to which tribals are unable to get fair prices.

Keyword: Sustainable development, Livelihood, Tribal, Forest, Product.

1. INTRODUCTION

Minor forest products (MFPs) play a significant economic role in the livelihood of tribal communities, serving as both a source of sustainable livelihood and cultural identity. In India, a substantial portion of tribal populations are directly or indirectly dependent on forests. This study examines the role of minor forest products within the sustainable livelihood framework in rural tribal communities. Tribal populations typically reside in forested areas, where they also act as stewards of the environment. For these communities, the forest is not merely a collection of trees and animals; rather, it is regarded as a place of worship, forming a core aspect of their identity and providing essential resources for food and livelihood security. In the context of MFPs, rural tribal groups collect forest produce in a manner that does not harm the ecosystem.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is a dynamic framework that analyzes how individuals or households, within a specific vulnerability context, deploy and combine their portfolio of assets (the five capitals) through chosen strategies which are enabled or constrained by existing structures and processes—to pursue and achieve sustainable livelihood outcomes, with these outcomes subsequently feeding back to

alter their asset base.(Aggarwal Abhishri, 2018). sustainable livelihood approaches are vital for ensuring that communities can maintain their well-being without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same, particularly by preventing the depletion of the natural resources they depend upon. For tribal communities, this is critically important as their survival is often deeply intertwined with their local environment through activities like agriculture, fishing, foraging, and the use of forest resources. A successful approach in this context must therefore integrate environmental stewardship—such as promoting regenerative harvesting and agroforestry—with social equity and economic viability. This involves strengthening traditional ecological knowledge, securing land and forest rights (e.g., through the Forest Rights Act), and creating fair market linkages for non-timber forest products. The ultimate goal is to build a resilient system where livelihood strategies actively enhance and protect the natural capital they rely on, ensuring long term cultural, economic, and ecological sustainability.(Choudhary et al., n.d.).

This study focuses on role of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) as the cornerstone of sustainable livelihoods for tribal communities in Bastar Division of Kondagaon district, where about 70% of the population is tribal and around 60% of the land is covered by forests. It positions MFPs not merely as economic commodities but as integral components of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, directly building financial capital through market sales, reinforcing natural capital through stewardship, and strengthening social and human capital through shared knowledge and cooperative harvesting. The research analyzes how these products function as a strategic buffer against the vulnerability context of climate variability and economic marginalization, enabling livelihood strategies of diversification and risk reduction. Ultimately, it assesses whether current practices and institutional structures and processes lead to positive livelihood outcomes—such as increased resilience, sustained wellbeing, and intergenerational equity—or if challenges like exploitative markets and ecological pressure threaten this delicate balance, thereby exploring pathways to fortify this forest-based lifeline for a secure and sustainable future. Adding value to these products, like turning Mahua into sweets, making herbal powders, bamboo crafts, or honey products, can increase income and create jobs throughout the year. Setting up local shops and mobile stalls also helps tribes sell their goods directly to more customers. Improving basic facilities like storage and transport makes the whole system more effective and profitable. In short, by using government support, adding value to products, and improving how they are sold, MFPs can become a strong and steady source of income for tribal people, while also protecting their traditions and the forests they live in.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Ajitha, G (2025):** Minor Forest Produce (MFP) plays a major role in the livelihoods of indigenous communities in India by providing both subsistence and income, yet these communities continue to face significant challenges in collecting, cultivating, and marketing MFP due to exploitation by intermediaries, limited market access, and poor infrastructure. Although legal empowerment through acts like PESA (1996) and FRA (2006) has recognized their rights, implementation gaps remain. Government initiatives such as the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for MFP, the Van Dhan Yojana, and TRIFED seek to address these issues through sustainable management and value chain development. The continued struggle underscores the need for stronger institutional frameworks, capacity building, better market linkages, and policy support to enhance economic, social, and ecological outcomes for these communities.
- **Raman R (2025):** This article comprehensively analyzes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) research in India from 2015 to 2023, noting a significant rise in productivity and citation impact. Research focus has centered on SDG 8 (Decent Work) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), while SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 14 (Life Below Water) remain under explored. International collaborations, especially with the US, UK, and China, have substantially boosted output and influence. The analysis identifies a need for stronger public private institutional partnerships and reveals two primary thematic research clusters: environmental economic issues and health human welfare. The study outlines India's progress, persistent challenges, and future directions essential for achieving the SDGs by 2030.

- **Choudhary J (2025):** Sustainable livelihood approaches to empower tribal communities facing challenges like economic instability, environmental degradation, and cultural marginalization. By integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices such as income diversification, community-based resource management, and climate resilient agriculture, these strategies aim to foster economic self-sufficiency while preserving cultural and environmental heritage. Case studies from India, the Philippines, and the United States illustrate the effectiveness of initiatives like Joint Forest Management, fair trade linkages, and supportive policies such as the Forest Rights Act. The paper concludes that long term resilience and prosperity for tribal communities depend on collaborative efforts—combining indigenous wisdom, government policy, NGO support, and secure land rights to balance cultural preservation, ecological sustainability, and inclusive economic growth.
- **Khosla R (2024):** The article highlights the critical role of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) in sustaining tribal livelihoods in Odisha, India, where they provide essential employment, nutrition, and cash income contributing 15–50% of household earnings. Forests are central to tribal socio cultural and economic life, with communities relying on MFPs for food, medicine, fodder, and household needs. A study in Koraput district found over 90% of tribal households depend on MFPs for daily sustenance and cultural practices. However, despite their importance, MFPs remain underutilized and have not significantly reduced poverty. Commercial exploitation and development projects further restrict tribal access to these resources, limiting their potential for livelihood security.
- **Aggarwal A (2018):** A sustainable livelihoods approach is an integrated application for poverty eradication through the incorporation of economic, environmental, and social equity principles in access to and consumption of resources. Accordingly, sustainable livelihoods efforts in India comprise a wide array of interventions, spanning diverse communities, objectives, and impact strategies. While the sector has long focused—and continues to focus—on agriculture and related activities, there is a growing emphasis on skill development, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This report maps the current state of funding in India's sustainable livelihoods sector and highlights the opportunities and best practices within it. To do so, the study examines organizations identified as demand side stakeholders, as they represent the 'demand' for funding in this space.
- **Sukla, N (2015):** The analysis of Chhattisgarh's forest sector highlights the importance of sustainable forest products, especially innovative wood products and Lac, in the context of international markets, green economy policies, and environmental goals. It emphasizes how trade regulations, renewable energy policies, and green building standards shape wood markets, while forest certification schemes affect public perception and policy alignment. Chhattisgarh has significant potential to expand its production and marketing of forest products, particularly through state support, collective producer initiatives, and improved access to quality inputs like Lac seeds. Key challenges include fluctuating prices, limited seed availability, and underutilization of existing resources. To address these, recommendations include enhancing the collection and trade of both nationalized and non-nationalized minor forest products, promoting micro enterprises, and focusing on the sustainable use of non-wood forest resources.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- I. To analysis the role of MFPs in building sustainable livelihoods for tribal households in Kondagaon District.
- II. To identify and document the Minor Forest Products (MFPs) collected and utilized by tribal communities in Kondagaon District.
- III. To examine the challenges and constraints faced by tribal communities in the collection, storage, processing and marketing of MFPs.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research employed a mixed methods approach, utilizing both primary and secondary data, to investigate the role of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) in Kondagaon District, Chhattisgarh. Primary data was collected directly from the field through structured questionnaires and semi structured personal interviews. A purposive sampling method was used to engage approximately 300 participants across three key stakeholder groups: local tribal villagers actively involved in MFP collection and trade, elected village heads (Sarpanch), and officials from the local Forest Department. The survey instruments were designed to gather detailed quantitative and qualitative information on livelihood activities, specifically focusing on the types of MFPs harvested, their contribution to household income, seasonal collection patterns, market linkages, and the challenges faced in the value chain.

Secondary data was extensively gathered to establish the study's context and support the analysis. This included a review of scholarly articles, books, and reports on tribal livelihoods and forest economy. Official publications, policy documents, and regulations from government portals—particularly those pertaining to the Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trade & Development) Cooperative Federation (CGMFPFed) and The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)—were analysed to understand the institutional and policy framework governing MFPs. This comprehensive use of secondary sources helped triangulate the primary findings, providing a robust foundation for assessing the impact of MFPs on sustainable tribal livelihoods in the region.

4.1 STUDY AREA

Kondagaon District, located in the Bastar division of Chhattisgarh, India. This location was strategically selected due to its representative significance for researching forest dependent tribal livelihoods. The district is characterized by a high concentration of Scheduled Tribe communities, predominantly the Gond and Maria peoples, whose socio-cultural identity and economic existence are deeply interwoven with the surrounding forests. Ecologically, the region forms a part of the dense central Indian highlands, with approximately 60-70% of its land area under significant forest cover, providing a rich and diverse natural resource base. This extensive forest ecosystem supports a vibrant and active Minor Forest Produce (MFP) economy, featuring key species such as Tendu leaves, Mahua flowers, Sal seeds, and various medicinal plants. The combination of a predominant tribal population, substantial forested landscape, and a well-established MFP collection and trade network makes Kondagaon an ideal microcosm for examining the dynamics, contributions, and challenges of forest-based livelihoods within the sustainable livelihood's framework.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Concept of Minor Forest Product (MFP)

Minor Forest Products (MFPs), also known as Minor Forest Produce, encompass a variety of non-timber forest products derived from plant sources found in or taken from forests. (Ajitha & Sadasivam, 2025) These products include items like bamboo, cane, brushwood, Tussar silk, cocoons, honey, wax, and medicinal plants. They also feature leaves—such as kendu or tendu leaves used for rolling bidis—along with roots, tubers, flowers, fruits, seeds, barks, and grasses. MFPs are vital for the livelihoods of tribal and forest dependent communities, offering essential food, medicine, and income. (Shrey et al., 2017) The collection and marketing of these products are often regulated by government schemes, including the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism, which aims to provide fair compensation to gatherers. The legal definition of Minor Forest Produce was established in India through the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, which clearly distinguishes MFPs from timber and other major forest products. (Ajitha & Sadasivam, 2025)

Table 01: Types of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) and their uses.

Timber Forest Products (TPFPs)		
1	Sal (Shorea robusta)	A major timber species, used for various purposes including construction and furniture.
2	Teak (Tectona grandis)	Another valuable timber species, known for its durability and strength.
Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)		
1	Tendu leaves (Diospyros melanoxylon)	A primary NTFP used as wrappers for Beedi (cheap cigarettes).
2	Mahua flowers (Madhuca indica)	Used for various purposes, including making traditional sweets and alcohol.
3	Sal seeds (Shorea robusta)	Used in traditional medicine and as a source of oil.
4	Harra, Bahera, Amla	Used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine and other purposes.
5	Tamarind (Tamarindus indica)	Used for its fruit, seeds, and leaves.
6	Lac (Kusumi, Rangini)	A natural resin used for dyeing and other purposes.
7	Honey	A valuable NTFP collected from the forests.
8	Bamboo (Bambusoideae spp.)	A versatile NTFP used for various products, including construction and handicrafts.

5.2 Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)

TRIFED, established in August 1987 under the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 by the Government of India as a national level cooperative body initially under the Ministry of Welfare, aims to foster socio economic development for tribal communities by institutionalizing the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) collected or cultivated by them. As a market developer and service provider, its core objective is to enhance tribal livelihoods through marketing development of these products, which form a significant portion of their income and daily activities, while empowering them with knowledge, tools, and information for more systematic and scientific operations. This approach includes capacity building via sensitization, formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and training to enable tribals to explore national and international markets, create sustainable marketing opportunities, and build brands for their products. Furthermore, TRIFED's Minimum Support Price (MSP) for MFP and VanDhan program align with the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006), a pivotal legislation that secures the rights of forest dwelling communities to land and natural resources, thereby protecting and sustaining the livelihoods of poor tribals. Government of India (2025).

5.3 Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**Fixed Rate of MFPs for Year 2024-25 & 2025 procured and stored under Indian Government MSP Scheme as below**

S.N.	Name of MFP	Collection Year	Fixed Rate (Per Qtl.) (in Rs.)	S.N.	Name of MFP	Collection Year	Fixed Rate (Per Qtl.) (in Rs.)
1	Palash Flower	2025	1740	11	Bhelwa	2024-25	1550
2	Harra Kachariya	2024-25	3360	12	Sal Seed	2025	2650
3	Baheda Kachariya	2024-25	2700	13	Neem Seed	2025	3760
4	Harra Sabut	2024-25	1890	14	Aamla Seed less (Dry)	2025	7000
5	Baheda Sabut	2024-25	2080	15	Dhawai Flower	2025	4310
6	Kodo Grade-A Pre Cleaned	2025	3990	16	Karanj Seed	2025	3180
7	Kutki Brown Grade-A Pre Cleaned	2025	4150	17	Tamarind Seed	2025	1810
8	Kutki Black Grade-A Pre Cleaned	2025	4150	18	Tamarind with seed	2025	4480
9	Ragi Grade-A Pre Cleaned	24-2025	5140	19	Tamarind Flower seed less	2025	8530
10	Charota Seed	2024-25	2380	20	Mahua Flower Dry	2025	4470

Source:- CHHATTISGARH STATE MINOR FOREST PRODUCECO-OPERATIVE FEDETATION, LTD

Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, officially known as The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, was enacted by the Government of India to recognize and vest forest rights and occupation in forest land to forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights were not recorded. The Act grants individual rights over land for habitation and cultivation, and community rights over forest resources, such as minor forest produce, water bodies, grassing areas, and traditional knowledge. It also provides for the rights to protect, regenerate, conserve, and manage community forest resources, empowering Gram Sabhas as key decision-making bodies in this process. FRA is a landmark social justice legislation aimed at correcting historical injustices faced by forest dependent communities and strengthening their role in forest governance. However, implementation has been uneven across states, and challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, evictions, and lack of awareness have limited its effectiveness. Government of India Report (2007).

5.4 PESA Act 1996

The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996—commonly known as the PESA Act—was enacted to extend the provisions of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to the Scheduled Areas of India, which are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities and governed under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. Based on the recommendations of the Bhuria Committee, the Act empowers Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) to function as the cornerstone of self-governance by giving them authority over local resources, development plans, social justice, and cultural preservation. It mandates that Gram Sabhas be consulted in matters of land acquisition, rehabilitation, and the management of natural resources, including minor forest produce and minor minerals. The Act recognizes the importance of customary laws and traditional practices in governance, and aims to promote participatory democracy and tribal autonomy. Despite its progressive intent, the implementation of PESA has faced challenges such as weak state level legislation, lack of awareness, administrative resistance, and conflicts with other laws, thereby limiting its transformative potential for tribal self-rule and sustainable development. Government of India (1996).

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This study will provide a detailed, evidence-based analysis of how Minor Forest Products (MFPs) function within the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for tribal communities in Kondagaon District. This includes quantified data on MFP contribution to household income (likely within the 15-50% range), documentation of species diversity and indigenous knowledge, and a clear mapping of value chains to identify specific bottlenecks. The research will yield a critical assessment of how MFPs build financial, natural, human, and social capital while also pinpointing the vulnerability context created by exploitative markets, ecological pressures, and gaps in policy implementation, such as the Forest Rights Act and cooperative mechanisms like CGMFPFed.

Consequently, the findings will translate into actionable, context specific recommendations to strengthen this forest-based lifeline. These will focus on practical interventions such as enhancing local processing and value addition for higher returns, creating more equitable market linkages, fortifying community-based resource management, and advocating for stronger enforcement of tribal rights and supportive policies. The ultimate outcome is a robust blueprint for empowering tribal households, ensuring their economic resilience and cultural integrity while promoting the ecological sustainability of the forest resources they depend upon.

7. COLLECTION OF MFPs IN KONDAGAON DISTRICT

In Kondagaon District, tribal communities primarily collect Minor Forest Products (MFPs) such as Tendu leaves, Mahua flowers, Chironji (Char), Tamarind (Imali), Sal seeds, Lac, Harra Bahera, Amla, and Neem seeds. These forest resources become available in distinct seasonal cycles and are gathered by locals for varied purposes, including household nutrition, medicine, and cash income. A significant portion of this collection remains outside official government records, as many households collect for self-consumption or sell informally to local middlemen. Only the produce channeled through the organized sectors such as cooperatives, government procurement centers (like CGMFPFed), or registered local mandis, systematically recorded, leading to an underrepresentation of the true scale and economic contribution of MFPs in the region's livelihood system.

Collection of MFPs contributes significantly to household earnings, often 23% of total income complementing agriculture (41%) and providing cash during lean agricultural seasons. These products are gathered from forest stands across blocks like Keshkal, Pharsgaon, and Kondagaon, with villages such as Vishrampuri, Bahigaon, Makdi, and Chipawand being key sites. The activity is institutionalized through cooperatives, ensuring fair trade and minimizing exploitation by middlemen. NABARAD (2024).

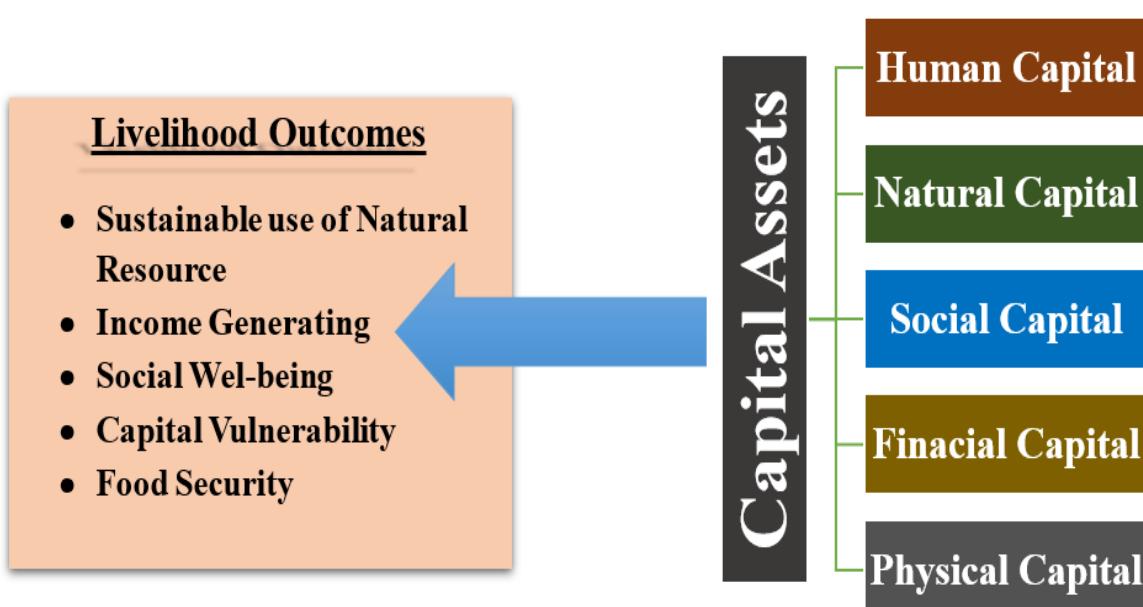
Table 03: List of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) majorly available in Kondagaon District in different season and there uses

S.N	MFP Name	Local Name	Season of Collection	Uses
1	Tendu Leaves	Tendupatta	April–May	Used for bidi making; major income source
2	Mahua Flowers	Mahuwa	March–April	Used for food, liquor, and oil
3	Sal Seeds	Sargi Dana	May–June	Oil extraction, cosmetic & soap industry
4	Tamarind	Imli	February–March	Culinary and medicinal uses
5	Chironji	Char	April–June	Edible seeds, high market value
6	Lac	Lac	Bi-annual harvest	Used in varnish, bangles, etc.
7	Harra & Bahera	Harra/Baheda	October–January	Ayurvedic medicine (Triphala)
8	Amla	Aonla	November–December	Nutritional, medicinal, and processed food
9	Neem Seeds	Neem Beej	June–July	Used in bio-pesticide and oil

Source:- <https://www.cgmfpfed.org/>

8. SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS THROUGH MFPs IN KONDAGAON DISTRICT

For the tribal communities of Kondagaon, Minor Forest Products (MFPs) are the cornerstone of a sustainable livelihood, holistically building all five key community assets: they preserve natural capital through traditional harvesting; generate essential financial capital via market sales; enhance human capital through skill development and nutrition; strengthen social capital via collective gathering and cooperatives; and enable investment in physical capital such as tools and housing. This integrated model ensures environmental protection, economic resilience, and cultural continuity, forming an adaptive system that secures well-being for both present and future generations.



8.1 MFP Contribution to Livelihood Capitals

- **Natural Capital:** MFPs are the direct yield of the forest ecosystem. Tribal communities employ traditional, often rotational, harvesting practices that help maintain forest health and biodiversity, viewing themselves as custodians rather than mere extractors.
- **Financial Capital:** MFPs contribute an estimated 15-50% of annual household income. The sale of produce like Tendu leaves (supported by a Minimum Support Price) and Mahua provides essential cash, especially during lean agricultural seasons, acting as a crucial financial buffer.
- **Human Capital:** The knowledge of identifying, harvesting, and processing MFPs is a key skill set passed intergenerationally. Furthermore, MFPs directly enhance family nutrition and health through consumption, building a healthier, more capable workforce.
- **Social Capital:** Collection is frequently a collective activity, strengthening community networks, trust, and reciprocity. Formal structures like Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) further institutionalize this cooperation, enabling collective bargaining and enterprise.
- **Physical Capital:** Income generated from MFPs is often reinvested in improving household assets—better tools, housing repairs, education for children, and transportation—thereby gradually enhancing long term material well-being.

Table 04: MFPs Sustainable collection and Livelihood contribution

Sn.	MFPs	Sustainable Collection/Uses	Livelihood Contribution
1	Tendu Leaves	Plucked selectively to avoid tree damage; used for bidi wrapping	Provides seasonal cash; supports community funds for education and health.
2	Mahua Flowers/Seeds	Gathered from ground to prevent over exploitation; edible, oil, liquor	Food/nutrition security; income from sales, with value addition like oil extraction.
3	Sal Seeds	Collected post monsoon; oil for food/industry	Year-round employment in processing; biodiversity friendly as it regenerates forests.
4	Harra/Behera	Fruits harvested mature; medicinal, dyes	Health benefits for collectors; sustainable trade reduces poverty.
5	Chironji (Char)	Seeds from fruits; nuts, medicine	High value export; empowers women SHGs through processing.
6	Tamarind	Pods collected; food, export	Supplements diet; community managed groves ensure regeneration.
7	Lac	Cultivated on trees like Kusum; resin for products	Employment in rearing; aligns with Forest Rights Act for rights-based sustainability.
8	Amla	Fruits gathered; vitamin rich, medicinal	Nutritional enhancement; low impact harvesting preserves trees.

Source: Primary Data (2025-26)

9. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MINOR FOREST PRODUCT (MFPs) ON TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The direct economic benefits of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) for tribal communities in Kondagaon are multifaceted, contributing an estimated 15–50% of annual household income and serving as the most accessible cash source for landless and marginal families. The staggered seasonal availability of MFPs, such as Mahua in spring and Tendu in summer smooths cash flow during lean agricultural periods, reducing vulnerability to income and food shortages. Additionally, MFP collection and processing provide significant seasonal employment, especially for women, enhancing their economic agency. Institutional mechanisms like the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for nationalized MFPs help ensure fair prices, while initiatives such as TRIFED's Van Dhan Vikas Kendras enable value addition—turning raw produce into items like mahua biscuits or amla candy thereby capturing greater market value. Furthermore, MFPs collected for self-consumption reduce household expenditure on food, medicine, and fuel, indirectly increasing disposable income and supporting overall financial resilience.

9.1 Direct Economic Benefits

- **Income from Collection and Sales:** Tribals earn directly from gathering and selling MFPs such as tendu leaves (₹4,500–6,000 per season at ₹150 per 100 bundles), mahua flowers (₹1,750–3,500 per household at ₹35/kg MSP), sal seeds, harra, baheda, chironji, tamarind, and lac. In Kondagaon Forest Division, NTFP production data illustrates this: 15,119.86 quintals collected in 2019 20 (benefiting 16,369 individuals), peaking at 107,105.52 quintals in 2020 21 (67,991 beneficiaries), and 49,431.37 quintals in 2021 22 (42,729 beneficiaries), generating millions in revenue distributed via cooperatives. For poorer households, NTFPs can account for over 30% of income, acting as a buffer against economic shocks.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Seasonal collection employs millions, with women comprising 70–80% of collectors, fostering gender inclusive jobs. Value addition through VDKVs—such as processing mahua into jams, tonics, or flour; tamarind into concentrates; and herbs into powders—creates year-round employment in drying, grinding, packaging, and marketing, yielding higher returns (e.g., mushroom powder at ₹400/kg). This has led to improved incomes, with early VDKV evaluations showing enhanced earnings for participants.
- **Fair Pricing and Market Access:** MSP schemes (e.g., ₹35/kg for mahua, ₹1,500/quintal for harra) eliminate middlemen exploitation, ensuring tribals receive 75–90% of profits directly. Cooperatives and TRIFED's e-commerce platforms connect collectors to national/international markets, reducing post-harvest losses and boosting sales.
- **Poverty Alleviation and Welfare:** NTFPs fund household essentials like education, health, and nutrition, with profits reinvested into community welfare (e.g., scholarships, insurance). In Kondagaon, this has contributed to socio-economic upliftment, aligning with the Forest Rights Act (2006) by granting direct control over resource trade and promoting self-reliance.

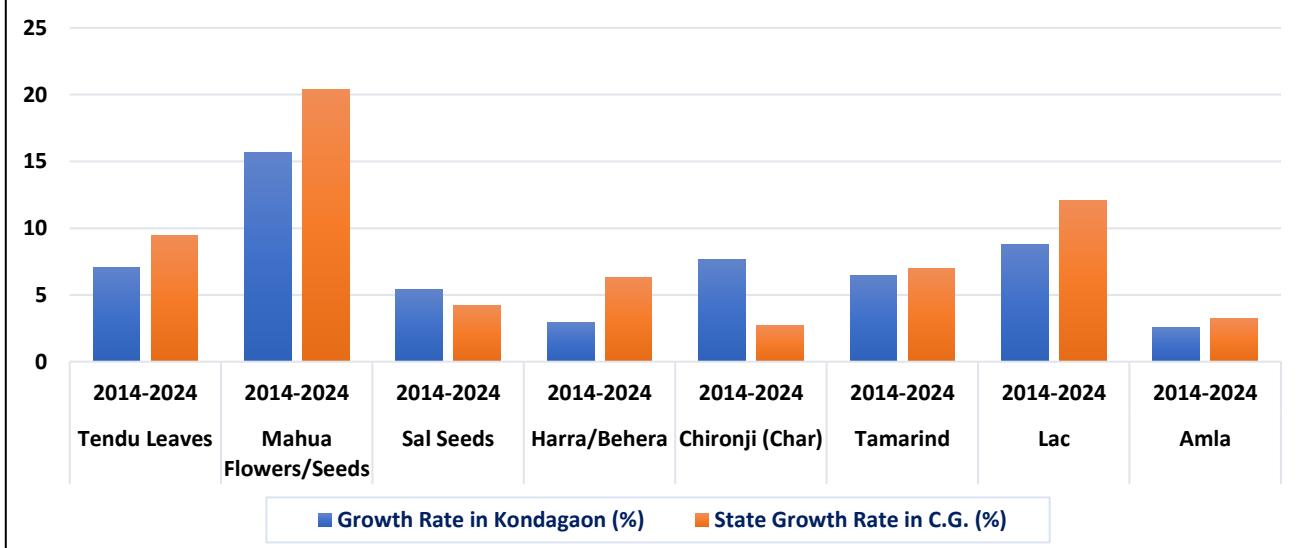
9.2 GROWTH RATES OF MFPs COLLECTION IN KONDAGAON DISTRICT

In Kondagaon District, the growth rates of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) over the period 2014–2024 have been satisfactory for some items like Tendu leaves, Mahua flowers, Tamarind, and Lac, with these products achieving an average growth rate of 9.65%. However, other products such as Sal seeds, Chironji, and Amla have shown a decline over the decade. When compared to the decade's state growth rate for forest products in Chhattisgarh, the district level trends are not significantly different, reflecting similar influences from seasonal variations, policy interventions like MSP expansions, and environmental factors such as forest fires and climate impacts.

Table 05: Growth rates of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) over the period 2014-2024

S. No	MFPs	Period	Growth Rate in Kondagaon (%)	State Growth Rate C.G. (%)
1	Tendu Leaves	2014-2024	7.09	9.45
2	Mahua Flowers/Seeds	2014-2024	15.63	20.36
3	Sal Seeds	2014-2024	5.38	4.24
4	Harra/Behera	2014-2024	2.96	6.29
5	Chironji (Char)	2014-2024	7.64	2.7
6	Tamarind	2014-2024	6.45	6.97
7	Lac	2014-2024	8.77	12.04
8	Amla	2014-2024	2.53	3.27

Source: <https://www.cgmfpfed.org/2024/tradeofNWFP.php>

Fig 01: Growth Rates of Minor Forest Products (MFPs) Over the Period 2014-2024


10. CONCLUSION

Minor forest products (MFPs) are an essential source of livelihood for tribal communities in Kondagaon district, and they also strengthen the framework for sustainable livelihoods by enhancing natural capital. This study focuses on the relationship between MFPs and tribal livelihood patterns, and examines how communities can generate sustainable income from forest produce. Kondagaon, home to a predominantly tribal population surrounded by dense forests, is rich in locally available MFPs such as tendu leaves,

mahua flowers, chironji, tamarind, sal seeds, lac, hara-bahera, amla, and neem seeds—all of which are in high demand in the market. Although government initiatives such as the Van Dhan Yojana and Minimum Support Price (MSP) are being actively implemented, market access remains difficult due to the dominance of middlemen. Despite these challenges, MFPs offer significant direct economic benefits, contributing approximately 15–50% of annual household income and serving as the most readily available cash source for landless and needy families. Significantly, between 2014 and 2024, high-value products such as tendu leaves, mahua flowers, tamarind, and lac recorded a strong average growth rate of 9.65%, highlighting their crucial role in sustaining the livelihoods of tribal people.

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