

CHAPTER 2

**FOREST WEALTH AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS: THE ROLE OF
TENDU (*DIOSPYROS MELANOXYLON* ROXB.) LEAVES IN
GARIABAND DISTRICT'S ECONOMY**

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Abstract

Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb.), is a famous forest tree belonging to the family of the *Ebenaceae* family, and is very common in the heart and eastern parts of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. The forestry is best known for its economic importance due to the collection of leaves used to produce bidi (traditional Indian cigarette), but also the importance of indigenous ethnic media. Traditionally, various parts of the Tendu plants, especially their leaves and fruits, have been used by tribal communities to treat current health diseases. The leaves are used outside to control diarrhea and in traditional ocular therapy, and to treat cracks. Fruits are also used in various basic links. For most forest communities,

bid calls are not only a seasonal source of income, but also a stable part of the main healthcare system. Its versatile nature reflects ecological, economic, and medical implications. Despite traditional use, scientific data is still not sufficient to confirm the quality of these healings. As a result, it becomes increasingly important that the pharmacological quality of trends is documented, preserved, and studied using modern scientific methods. Marketing for sustainable use helps maintain biodiversity while improving rural and tribal health systems.

Keywords: - *Non-Timber Forest Products, Socio-economic study, Tendu, Tribal livelihood.*

Introduction

Chhattisgarh holds 44% of its geographical area under the forest, making Chhattisgarh natural resources an important aspect. Chhattisgarh Forest is very rich in secondary forest products [1-2]. Soft leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb.) are one of India's most important Non-Timber forest products (NTFPs) and play an important role in the lives of millions of forest communities [3-7]. For centuries, forest cover has been an important line of rural and tribes in India, providing an important source of food, fuel, medicine and livelihoods. Of all the different forest products, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), strain in the Ebenaceae Tendu, is a specific economic and cultural meaning. Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh are producers of tender appeal, while Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh combine the total volume of national production [3, 8]. Chhattisgarh is the best state in India for the production of high quality tension leaves (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) used as a package for bidi (a rural cigarette). The state has a standard leaf bag of about 16.72 lakh growing per year, contributing almost 20% of the country's total production. Each standard bag at Chhattisgarh comes in 1000 bundles, each package contains 50 leaves. The roaming period for growing leaves in

Chhattisgarh continues from the third week of April to the second week of June, starting earlier in the southern part of the state than in the north [10]. It is simply referred to as green gold in central India. It has been a great help in the bidi industry. There, we use leaves to smoke plain cigarettes. But in addition to its economic importance, Tendu also serves important functions in traditional medicine and rural health systems. With Chhattisgarh, particularly in the Gariaband Forest district, the Tendu leaf collection is one of the main seasonal means of detecting the presence of liquids in forest tribes. Fingeshwar, Chhura, Mainpur, Deobhog, and Gariaband blocks are the leading manufacturers of Tendu leaves in the region. Throughout the collection season (most discovered from April to June), hundreds of families have been involved in collecting, constraining, and marketing tense leaves, resulting in more than half of their annual income. In addition to its economic importance, soft plants also have drug value. Its fruits and leaves are commonly used to treat eyes with cracked heels, diarrhea, and eye. NTFPs is a wide range of forest products that play several functions, in addition to wood, including financial support, cultural identity, environmental protection, and health benefits [10-11]. Despite its critical importance, tensioned collectors face many issues, including price fluctuations, delayed payments, intermediary operations, and a lack of social security. This study plans to study the socio-economic consequences of the collection of tense sheets in the Gariaband district, analyze traditional knowledge revolving around plants, and provide sustainable practices and political proposals that can enhance income and environmental harmony.



Figure 2.1 Collection and Utilization of Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) Leaves for Rural Livelihoods in Gariaband District

Materials and methods

Study Area

Field studies were conducted in five forest districts in the Gariaband district, Chhattisgarh province. It was held in Fingeshwar, Chhura, Mainpur, Deobhog, and Gariaband. The block is located in the eastern forest belt of Chhattisgarh and is

rich in the densest forests with Tendu trees and high-grade tribal groups such as Gond, Halba, and Kamar. The area was marked by a tropical climate that contributes to the natural development of medium precipitation, red and outer floors, and offers trees. The Tendu Leaf Collection is a key seasonal activity for local livelihoods and is firmly tied to a state-funded financial program. The selected blocks are useful for socio-economic assessments as they show the large collection of trendy leaves, active participation of households in tribes, and the functioning of cooperative enterprises in the native forest.

Data Collection: This study involves data collection from primary and secondary sources with important fieldwork. Outdoor activities have extended the identification of economic importance and traditional functions of leaves when maintaining self-sufficiency measures in rural and forest village tribes.

The gender roles associated with collection process, seasonal schedule, remuneration patterns, and gender-based roles Tendu leaf collections were recorded using discussions in households, focus group discussions (FGDs), and interviews with local tribal collectors, members of Self-Help Groups SHGs, Van Dhan Yojana, and forest staff.

The recent Chhattisgarh production model and price of Tendu leaf market tension is considered a quantitative assessment of price fluctuations, state policies and commercial value of leaf activity. Field observations also helped to assess the pristine tree density and patterns of selected forest plots and degraded lands.

Results

This study shows that Tendu leaf collection is an important source of seasonal income from rural and tribal communities in the five quarters of the Gariaband district. The collected data for 100 families determined the following main results:

1. Demographic Characteristics: Approximately 82% of respondents came from tribal communities such as Gond, Halba, and Kamar. Most of them were marginal

farmers or landless workers. Women and children played an active role in the collection of sheets.

2. Income from Tendu Leaves:

- Each family earns ₹6,000-10,000 during the tension season (April-June).
- Changes in income were based on the number of beams assembled, the presence of labor charges, and government charges.
- On average, household collected 300-500 bundles per season.

3. Fresh and work entry:

- Families took 15-25 days to collect and connect sheets of offers.
- Collections were generally held early in the morning to avoid drying out the leaves.
- The leaves were associated with fixed (50 sheets per package) units sold by the cooperative.

4. Market Access and Payment Delays:

- Tendu leaves were sold by a cooperative of forest products under national control.
- Prices are set in advance, and payments are delayed (2-3 months), 67% of respondents said.
- In some cases, there was no direct access to the market, and in some cases, collectors relied on intermediaries.

5. Medicinal Knowledge:

46% of respondents reported using Tendu leaves or fruits for cracked heels, diarrhea, and eye infections, showcasing its dual livelihood and health relevance.

6. Government Support & Challenges:

- The number of beneficiaries in diagrams such as Van Dhan Yojana and minimum MFP support prices was low (only 18%).
- Promenades face limited pricing, a lack of storage, and pattern recognition.

Table 2.1 Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce 2024-25 [2].

Chhattisgarh state minor forest produce 2024-25 (CGMFPFED)						
Name of Forest produce	Category	Category (MSP/SP)	Collector rate (Rs.)	Collector period		Criteria
				Form	To	
Tendu Leaves (<i>Diospyros melanoxyton</i>)	NTFP	SP	₹550 per 100 standard bundles	15-Apr	15-Jun	Standard bundle: 50 Tendu leaves per bag, properly dried and tied.

Discussion

Trend leaves is also known as Green Gold in the tribal regions for their economic value. The leaves are collected and dried in the sun, then used to prepare the bidi to wrap the cigarette. In addition to the production of bidi, soft leaves are used as a source of traditional medicine for diseases such as diabetes, fever, and diarrhea. The leaves are also used to treat antibacterial bruises. Flowers are used for skin diseases and urinary conditions [1]. The results of this study highlight the leaves of the central location of bids Tendu occupying the live and live forests of the Gariaband district. As you can see, the collection of tense sheets is not only an old practice, but also an important seasonal income source for marginal groups, especially during the summer season when there is less agricultural activity. This reflects the findings of previous NTFPs studies, highlighting their association in

strengthening income gaps and maintaining the rural economy. The participation of women and children in the collection of sheets indicates a contribution to the economy at the household level. Nevertheless, payment delays and non-reporting markets show systemic inefficiencies in the supply and distribution processes. The same results follow the problems observed in the tribal regions of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. There, tribal collectors are exploited by intermediaries of low-support mechanisms. The most important and enlightening finding in this study is the ethnic knowledge of tense leaves. The use of trends in the treatment of cracks, diarrhea, and ocular infections reflects its place in the traditional health system. This confirms the need to store information from Aboriginal people and mix modern scientific concepts for the development of community health. Poor coverage of government administrations such as Van Dhan Yojana and the MFP MSP initiative once again shows the rupture of political practice. There are policies that benefit forest collection, but their close coverage and their low implementation weakens effectiveness. Community awareness of their rights, increased payment transparency, and the creation of cooperative possibilities are key steps for comprehensive development. Furthermore, this study identifies micro-enterprises (e.g., leaf-processing, packaging) as a means of increasing value at the local level. Promotion of these small forest branches can expand employment possibilities without much understanding of raw leaf sales. Ultimately, soft sheets are not only forest products, but also ideas for requirements to improve economic survival, traditional knowledge, and management of forest resources.

Conclusion

this study clearly shows that tense leaves Tendu play an important role in maintaining the livelihoods of tribes and rural residents in the Gariaband district of Chhattisgarh. As one of the most collected products by Wood Learning, soft sheets

generate seasonal employment and income completed by marginalized communities, especially in months of lean farming. The active participation of children and women in the collection process is further emphasized by the inclusive nature of the family and this forest activity. In addition to its economic importance, Tendu has traditional drug value as it is used in topical medicines for cracked heels, diarrhea, and eye diseases. It also emphasizes the dual meaning of trends as a primary care component among forests and as a means of self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, issues such as delayed payments, ignorance of the state regime, and market dependence on intermediaries are preserved, preventing the full implementation of its benefits. Limited coatings using programs such as Van Dhan Yojana also show the gap between political intention and large-scale action. To ensure stable means of forest presence and protection, timely supply systems, strengthening awareness programs, trend-based microenterprises, and integration of knowledge of Indigenous peoples with modern values. Improving these sectors can contribute to the best socio-economic benefits for the residents of Gariaband forests.

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