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Chhattisgarh is a predominantly forested and resource rich State. A total of 11185 villages out of around 19720 villages (56.71%) are forest fringe villages and the rural economy is substantively forest dependent. The contribution of forest resources is ranked next to the agriculture in the rural economy. NTFP's e.g. Tendu leaves, Sal Seed, Mahua flower and seeds, Aonla, Harra, Gums, Lac, Tamarind & Mahul leaves play a major role in providing livelihood to the tribals and forest dwellers of the State. Apart from this a host of non-specified minor forest produces and derivatives of medicinal plants add to the income of the forest dependent populace. Minor Forest Produce (MFP) means the produce from various forest species in the form of fruits, seeds, leaves, barks, roots, flowers and grasses etc., including entire plant of medicinal herbs / shrubs. The forests of Chhattisgarh are very rich in these MFP. There are many MFP species of commercial importance in the State.

Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading & Development) Co-operative Federation Ltd., Raipur has been created with an objective to promote the trade and development of Minor Forest Produce in the interest of MFP gatherers, on co-operative pattern. **Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading and Development) Co-operative Federation Limited** is an apex organization with three tier co-operative structure comprising of a State level Apex body, 31 District Unions and 901 Primary Forest Produce Co-operative Societies. At present there are about 10260 collection centres (called *Phads*) of Tendu leaves spread over the length and breadth of the State and approximately 13.76 lakhs forest produce gatherer families.

Collectors of these produces, apart from earning wages are benefited in a number of ways e.g. profit distribution and a host of welfare activities along with group insurance schemes. But the unorganized trade of non-specified MFP / Medicinal plants has led to low collection prices to the gatherers and unsustainable harvesting of MFP from forest areas. Moreover processing and industrial units are mainly located outside the State.

The Government of Chhattisgarh has taken the decision to procure 7 MFP's e.g. Tamarind, Sal Seed, Mahua Seed, Chironjee *Guthli* (Pod), Harra, Kusumi lac and Rangeeni Lac on minimum support price as per the guideline of the Govt. of India.

Chhattisgarh Government has declared the State as "**Herbal State**" with an objective to conserve plant resource in natural form. Cultivation of medicinal plants in and outside the forest, non destructive harvesting, promotion of organized trade and promotion of MFP based industries for processing of MFP so as to generate the additional employment opportunities in the State, improve socio-economic status of rural communities and provide Insurance cover are the main activities taken up by the MFP Federation to achieve the objectives of Herbal State.

Profit distribution - From the collection year 2008 onward profit earned from the trade of Tendu leaves is distributed in the following manner.

- 80 % of profit as incentive wages to the Pluckers of Tendu leaves.

- 15 % of profit for collection, sale, godowning and value addition of non-nationalised minor forest produces.
- 5% of profit for the temporary reimbursement of losses of societies.

Shoe / Chappal distribution - The Govt. of Chhattisgarh decided to provide *Charanpaduka* (Shoes / Chappal) to one member (Man / Woman) in each family of Tendu leaves pluckers from 2006-07 onwards. Only those families are eligible for above who collect minimum 500 bundles in at least one year in preceding two years.

Insurance Schemes - All tendu leaves pluckers whose age is between 18 and 59 years and whose families have collected 500 or more bundles of tendu leaves in at least in one of the last two years are insured under following insurance schemes :-

- **Aam Aadmi Insurance Scheme** - This scheme is for the head of all the tendu leaves plucker families. This scheme was started from 01.05.2007. From year 2017-18 only head of family whose age is between 50 to 59 years are insured under this scheme.
- **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Beema Yojna (PMJJBY)** – This scheme started in year 2017-18 and all head of Tendu Leaves Pluckers whose age is between 18 to 50 years are insured under the scheme. The insured member will get Rs. 2.00 Lakhs on normal death.
- **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Beema Yojna (PMSBY)** – This scheme started in year 2016-17 and Plucker whose age is between 18 to 50 years are insured under the scheme. Under the scheme the nominee of person will get Rs. 4.00 Lakhs an accidental death.
- **Group Insurance Scheme** - This is the old insurance scheme for all tendu leaves pluckers but from 01.05.2007 other members of the family of age group 18 to 59 years except the head of the family are the beneficiaries of this scheme.
- **Atal Group Insurance Scheme** - This scheme started from year 2011-12.

Education Promotion Schemes - Education schemes have been started for the children of head of tendu leaves plucker families who have collected 500 or more bundles of tendu leaves in at least one of the last two years.

- **Award to the meritorious student** - The scheme has been launched from the education session 2011-12. In every Primary Co-operative Society one boy and one girl from the children of tendu leaves plucker family heads, who score the highest marks, are being given the cash awards.
- **Scholarship for Professional Education** - To encourage the professional education after 12th exam like Medical, Engineering, Law, MBA and Nursing etc, one student in every Primary Co-operative Society who scores maximum marks in 12th exam is given scholarship. From 2015-16 onwards the above scholarship is provided to all the Scheduled Tribes students who take admission in B.Sc. Nursing courses in Bastar Revenue Division.
- **Scholarship for Non-Professional Education** - To encourage the non-professional graduation courses after 12th exam like B.A., B.Com., B.Sc. etc, one boy and one girl in every Primary Co-operative Society who scores maximum marks in 12th exam is given scholarship.
- **Education Incentive scheme for Talented Students** - This scheme has been started from the year 2012-13 for every talented student. Under this scheme all the girls and boys who score more than 75% marks in class 10th exam and class 12th exam get cash amount as award.

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