Chapter – 5

COLLECTION AND MARKETING OF
MINOR FOREST PRODUCES
CHAPTER - V
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5.0 Introduction
This chapter analyze the dependence on MFP for livelihood and all
details of where, what, when, and how they collect MFP and the adequacy of
the incomes generated from the sale of the MFP for their livelihoods. The
problems faced in the collection and processing of the MFP, including the role
of the Department of the Forests and the methods of processing. The marketing
of the MFP in the markets in and around the district, the modes and cost of
transport of the MFP, the marketing channels used by the tribe and the
strategies for effective marketing.

5.1 Minor Forest Produce and its Collation
In the past, tribal people were free to collect MFP and they were
dependent on MFP for their livelihood and they felt that it was a legal right. But during the British period, tribal people were restricted to collect MFP, because Britishers established the Forest Department in 1864 to check the deforestation and to have monopoly over the forest.

Indian Forest Act of 1865 and 1878 Act restricted the tribal people to
collect and use MFP. After Independence, the Indian government formulated a
New Forest Policy in the year 1952 popularly known as The National Forest
Policy of 1952 which has imposed more restrictions on tribal communities to
access MFP.

In 1970, only in Madhya Pradesh, the tribal communities were given
rights over MFP, but state monopoly over MFP continued. Wild Life
Protection Act of 1972, which restricted tribal people to enter into the protected
forest areas. Only in 1988, the first opportunity for the tribal community to use and participate in management of forest resources and its uses was permitted.

The scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right) Act 2006 popularly known as the Forest Rights Act was enacted in 2007. The Act recognizes and vests individuals forest in and cultivate forest land that was occupied before 13 December 2005 and granted community forest rights to manage, protect and regenerate the forest. And these rights also made provisions for the tribal people to collect, use and dispose or market Minor Forest Produce.

The Malekudiya tribe considers that its their traditional rights to collect minor forest produce and make a living out of their sales. Even as there are some restrictions to their collection of MFP and thus for exercising their rights to collect, this has not deterred them from collection of MFP and dependence on the MFP as a supplementary livelihood.

5.2 Dependence on Minor Forest Produce for Livelihoods

Since 90 per cent of the households are involved in MFP collection, processing and sale for a living, the Malekudiya dependence on the MFPs for livelihoods is very clear. Even though small, though the income from the MFPs does supplement the income from agriculture and wage labour such that the tribal people put a premium on their dependence on the MFPs. They have some limitations on the produce they may collect from the forests and the products they mostly collect include: honey, soapberry, fruits and dead wood. Honey collection is a specialist job and so not all of them are involved. It is a man’s job as well, not that women do not try their hands at its, they do, and some are habitual and good collectors of honey. Fruits and roots, dead wood, soapberry and other such MFPs are not difficult to collect but are becoming short of their supply because of increasing number of collectors and increasing restrictions
on their collection, more so, with the declaration of certain areas of the forests as wild life sanctuaries and forest reserves for regeneration. Table No.5.1 reveals the type of MFPs and their Botanical name which are collected by Malekuidya.

Table 5.1. Minor Forest Produce of Malekuidya tribe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minor Forest Produce</th>
<th>Botanical Name</th>
<th>Season of collection</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenu</td>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>April – May</td>
<td>Food and Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antwala</td>
<td>Resin</td>
<td>March – May</td>
<td>Wash clothes, silver, Idols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seegekai</td>
<td>Soapberry</td>
<td>February – March</td>
<td>Wash hair, bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rampathra</td>
<td>Anis-flower</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td>Colour, Paint-raw material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhupa</td>
<td>Incense</td>
<td>January-December</td>
<td>Poojā, rituals, ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marapachi</td>
<td>Tree moss</td>
<td>January-March</td>
<td>Food, daily food items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Processing of MFPs

Minor Forest Products has a long history of being used for subsistence by communities living near and in the forests. The high value of timber and timber products has caused indiscriminate falling of forest trees which has led to serious environmental problems, including damage to the ecosystem, soil erosion, and climate change. In the process, the other valuable forest resources have been neglected.

However, the tribals recognise the abundance of plants yielding oils, gums, medicines, tannins and colorants and being one with nature, they know that these are valuable resources that help augment and sustain the livelihood of their family. Among the MFPs collected by the tribal community are those that can yield

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In interaction with the people and by directly observing the practices, we noticed the following as the processes that the Malekudiya employ in order to add value to the MFP collected before sending them out for use or for sale.

**Honey**

The best period for collection of honey collection is in the month of April through May i.e. during the summer. There can be 7 to 8 colonies of honey bees. Each harvest in a tree may take about one and half hour. Honey collection is done by young adult male as it requires skill to climb the tree and to handle the bees. It is collected only in the night and one person can collect 20-25 kg. per season. There is also honey wax which is separated by steamed water, strained in white cloth and then ground. There is also the traditional system of honey collection in boxes popularly known as ‘Bee Keeping’ where the queen bee are kept and others worker bees are kept for their protection and in the process a hive formed inside the specially designed boxes. Over a period of time, honey collects in this box and is harvested, and bottled for sale. Interestingly, the government is interested in training the youth and providing them with financial assistance to set up bee keeping units. Honey collected by the tribals are sold for Rs100-200 per bottle/kg and in co-operatives societies it is sold for Rs.150-200 per bottle/kg. Availability of honey depends on forest trees and it accessibility.

Honey is used all over the world and is found beneficial in several aspects such as relieving hangovers, healing cuts and burns, soothing sore throats, hair conditioning, energy boost, substitute for sugar, etc. This is the reason the demand for honey is always high and Coorg honey is a popular brand in India. The Malekudiya use honey both in birth and in death as part of traditional and religious ceremony in addition to using it as food component and healing source.
Antavala

Antvala, also called ‘Soap Nut” is collected in the month of March through May. A reddish substance, it is collected in large quantity and sorted according to quality. The good ones are first cleaned and placed in the sun for a period of 8-10 days to dry and become hard. The hard-nut is then grounded into powder for use. Some people also keep the dry nut as it is and when they want to use, they soak it in water, tie it in cloth before use. The tribals collect 10-20 kg per season and the price varies between Rs. 6 to Rs. 35 per kg. Antvala is used for religious purpose and to wash temple idols, cleaning temple vessels and utensils, as well as household use and used during Kodava festivals.

Seegekaaye

It is vine plant that spreads between 5 to 7 trees covering with spines and is best collected in month of February and March. They are collected in bunches when they become brownish in colour. This is also cleaned and spread in the sun for drying and the same is powdered before use. Seegekaye is one of the main subsistence forest produce and its collection requires 5 to 6 hours. A person can collect 20 -30 kg. at a time however, it is difficult for them to get good price for it because of lack of good storage facilities to preserve the product. It is a household item and the price ranges between Rs.5 and Rs 15 per kg.

It is used as soap by the majority of the population in the region, it also has medicinal quality, cheap and easily accessible for cleaning the hair, body of all impurity and prevents infection. It has a natural fragrance which is admired by everybody and it is a common product for cleaning hair in the tribal villages.
**Dhupa**

This is another wonderful gift of the forest as when you cut the tree, gum-like substance is excreted and this excretion is left to dry. This waiting may take about six months for the quantity to increase and during which time, the semi-liquid substance has become strong and hard. The next step would be clean and dry it for 7-15 days during which time the maroon red substance turns black in colour, it is then grounded for use. Dhupa is used as very important substance for pooja and rituals in temples and households. It is used during birth and death ceremony as well as during marriages. Its fragrances are natural and its smoke purifies the home and places that are considered sacred. The prices range between Rs.50 to Rs.75 per kg.

**Rampathra**

It is found in the month of May-June, they have to attach it to another small tree or support, outside it looks green but inside its flower is pink. Only the inside pink coloured flower is picked for processing. The pink coloured flower is gathered and spread on the floor for 3 to 5 days after which it turns brown and reduces to 1/3rd its weight as the flower contains about 50% water. It is dried for 2-4 hours. After sun-drying, they hammer and grind it with a stick to get it ready for use as a material for colouring and painting.

Rampathra is mainly used for paints and a large quantity of it is exported. It is available in plenty during the monsoon and lasts between 10 to 15 days. It has a high rate of demand. Some tribes cultivate the flower in their own land while others cover a distance of about 120-130 km. to collect the flower.

**Marapachi**

It is found in the month of Jan-March, it is taken from wet trees as a layer. Marapachi is a tree moss and a kind of layer that grows on trees,
initially white in colour and which turns brown after processing. It is first taken out from the tree, cleaned and dried for 4 to 5 days. It is then filled in plastic bags for sale and the price ranges between Rs.75-150 per kg.

It is used in every household of Coorg as food condiment especially the coorgi special food called ‘pakka food’ which is prepared with ghee. The item is also an export product as it is rich in nutrients.

**Herbal Medicinal Plants**

It is evident tribals are dependent on medicinal value of plants, roots, tubers and herbs. They know clearly the plants and roots that are suited for each ailment, including blood purification and improvement. Herbal plants are plenty and they know how to process them and to preserve the effectiveness. So the processing of herbal plants varies from plant to plant.

**Minor Forest Produce Uses**

**Honey**

Honey is used as a substance from children to elders consume it as a medicine. And for all purpose whether it be a good occasion like marriage, birth, death ceremony it is used as main substance for all cause in Coorg, the vegetation compels the person to use honey.

**Antavala**

Antavala is a the main produce. It is used to wash Idols in temples. Majority of the houses in the region are Hindu’s that is Coorgis and Coorg-Gowdas, that are larger in number. There are a large number of temples in Madekeri, Virajpet and Somwarpet, Antavala is used for religious purposes. Here we can see large number of people in the region are in need of it. So in the market places and in religious places it is sold for its immense demand.
It is used to wash temple vessels, religious Idols, precious silk cloths, stones, cleaning house, temples etc, and each house festivals of Kodava, Gowdas, and tribals use it in their homes.

**Seegekaye**

It is used as soap by majority of the population in the region. It has medicinal, value cheap and also easily accessible to clean, hair and body. Its natural fragrance cleans all the impurity and avoid infections is one of the reasons for which it used for washing hair and skin in large quantities till day.

**Dhupa**

Dhupa is used as a very important ingredient for poojas and rituals in temples and in the homes. It is used at the time of birth, marriage and death. It is used by Gowdas, Coorgies, and tribal alike. Its fragrance and smoke purifies the home and temple and places considered holy.

**Rampthra**

Rampatha is available plenty in Coorg. Rampathra flower is very much in demand for its raw material for colouring, among tribals region, which use it for raw material for paints. Generally all members of the house take part in its collection, usually they leave the hamlet before sunset. The flower which is pink in colour when it is dried becomes brownish and become 1/3 in weight. The Raw flower contains 50 percent of water. After sun dry tribals hammer and grind it with a stick, which is used for colour and paints.

**Marapachi**

It is used in every house of Coorg, it is used daily in food preparation. It is used in ‘pakka food’ which is prepared with ghee, Marapachi-rich food has get medicinal value. It is also exported to foreign country and neighboring state like Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
Indian goose berry (Nelliai)

Tribes are also involve in collection of gooseberries. These gooseberries are found in small quantities. So it can not be purchased by the LAMPS society. The gooseberries are used for medicinal purposes and so it is not sold either in local retailers or by local vendors, it is used for home consumption. These gooseberries are either soaked in sugar or dried and sold in ayurvedic shops.

Herbal Medicinal Plants;

It is evident that the tribals depend on the forest for the medicinal needs, the tribals use plants, roots tubers, herbs and fruits from the forest as medicines. The tribals are well versed in the use of these forest plants, and giving medicines for different diseases is an inborn trait. This practice is passed on from one generation to another. These tribes are healthy and are not affected by any disease.

5.3 Responsibility for collecting MFP

When asked who are involved in the collection of MFPs, most respondents indicated to both women and men being involved in the collection, processing and sale. Women participate in all processes with equal enthusiasm and involvement. They have also indicated to anywhere between 1 to 14 family members being involved in the collection. Figure 5.1 shows that 1-2 members are involved in 11.6 per cent of the households, 3-4 members from 41.5 per cent of the households, 5-6 members from 33.2 per cent of the households, 7-8 members from 12.2 per cent of the households and 8 plus members from about 4 per cent of the households. A fraction of the households are not involved in the collection of MFPs.
Thus all of the households are involved in the collection of the MFPs but not all of them collect for selling and making money for the households. Some small percentage of the households collect the MFPs for their own use, for everything they could collect can be consumed as collected or with little processing. Tribal households use the MFPs diligently enough such that they may reap the benefits of their use just as their parents and grandparents have been using them in the past.

5.4. Number of working days spent in the collection of MFP

The number of working days people are employed in a year, in various activities towards making a living 97.5 per cent of them have indicated to an average of 92 working days in agriculture and allied activities, 89.6 per cent of them have indicated about 61 working days in the collection of minor forest produce, and 66 per cent of them indicated 122 labour-days in wage labour. So on average most Malekudiya households are engaged in livelihood activities for 275 days in a year. Nearly 90 labour-days are lost at an average Malekudiya who is actively engaged in economic activities lose a few days on account of rainy and cold days and social and religious occasions. Most have to
make do with what they earn in about 275 days of the year for the whole year, but stretching what they earn for the whole year is often a struggle but they come out of it unscathed, though.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage labour</th>
<th>MFP collection</th>
<th>Agric. And allied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 5.2**

**Working Days Spent in Livelihood**

5.4 Households involved in MFP Collection:

Not all households are into MFP collection but most households are, as shown in Figure 5.3. Honey (*jenu*) collection is the MFP activity involved in by a large majority of 88.4 per cent of the households, soapberry (*Seegekaye*) 83 per cent, anis-flower (*rampatra*) by 36.1 per cent, incense (*samprani*) 31.1 per cent, resin/gum (*antwala*) 29 per cent, and tree moss (*marapachi*) 18.3 per cent. All minor forest produce collected are used for either industrial or medicinal purposes and fetch incomes for the Malekudiya households. But again, not all households collect them for sale, for quite a number of them do so for their own use. Everything they collect has everyday use as well.
5.5. Aggregate Walking Distances for Collecting MFP

In the olden days, the tribe could go deep into the forests for collecting MFP and return safely the same day, without being harmed by the wild animals or the forest officials. But today, they have a lot of restrictions on their movements because of the National Forest Policy of 2006 which regulates the movements of people with traditional rights, for several reasons, of which one is for helping to regenerate the forests. Wildlife and bio-diversity conservation has resulted in increased restrictions. Yet the people still use their traditional rights to go into the forests for collecting MFP and travel considerable distances over a period of time, that is, the period of collection. About 15 per cent of the collectors have reported of an area defined by a radius (distance) of 500 meter and within, 20 per cent of them between 500 m and 1,000 m radius (distance), 52.3 per cent of them between 1,000 m and 1,500 m, 12.8 per cent between 1,500 m and 2,000 m, and just about 0.8 per cent beyond 2,000 m plus (Figure 5.4). Thus more than half the Malekudiya walk into the forests for more than 1.0 to 1.5 km in their collection for MFPs, for mainly home use and also for marketing. Marketing of the MFP helps the families with their livelihood. Thus the Malekudiya do not go far into the forests for the fear of both the wild animals and forest officials.
5.6. Skills for collection of MFP

Asked further about the collection of MFPs, all the respondents have indicated that no license is required for collecting the MFPs and yet the forests sustain their collection, even as their numbers have multiplied in the last 2-3 decades. While nearly 89 per cent of them have followed traditional methods of MFP collection, some 11 per cent other, improvised methods. People interviewed have suggested that the collection of MFPs such as honey, soap berry, Rampathre, tree moss and the like requires special skills and the tribes acquire them by observing their peers on-the-job. Presently, several of them have skills acquired at the higher level of expertise.

Problems of Collecting M.F.P.

Collection of MFP in forest areas is not easy task according to Malekudiya tribes. Nearly 90 per cent of the tribes stated that it is difficult to collect MFP to some extent, because they are being allowed to collect the MFP
in their surroundings areas only, but not in the reserved forest areas. They say that, if they enter into the reserved forest areas unknowingly, they have to face physical harassment or torture by the forest officials. Some tribes who are living in the dense forest areas have reported that they have experienced torture and harassment by the forest officials, the reason is that they have entered the reserved forest areas in search of their cattle not for collection of MFP. Whereas, some tribes are afraid of sharing their experiences. All tribals mentioned that they are collecting MFPs which are available in their hamlets or surrounding areas only.

Another problems in that all the MFPs are collected by the tribals are seasonal in nature and are not available throughout the year. Specially in the rainy reason, tribal cannot come out of their homes, because of heavy rain they cannot get any daily labour also.

Some of the tribals told to the researcher that there are many a times attacked by the wild animals while collecting the MFP. Nobody, has taken any licence to collect MFP. They argued that it is their birth right to collect MFP for their livelihood. They have also expressed that the forest department has not undertaken any measures for sustainable extraction of MFPs, because the whatever the Malekudiya tribes collect from the forest will not affect the sustainability of forest.

5.7. The LAMPS

The LAMPS was set up by the Government for the purpose of supporting the tribal community in the pricing and selling of their MFPs. This is to avoid their being cheated by the middle men and to ensure that their efforts do not go to waste when the products collected are not sold and they do not have storage or preservation facility for the products. Moreover, as many of the tribal hadis are located inside the forest, transport bottleneck could hamper
their sell. These can be eased by the LAMPS making arrangements to collect
the MFPs from the people directly.

5.8 Product Pricing by LAMPS

Price of the MFPs sold at the LAMPS is determined by the LAMPS
itself, although sometimes the tribe sells smaller quantities in the markets at the
market-fixed prices, which could be a bit less than the price of the LAMPS.
Ninety per cent of them say that the prices of MFPs are fixed by the LAMPS.
Different produce are sold at different prices as the MFPs are of different
monetary value for the users. Honey is sold at Rs.100 (51.9 per cent) or at
Rs.120 (37.8 per cent) for a kilogram. Numbers in bracket indicate the percentage
of respondents selling at the indicated prices. Resin could be sold at prices widely
varying, with 8.7 per cent of them selling at Rs.6 per kg while 18.3 per cent of
them selling at Rs.35 per kg. Resin is more like gum and it is a tree secretion with
industrial and medicinal value. Similarly, there are price fluctuations in soap berry
sale as well: from Rs.5 to Rs. 15 to a kilogram. It is dried and milled into a powder
and is then used as body soap while bathing. It is a traditional and natural product
with no side effects for the users. Anis flower is also a high priced produce and is
sold currently at Rs.150 per kilogram.

5.9 Product Pricing by other forces

As long as the prices are fixed by the LAMPS, they are reasonable and it
is in fact a support price that fetches reasonable spending money from the sale
of the MFPs. Hence, most tribal collectors of the MFPs (89.2 per cent) sell
their produce at the LAMPS.

However, some may need quick money and for a small amount of the
produce collected may sell them at the open market or to a passing traveller. In
such situations, the price of the produce does not depend on the market demand
or conditions that would be prevailed to enable LAMPS to fix a reasonable
price. The price determined would the result of the negotiating ability of the
seller, the urgency for financial requirement as well as the need of the buyer and his/her ability to negotiate. Sometimes, they cheat the Tribals because they know that they are the only source for the sale of the produce.

5.10 Distance for LAMPS

There are LAMP societies in the district and amidst the tribal habitations. They are scattered on the hills and in the midst of forests. For just about 10 per cent of the tribal habitations, they are close by, not involving a distance of travel. For others, they are at varying distances: for 2.5 per cent of the habitations, they are at less than 6 km; for 25.7 per cent of them, they are at 7-12 km; for 48.6 per cent of them, they are at 13-18 km; and for 12 per cent of them they are rather far away, beyond 18 km.

Figure 5.5

This means that a majority of the tribes have to negotiate a good distance for selling their MFPs. On the hills, a distance of even 5 km could mean long travel, in time. With a low or no frequency of the public transport,
relatively high cost of private transport, the journey could be arduous. A distance of 15 km and above could be difficult to negotiate both onward and return.

5.11 Transport Facility

The only means of transporting MFPs to the LAMPS is by jeep or by private buses, which are not very frequent. Both are run by private people and are considerably expensive. They have two or three slabs for charges: Rs. 5 for short distances, Rs. 10 for distances between 5 km and 10 km, and multiples of Rs. 5 beyond. Private buses and jeeps also charge for carrying the MFPs, by weight or size of package. Nearly 80 per cent of them travel by jeep for they are fast and 65 per cent of them travel by buses as well and they are time consuming in their travels. Both jeeps and buses have several stops and they are never regular stops alone. Less than a fourth of them (23.2 per cent) use other transports such as the two wheelers and they pillion-ride MFPs to the LAMPS.

5.12 Other markets

Besides the LAMPS, the other markets where they sell MFPs are the weekly shandies and the private retail units in the area. For a question where is selling MFPs profitable, only 5.8 per cent say it is at LAMPS, 5 per cent at the weekly market, and 86.3 per cent at the private retail outlet. They sell their produce through middlemen. However, the dominant communities of the district, namely, Coorgies, Gowdas, and Malayali do exert pressure and bargaining in their sale of the MFPs. About 41 per cent of the tribal households feel compelled to sell their produce at lower prices by the Coorgies and the proportions for the Gowdas is 42.7 per cent, and for Malayalis is just 1.2 per cent. These communities bargain for lesser prices, more often than not.
The various marketing places available for the tribal community under study are,

**LAMPS : (Large scale Adivasi multi-purpose co-operative societies)**

The maximum percentage of tribes selling to LAMPS is found in the region of Bhagamandala which is 21.4 per cent and the least is found in the Kakkabey region which is 1.4 per cent. The overall percentage among all the regions is that 5.8 per cent of the collectors sell to LAMPS. The LAMPS (Large scale Adivasi Multi-purpose co-operative society)

As would one would expect, the market share of LAMPS relative to MFPs would be higher since it is set up by the government and the objective is to ensure that the tribal community get fair price for the products they bring to the market. However, this study reveals that the overall market share of MFPs is just 5.8 with Bhagamandala (21.4%) as the highest and Kakkabey (1.4%) the lowest.

### Table 5.2 : Marketing process of MFP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LAMPS</th>
<th>Weekly Market</th>
<th>Private agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagamandala</td>
<td>6 (21.4)</td>
<td>22 (78.6)</td>
<td>28 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bettathuru</td>
<td>4 (12.9)</td>
<td>27 (87.1)</td>
<td>31 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thora</td>
<td>44 (100.0)</td>
<td>44 (100.0)</td>
<td>44 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galibeedu</td>
<td>3 (5.5)</td>
<td>52 (94.5)</td>
<td>55 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakkabey</td>
<td>1 (1.4)</td>
<td>72 (98.6)</td>
<td>73 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelavara</td>
<td>10 (100.0)</td>
<td>10 (100.0)</td>
<td>10 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>14 (5.8)</td>
<td>227 (94.2)</td>
<td>241 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source : Primary Survey 2013.
Note : Figures shown in parentheses are percentages.
Weekly Market

Weekly Market is held once a week. The highest percentage of produce sold is in the Weekly Market held at Bhagamandala, which is 25 per cent and the least is found in the region of Kakkabbe which is 1.4 per cent. The comparative percentage among all regions is 5 per cent.

Weekly markets are held once a week, called santhe. Whatever is collected is sold and purchases are made for the week here. However the pricing of their products here, are marked lower than the actual cost, however, they get an opportunity to buy household commodities as well as sell their products even as they are priced less. The highest percentage of produce sold is in the Weekly Market held at Bhagamandala, which is 25 per cent and the least is found in the region of Kakkabe which is 1.4 per cent.

Private Agencies

Private refers to the tribes selling the MFP individually at various markets. This is mostly practised in the Thora region which is 100 per cent and the least is found in the region of Bhagamandala, which is 64.3 per cent. The overall percentage among various regions is 86.35.

These are shops in the nearby village markets where, they give their produce to the villages attached to haadis, where they get proper price for their produce. Private refers to the tribes selling the MFP individually at various markets. The overall percentage among various regions is 86.35% indicating that this channel has the largest share of MFPs.

5.13 Nature of the Produce

Moreover, the price of the produce depends also whether it is in its original form or transformed through some process. For example, this is a final product of a forest produce which this man has made for himself for protection
from rain which is very heavy and constant in the hills. This product would cost more than the raw material (bamboo) from which it is made.

Plate 5.1: An elderly man with the traditional umbrella, known as *Gorga* made by himself.

Incense is a fragrant powder made out of a rubber secretion, and is often used in worship of the gods. The incense powder is put on burning coal to make fragrant smoke. The smoke keeps the insects away from the houses when constantly used. Currently, the price of incense is also varying, from Rs.5 to a kg (8.3 per cent), Rs.20 to a kg (16.2 per cent) and Rs.40 to a kg (18.7 per cent). Tree moss which is both a protein substitute and medicinal is also sold at Rs.70 (1.2 per cent) – Rs.75 (17.4 per cent) to a kg.

5.14 The Challenges

This has provided us with complete details of the Malekudiya tribal community in terms of their way of life and source of livelihood. It is evident
from the discussion above that the community is hardworking and intelligent, the number of literate people is an indication. In spite of low income from agriculture, the people find time to brave the misery of MFP collection, risk their lives in the wild forest with wild animals and travel distance to sell their product. On the other hand the forest officials in pursuit of government order and restriction in the collection of MFPs misuse the opportunity to exploit the Tribals. Unfortunately, the efforts of the government to provide succor to them through the establishment of the LAMPS is not yielding the expected benefit due to the distance of majority of the tribal hadis from the society’s center. The result is that the Tribals are exposed to cheating by the dominant constant who understands their challenges in terms of marketing their product and their need for money.

What is clear from this chapter is that the Malekudiya tribal community as many other communities face great difficulties in meeting with day-to-day economic requirements and are exploited by different sections of the society.

• Restriction in the collection of MFPs and reservation of Forest areas provide opportunity to government officials to exploit them
• Menace of wild animals is great risk that they brave
• Exploitation of middlemen especially when they need immediate money
• Absence of processing units that would add value to the produce before they are sold

In the light of the above, it is only pertinent to find ways and means to alleviate their difficulties and this study has made an attempt in that area through suggestions.