CHAPTER - 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS
6.1 SUMMARY

It is felt necessary to place in a comprehensive manner all the detailed analysis emerging out of information collected during field study, which will indicate scope for further study on the subject.

The study on management of forest produce in a tribal area of Orissa was carried out in five representative tribal villages of Kandhamal district. The study focused on six objectives i.e (i) documentation of the traditional pattern of collection and marketing, (ii) methods of forest conservation code as has been observed by the tribals, (iii) age-old middleman system and its gradual replacement by cooperative net work for both collection and marketing, (iv) value addition programme for higher profit to the primary collector along with time and place utility advantage, (v) community and cooperative participation in the management, and (vi) methods for optimal use, maximize profit and find out methods and mechanisation of sustainable development.

The climatic and soil conditions of Orissa are responsible for rich growth of vegetation and forest cover. Five main types of forests are seen in Orissa, viz., (1) Evergreen and semi-evergreen forest, (2) Moist-deciduous forest, (3) Dry deciduous forest, (4) Littoral swamp forest, (5) Mangrove / Tidal swamp forest. Several minor forest produce like kendu leaf, sal seed, tamarind, mahula/mohua flower, tubers, roots of medicinal value are found in the study area. Collection and disposal of such minor forest produce are the major source of income of thes tribal people.
Forest produces are important for forest dwellers specially to tribals; They are divided into (I) Major Forest Produce, (II) Minor Forest Produce. Tribals have limited access to the market. Often they are cheated by the middlemen and do not get a fair and competitive price and due to their poverty, they are not only forced to sell in distress and but also they fail to get their legitimate dues.

Kandhamal district is inhabited by tribes known as Kondhas. This district is flourished with mountains, plateaus and dense forest. The forest area has been reduced to 5,709.83 sq.km (1998-1999 census) whereas it was about 8,122 sq.km during 1978, which is a major concern. Tribals derive their livelihood from forests. Most of them could be termed as forest dwellers, whose welfare is tagged to the management of forest and its produce. Minor forest produce provides gainful employment to a considerable number of Adivasis. They sell these articles after keeping for their own consumption. The present study is to examine and explore their traditional trade practices and possibilities of adoption of scientific methods of management to improve their economic standard. The scope of the present attempt is focused on only minor forest produce.

The role of the middlemen being the most important element in their traditional trade practice has caused immense damage to their economic condition inspite of several protective and punitive legislations to eliminate the middlemen.
Scientific methods of management would go a long way to improve their income, even if basic quantity of collection of MFP remains the same. Timely collection, safe preservation, value-addition processing, competitive pricing, accessibility to the market aimed at bringing a good profit to the primary collector are the main objectives of scientific management. Constraints and causes that deprive the target group from their legitimate profitable opportunity has been detailed. The profitable opportunity in marketing MFP is lessened due to illiteracy and ignorance of the primary collectors, use of non-standard weights and measures by the middleman, distress sale due to lack of storage facility for perishable articles, lack of value addition processing, advance sale at a low price during lean season and last but not the least, the negligence of officials at the grass root level in timely procurement.

6.2 FINDINGS

After repeated field visits, interaction with the leading tribal people and discussions with the government and non-government agencies operating in the area, major findings are detailed as follows:

6.2.1 Traditional Pattern of Management

I. With the persistence of poverty, the primary collectors are forced to approach the village moneylenders and sell their articles in advance at a lower rate, especially during rainy season, when they remain unemployed. Unemployment, underemployment,
illiteracy and ignorance are the main stumbling blocks that put them at a disadvantageous position, exposing them to the rapacious clutches of the middlemen. This makes them everyday in every way poorer and poorer. The institutions on which government reposes faith for upliftment of the tribal people not only fail in their primary duty but also aid and assist the middlemen who directly or indirectly control and command the local elected institutions. The rich and the influential sections of the tribals who invariably associated with these institutions look to their own interest and thus exploitation is perpetuated. Public agencies including the cooperative sectors are heavily penetrated with the interest of private trading groups. Political discussions made by government are called policy decisions, but political decisions are seldom implemented for the benefit of the target group by the executive at various levels as such functionaries are rarely dedicated and committed.

II. The economically well off few amongst the tribals who control the elected institutions, enjoy the protection of the officials and in return both combine to exploit the innocent tribals unhindered, which is an unpleasant truth. Our intention is not to provoke controversy for its own sake, but to offer a realistic analysis of
what is really happening in the study area, even at the risk of courting displeasure of the local administration.

III. Grinding poverty is a widespread among the tribal people. Their children are sickly, rickety and emaciated due to lack of proper balanced diet. Like dumb, driven cattle, they are sometimes sold or pledged to Sahukars as bonded labour for sum as less than Rs.100/-, which multiplies with passing of each year making bondage lifelong. The self-congratulatory pronouncement of politicians and tailored statistics regarding complete eradication of bonded labour, or illiteracy is not true as revealed during the field study. Liberal use of alcohol adds to the poverty and ill health of these people. Any ritual, celebration or festival is accompanied with distribution of alcohol. They are exempted from excise duty for their own brew, but they also purchase from the liquor vendor even on credit and make advance sale or mortgage their standing crop.

IV. The weights and measures used during procurement are non-standard. By this, the primary collectors of MFP are being cheated. So far the weights and measures department has taken no action to destroy the various crude methods of measurement in the interior areas and enforce use of standard measurement.
V. In addition to the age-old customs of lavish use of alcohol in their festivals, and social rituals prolong their indebtedness. Though the tribals are exempted from excise duty for their home made liquor, they spend beyond their means and purchase from the illicit distillery run by a particular class in each and every village. Prohibition has been withdrawn by the government as a populist measure and this has ruined not only the economy but also their health, rendering many of them sick and unfit for physical labour.

6.2.2 Conservation and sustainable collection of MFP

I. Podu cultivation is mainly responsible for destruction of rich forest growth. When the tribals do not get bare necessities from collection of forest products and being landless, they adopt Podu cultivation and due to such burning of forest fruits, roots, flowers, leaves become scarce and collection of MFP is reduced. Practice of Podu cultivation is the main reason for devastation of forest growth. Tribals should be trained for efficient management, of their collected MFP that will improve their economic standard and thereby sustainable exploitation would be possible. Even today they do not cut or burn the Salap, Mango, Mahua/Mohula, Tamarind tree as a traditional practice. If they will know the utility of other plants and generation of income from such plants,
they will refrain from Podu cultivation. For this, adequate canvassing and practical demonstration would be beneficial.

II. Article 46 of the Directive Principles of State Policy enjoins the states to *Promote with special care the educational, economic interest of the weaker sections of the people and in particular the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation*. But this direction has been seldom carried out and exploitation perpetuates unaffected in the scheduled areas. We should not judge the results by official statistics and amount of money spent for the welfare of the tribals, but access the actual improvement in their standard of living. Our field visits only point to a disheartening situation.

6.2.3 Need for value addition

The hopes and aspiration of the village community can be fulfilled, by undertaking various value addition programmes. Under this programme industries based on minor forest produce like Tamarind Seeds (Starch making), Mohula Flowers (distillery), Sabai grass (rope making), bamboo and cane (basket and furniture making), Kendu leaves (bidi manufacturing), medicinal extracts are important and can be established in specific forest areas of Kandhamal district. Since tamarind is plentifully available, tamarind processing units would be useful in Kandhamal district. Seed removing, drying and
6.2.4 Management of Forest Produce

I. Management is the art of maximizing production and profit with the available resources. With the plenty of resources if the market is not properly identified it amounts to poor management which perhaps is the situation prevailing in Kandhamal district and as such, it is necessary to apply norms of modern management technology to elevate the condition of tribals, who live below the poverty line as seen from the sample survey.

II. Given the extent of dependence of the forest dwellers on their income from minor forest produce, it is felt that adequate attention has not been paid by authorities to protect their rights through spread of awareness and guide them for proper management at the grassroot level. Restrictions still continue on collection of several MFP that adversely affect the economy of the tribal areas. Since government issued license for procurement of MFP to contractors and leased forest areas, the Adivasis only earned daily wage from the contractors. Now the ownership and management of some of the forest produce has been transferred to the Gramapanchayats in the scheduled areas, which may improve the management system and enhance the economic condition of tribal people. This system has not yet been implemented in the field.
6.2.5 Lack of Infrastructure facility

I. Majority posted in these areas to carry out various welfare activities, reluctantly comes from other districts under compulsion of service. Due to lack of proper accommodation, transport and health care in the agency area, they try to get out from their unhealthy places as early as possible and do not work sincerely. Since serving in these unhealthy areas is not mandatory, they keep their families away and remain absent from the workplace.

II. Due to the combursome procedure of financial sanction, the cooperatives and government agencies do not get adequate finance to purchase minor forest produces in right time. The bureaucratic delay appears to be the main stumbling block in this regard. Taking advantage of this situation, the private traders who can afford to give advance to primary collectors at the time of their need without any documentation, enjoy confidence of the tribal and also procure at a cheaper rate. It is also alleged that the cooperative officials are sometimes influenced by the private traders to go slow.

III. During field visit and discussion with the government officials and NGOs Staff, it is found that while government agencies are invariably tightlipped or evasive, the non-government agencies are more eager to highlight their activity and achievements.
protecting the interest of the Adivasis. The presence of non-government agencies in the interior areas is looked upon as a deterrent on the freedom of the lower level forest officials. With the support of the social workers, the ignorant forest dwellers have staged protests against the illegal and whimsical action of the forest people. This has led to confrontation and bitterness and not conducive to the ultimate economic welfare of the Adivasis.

6.2.6 Lack of Education

Illiteracy has been responsible for perpetuating the poverty of the tribals. Welfare measures are not yielding the desired result. More than 66 per cent of tribals are illiterate in the study area as per the ground survey.

6.2.7 Distress sale and use of non-standard weights and measures

Poverty, need of cash for the impending festival, lack of storage facility are the main reasons for distress sale of MFPs by the primary collectors. Poverty compels them to surrender to the avaricious terms of the village moneylender, who not only offers low price but also collects in his own traditional measures causing loss to the primary collector.

6.2.8 Perishable Items

Perishability of some minor forest produce specially fruits i.e mango, jackfruit, kendu, trifala, mohua, roots and tubers forces them to sell at a throw
away price, as there is no storage facility. It is found that keeping first the quantity for their annual use or consumption they dispose of the articles in the nearest marketing for a very low price, because product being seasonal the supply exceeds the demand, when all collectors are eager to sell, and delay means deterioration and total loss, so they accept whatever price is offered.

6.2.9 Lack of confidence

I. The tribals repose immense faith on the local ssahukars and local traders. The vested interest group being the most powerful element, both economically and politically try to malign the dedicated officials anticipating a challenge from the weak adivasis and due to their political hold, get honest officials transferred and post a man of their own choice to perpetuate their traditional exploitation.

II. The functionaries at various levels are rarely dedicated and committed. They keep the influential group in good humour, who act as the mouth piece of the tribals, and this unholy combination do more harm than good to the innocent tribals. If some official do not fall in line with this influential group and act in the larger interest of the tribals, this vested interest group get him transferred through their political leaders.
6.2.10 Documentation of Medicinal Plants

In Kandhamal district there are various types of medicinal plants available, which has not been properly documented. There are species of medicinal plants like Raulfvia Serpentina, Noxvomica, Jumbolan, Bidimbica seeds, Masania bark, Odramembraca seeds (Plate no 15,16,17) which the adivasi people sell at nominal price without knowing its real value. Since registration of patent is spreading gradually, patent rights of such medicinal plants should be ensured. Beyond the known items of various minor forest produce seeds locally known as “Biding” or “Bidimbica” and “Odramembraca”, bark of “Masania” Tree which are procured at a cheap rate by traders since the tribal does not know the use of these items, they do not put a price on it. It is learnt that, these two items are used for medicinal purposes and the bark powder is used for incense sticks (Agarbati). It is learnt from the local middlemen that they purchase these articles at a price of rupees ten per k.g. and reluctantly indicated that these are being sold to Raipur (MP) traders at a higher rate. The exact sale price, they did not divulge.

6.3 Suggestion

6.3.1 Effective education and training

Taking into consideration the importance of forest in the socio-economic life of the society, Forest Science should be included in the education curriculum at the middle school level, so that elementary knowledge is
imparted early to the people. Instead of formal syllabus, a separated simplified
and utilitarian syllabus may have to be introduced in this area that will help the
adivasis in their day-to-day activity. Instead of prescribing difficult subjects like
algebra, geography and world history, subjects like soil conservation,
afforestation, scientific collection and storing of minor forest produce, simple
mathematics and rudimentary business principle would be beneficial for them.
They should be given practical demonstration and training in the field and do
the job of afforestation and soil conservation, for which they should be paid by
the respective departments. In appropriate stage botany, forestry, arboriculture,
floriculture, horticulture and silviculture may be prescribed in the syllabus for
them. Such syllabus should be prepared in consultation with different
agricultural universities.

Since the local people are mostly illiterate, only publishing a rate chart
for both procurement and sale of different commodities, which the target group
may not be able to read, serves no purpose. It is suggested that rates should be
fixed well in advance of the procurement season and written in both Oriya and
local language i.e Kui. The rate chart should be distributed in every weekly hat
and declared repeatedly through intra personal communication.

Here comes the effective role of the NGOs who through their field
network could contact the village headman, the actual producer and procurer
and make them conversant with the rate fixed by government. They could also
propagate in the local hat that who ever purchase, procure or advance for MFP
at the rate below the government fixed rate is liable for prosecution and punishment. The village headmen who invariably are with the traders and occupy the elected post in the grassroot democratic institutions are to be properly educated through village leader training camps to be organized from time to time and such camps should be addressed by higher officials and leader which could arouse the confidence of the village leaders that administration could come to their rescue if they fight for the cause of the procurers and saved them from the clutches of middlemen. Adequate literature in simple language should be distributed in such camps and read over to the village headmen who are literate.

It is also felt that if the subjects of illegal exploitation its detection, prosecution and punishment are shown through audio-visual means, the illiterate adivasis could also become conscious of the exploitation. For the present the publicity department of government of Orissa and field publicity units of government of India do not have Visual aids to the above effects. Now this could be intruced to the benefit of the advasis. Such plots should be written, edited, and picturise through the NGOs. For writing such plots which would impress the adivasis dramatist and script writers should be remunerated properly so that they would take adequate interest to highlight the exploitation by the Sahukars and middlemen in the adivasis areas.
6.3.2 Better storage and warehousing and transport facilities

I. Every article which is forest produce be it food, fodder, foliage or fuel is perishable. So for value addition some items are to be processed and stored and some are to be stored in its original form. When the questions of storing large quantity of MFP arises all problems relating to warehousing and storages arises. In the past appointment of storage agent has not given good results for which both government of India and state government had taken up storing of rice and paddy. Similarly government should be established storage godowns or extends the existing storage facility to accommodate storing of MFP. The related problems of storing like damage due to vagaries of nature, depredation by rodents etc has to be given proper attention. For keeping their articles in such godowns the primary collectors should be charged the nominal rent which would be a frangible of value added to their articles. When it is taken out for sell of procured by government by this distress sale, damage due to unscientific storing and finally the difficulty of storing place in their residential houses would be solved in great extent.

II. Transport enhances the value of all MFP. Because market facilities in rural areas are much less than the competitive facilities available in the urban areas. Introduction of railway line
and national highways will improve the existing transport facility and also save the producer from arbitrary rates charged by the truck owners.

6.3.3 Grazing vis-à-vis its impact on minor forest produce

At present stage development, the role of livestock and its importance in the national economy of India needs no special emphasis. It is observed that 91 per cent of both government and NGOs officials have emphasised on decrease of minor forest produce due to grazing. Traditionally a large number of cattle grazed in forest, since forest are easily accessible, the livestock depends entirely on grazing as stall feeding is far more expensive for such low yielding cattle. Due to repeat heavy grazing the fodder stock is reduced and the animals are rather lean and rickety compared to stall-fed cattle. The present livestock is mostly maintained for measure and transport purposes but rarely for milk. So it will take a long time to change the habits of adivasis and introduced stallfeeding. So for the present it is of utmost importance that the optimum balance between plant cover and the adverse effect of grazing is maintained to perpetuate the forest as well as the pasture in satisfactory condition. Controlled and restricted grazing in the reserved forest would be beneficial to strike a balance. It is found that there are adivasis village inside the reserved forest. So unless co-operation of resident is obtained, no law prohibiting grazing would bear any fruit and damaged of forest will have its adverse affects on MFP, which is evident from the decreasing quantity available
for collection. Specific areas may have to be reserved for grazing after
amicable understanding with the tribals. Further there should be restrictions
during certain seasons when the shrubs are tender and susceptible to easy
destruction.

6.3.4 Making government machinery effective

I. Revealing reality is no solution but aimed at pointing the existing
situation, so the authority responsible to rectify may use the
information and take corrective measures. The adivasis are
confused due to presence of several agencies for their
development. Instead of so many agencies there should be one
nodal institution. Now these illiterate people are confused to
approach so many agencies to redress their grievance. At the
lowest level there should be one combined office, which would
sanction loan to purchase their articles, sell their bare household
necessities and give them proper advice if and when they require.
Awareness could be imparted here regarding their rights and
responsibilities.

II. A friendly, affectionate and least interference attitude required on
the part of the officials engaged in development oriented welfare
programmes in the scheduled areas is yet to be cultivated. More
and more tribals should be involved in all such welfare activity,
and confidence of the tribals in the administration has to be
developed. Instead of only punishment for negligence of duty in implementing the welfare programmes in the tribal area, adequate reward and recognition should be given to the committed official and non-official functionaries.

III. Government attitude towards tribals should be changed. It has not played facilitating role yet. There is no work culture. So for the best interest of the people of the agency area, willing workers with a missionary spirit need be related and posted in these difficult areas, which should be given attractive financial and other facilities as incentive. With a dedicated band of officials the present rules and regulations would perhaps be adequate to prevent exploitation and protect the economic interest of the primary collectors of minor forest produce. With proper aid and advice in the management of forest produce in these tribal areas, economic condition is bound to improve. To avoid redtapism and delay in the process of fixation of rates and sanctions of government funds, power may have to be delegated to the district magistrates so that funds could be available through the co-operative institutions for purchase of minor forest produce. The financial institutions must simplify the procedure of small loans. The co-operative banks and regional marketing societies should advance to the primary collectors and at the time of collection of
articles defray the advance and pay the balance to the primary collectors. Instead of advance sale this should work as **advance mortgage**. The primary collector thereby is saved from the distressed sales and get a competitive price. The power of advance has to be vested with the co-operative functionaries who would ensure that regular collectors of MFP are only benefited by the scheme. The cumbersome documentation required for availing loan may not be insisted in advance MFP purchasing scheme.

**IV.** Though with the primary intention of helping the Adivasis in collection and sale of MFP, Government have transferred the proprietary right to the panchayats in the scheduled areas, it is reasonably feared that the crafty private traders and village money lenders who play a prominent part in the panchayat will continue their traditional exploitation unhindered by obtaining license from the panchayat. This could be checked by welfare organizations.

**6.3.5 Establishment of processing units**

Now the primary collectors do not enjoy the profit of value addition processing. If such value addition processing industry could be organized in each grampanchayat taking into account the availability of raw materials the primary collector could also get their share from the added value. In the study
area starch from tamarind seeds, tamarind puree and paste (now made and marketed by Dabur Company), rope making out of various types of barks and grasses, bamboo and cane works with innovative designs for decorations, Siali, Kendu Leaf processing, extract of different herbs for paint, medicine and chemical industry could be profitably started for the benefit of the primary collectors.

6.3.6 Proper documentation of medicinal plants

To ensure proper documentation of medicinal plants, a village wise survey should be conducted by experts and during such survey the local name of the plant species along with its botanical name and its use in preparation of its medicine has to be indicated. If the job is undertaken by some NGOs, such a resource mapping exercise when made public in the locality the Adivasis will get appropriate price of such articles .In this district of Kandhamala there is ample scope to start a course on herbarium i.e the study of herbs, which would amply benefit the local people and specifically the Adivasis. Once they get appropriate cost for such medicinal plants the Adivasis would be interested to protect and propagate such medicinal plants. The forest of Kandhamal are rich in medicinal plants like Atropha, Belladona, Nux Vomica, Sattabar, Gokhoru and Sarapentila.
6.3.7 Strict enforcement of rule and regulations

I. It is observed that 26 per cent of government officials told that implementation of legislation is adequate whereas 74 per cent of NGOs does not agree with this view. Since govt issued license and lease for procurement of MFP to contractors the adivasis only collected it from the jungle in lieu of wages and delivered forest produce to the contractors. Now the ownership of some of the forest produce has been transferred to the gramapanchayats in Scheduled area, which may improve the management system and enhance the economic condition of the tribal area.

II. This intervention if implemented with right spirit are expected to go a long way to improve marketing of MFP which in turn, help achieve sustainable economic development in Kandhamal district. These interventions may also be considered for implementation elsewhere in India.

6.4 Scope for Future Research

Businessman dealing in the trading of MFP enterpreneurs processing and packing are much more prospects than the primary collector. The entire process from collection to consumption has tremendous scope for study, to find out the exploitation of the illiterate primary collector.
Loopholes in the existing rules and regulations, which allows businessman to escape after cheating the primary collectors, has to be studied in detail, along with such rules and regulations adopted in the neighbouring states, so that similar amendments could be suggested for effectual remedy.

Thus is the study on **Management of Forest Produce in a Tribal Area of Orissa - An In-depth Study**.