Chapter VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
It is estimated that 70 percent of NTFP is collected in 5 states namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra and Orissa, where 65 per cent of the tribal population concentrated. At present NTFPs is gaining importance as a vast majority of the forest dependent communities still involved in the collection of different types NTFPs for the domestic use and for sale. The NTFP are the prime source of raw materials for certain cottage, small and village industries and contribute to the national income through the export and import substitution. It has been estimated that at present the annual collection of most of the NTFPs in the country as a whole less than the 5 percent of the available potential. As a result the tribals particularly the vulnerable sections were unable to exploit the available potential and maintain a high standard of living.

The NTFP collectors have also been facing the problems of marketing of their NTFP items and in realizing the remunerative prices for their items, several measures have been initiated by the government to support the forest dwellers with specific reference to tribals in the process of collecting the NTFP in general and its marketing in particular. It is in this process introduction of Joint Forest Management (JFM) now known as Community Forest Management (CFM) has gone a long way in the forest development in general and the NTFP segment in tribals dominated areas in particular. In order to avert the exploitation of the private traders in the purchase of NTFP from its collectors Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) has also been set up and it has been taking measures by way of purchasing the specified NTFP items and also supplying the consumer goods through of Daily Requirement (DR) Depots with a
view to help the NTFP collectors in better marketing of their products at a remunerative prices and also supply the needed consumer goods at reasonable prices (less than the prices of private traders).

Forest dependent communities survival mostly depends upon the availability of the NTFPs in the tribal areas. In the scheduled areas of Andhra Pradesh most of the tribal people have been collecting different types of NTFPs for meeting their domestic needs and for the sale. Availability of NTFP and its sustainability is only one step in the betterment of the tribals with specific reference to NTFP dependent communities. NTFP collection in greater quantity carries no meaning if it is not followed by good marketing systems. Fair treatment for the NTFP collector in the disposal of their NTFP items may alone help the NTFP collectors. NTFP marketing remained an unorganized one till recently. In the absence of access to institutional credit and organized marketing facilities the NTFP collectors were mostly selling their items to the itinerant traders and forced to accept the price offered. Sale to private traders may result in several other types of exploitation. It was said that in many cases (prior to the intervention of the GCC) the traders used to take NTFP in lieu of domestic items like rice, red gram oil in such cases NTFP collector was exploited by taking more NTFP and offering less consumer goods (in terms of money values). Weights and measures have also been manipulated. Due to the wide spread illiteracy and ignorance of the NTFP collectors, it was said that in many cases underpayment, deferred payment have taken place. In case of urgency for cash, the traders exploitations have no limits. The terms conditions are detrimental to the interests of the NTFP collectors. Apart from the above many other Government and non-Government agencies have been helping the tribals in better marketing of NTFPs so as to free the NTFP collectors from different forms of exploitation. New
institutions have also been established for providing the vocational skills and to improve the capabilities of tribals. In spite of all the measures it is believed that still forest dependent communities are prone to exploitation in same form or the other due to the innocence and ignorance of the said people.

In the tribal areas for NTFP collectors better marketing is sine-qua-non. Tribals primarily market NTFP and the Agricultural produce. Hence it is important to conduct a research study on the marketing of NTFP which is an important source of income for the forest dependent communities. Most of the earlier studies on the problem of NTFP are mostly descriptive rather than analytic orientation. More over there are no region-specific studies on the impact of institutional agencies viz Community Forest management (CFM), PESA, GCC on sustaining the NTFPs and in strengthening the marketing facilities. Hence, there is a need to conduct micro level studies in remote tribal belts where the problems of these categories are of different nature. It is expected that the research study findings may help the policy makers, implementers, social reformers, researchers, Government and Non-Government Agencies (NGOs) to initiate appropriate measures.

Objectives of the Study:

The specific objectives of the study are

1. To review the different Forest Policies and Acts in India in general and in the state of Andhra Pradesh in particular.

2. To identify the important NTFP items available for extraction in the study area and to examine the impact of VSS on NTFP regeneration and collection and to study the problems in NTFP collection in the study area.

3. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the sample households.

4. To study different Marketing channels of NTFP collectors and to analyze the impact of Girijan Cooperative Corporation on the sale pattern of NTFP collectors vis- a-vis with private traders.
5. To identify the reasons for availing different channels in NTFP marketing and to study the problems in availing different marketing channels.

6. To suggest appropriate measures in the light of the findings of the present study to strengthen the existing infrastructure for NTFP Marketing and to control the exploitation of the private agencies.

Adilabad district was purposively chosen for an in depth study. In the district of the four forest divisions, 12 villages have been randomly chosen, of the twelve villages eight are VSS villages and the four are Non-VSS villages. 250 sample households were interviewed covering 168 sample respondents of VSS villages and 82 from Non-VSS villages with specially prepared pre-tested questionnaires. The research study is presented in eight chapters.

The earlier studies on different aspects of forest dwellers have mainly dealt with living conditions of the tribals. A few studies have also dealt in detail the consequences of shifting cultivation on forestry development. Further, very few studies have concentrated on the impact of JFM on NTFP collection and its marketing. Apart from these authors have also made attempts to analyze the impact of different forest policies at different points of time. However, no scientific studies covering both the collection and marketing of NTFP in remote tribal areas have been conducted. Very few studies have been conducted on the impact of Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) and other institutional agencies on marketing of NTFP. As such the present study proposed to fill the research gap by covering all the afore said issues in a scientific manner.

Different forest policies and Acts were discussed in the second chapter. The present status of forest in India and Andhra Pradesh has been examined in detail. The first forest Act was enacted in 1865 mainly to facilitate the acquisition of forest areas that could supply timber to railways without abridging the existing rights of the
people. The forest in this Act was defined as "land covered with trees, brushwood and Jungle". The next wood extraction for the industrial purposes such as ship building in Royal Navy and railway sleepers laying and bridge constructions.

The Indian forest Act of 1878 was modified in parts by different acts of the local Governments. The Act contained all the major provisions of the earlier policy. While all the restrictions proposed earlier remained the penalty for defaulters increased. Punishment for the "acts in contravention of notification" in the protected forest was increased from imprisonment for six months or fine up to five hundred rupees or seizing illegal property. The Government of India Act, 1935, was passed by the British Parliament created provincial legislature. There after several provinces made their own laws to regulate forest. Finally in pre Independence period the Britishers formulated and reformulated their forest policy with the sole motive of revenue collection. Forest Department was established to improve authority over the tribal who were conversed from owners of forest to cheap laborers.

After the attainment of independence the first forest policy was issued in 1952. The main features of this policy are the need for ensuring progressively increasing supplies of grazing for cattle development, small wood for agricultural implements, and supply of firewood, to the rural families. And also need for sustained supply of timber and other forest produce to meet the requirements of defence, communications and industry and finally to realize maximum annual revenue for the forest department.

As per the Forest policy 1952 the forests have been classified in to four categories.

(1) protection forests (2) National forests (3) village forests (4) Tree lands

The National commission on Agriculture 1976 has stated that mostly tribals are responsible for the depletion of forest wealth but also finds them to be a real
hurdle in the systematic development of forest. Accordingly the commission has recommended the revised National forest policy of India.

Social forestry programmes have mainly three components. Farm Forestry, encouraging farmers to plant trees on their own farms. For the need of the community, especially along roadsides canal banks and other such public lands and community woodlots planted by the community lands, to be shared equally by them. The forest policy of 1988 emphasized the community participation in the protection and development of the forests. Further, the National Forest policy of 1988 keeping in view main factors advocated that the forest cover should at least be 33 percent of the total Geographical area India.

Based on the National Forest Policy of 1988 the Government of India has initiated joint Forest management known as community forest management (CFM) with a UFM view to and encourage people participation in the management of forest for the planned developments of the Forests.

Various tribal development measures undertaken during the British rule, post independence period with specific reference to the five years plans were examined in chapter III. After attainment of the independence, India has launched Five year plans for the planned and rapid development of the country. As a part of the Governments strategy Five year plans have also been designed to achieve the all round development of the tribals in the tribal areas with a view to bring these sections in to the mainstream of the economy. During the first five year plan community development programme was launched under which the community development blocks were also constituted in the tribal areas. During the year 1954 the special multipurpose tribal development blocks were constituted exclusively for the development of the tribal areas. The second five year plans has been emphasized on health and education
facilities. During third plan the scheduled areas and the scheduled tribes commission was setup in April 1965, and submitted its interim report based on the study of the tribal development in nine states.

In the fourth plan an outlay of Rs.11 crores was provided for the award of the post metric scholarship to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes with a view to encourage these categories to pursue higher education. In the fifth five year plan the introduction of Tribal sub plan (TSP) and Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP). The TSP was implemented in 16 states and 2 union Territories. During the fifth five year plan the Andhra Pradesh Government established nine Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDA’s) in areas of tribal concentration. Besides the Andhra Pradesh Government has also established 41 Modified Area Development Agency (MADA) pockets and 17 clusters for the development of tribals.

During the sixth plan separate sub-plans were formulated covering 63 per cent of the tribal population in the country spread over in 16 states and 2 union territories. During the seventh plan under the integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP), 13.04 per cent scheduled tribes beneficiaries in the seventh plan were covered in the wage employment programme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), preference was also given to scheduled tribes and bonded labour. During the eight plan the major activities were taken towards the welfare of the tribal population. In order to tackle the problems of scheduled tribes streamlining the mechanism has also been given priority. During the eight plan efforts were made to provide the guidance with reference employment opportunities for schedule tribes and also offer appropriate incentives. Further, the causes for inter-tribe variations in availing the benefits under the scheme have also been identified so as to take appropriate remedial measures.
The main objective of the Tenth plan is to reduce the percentage of scheduled tribe families living below the poverty line. During this plan important activities have been taken up towards the welfare of the tribal communities by providing education, housing and economic development activities. During the Eleventh five year plan the main focus is on the development of forest villages and to speed up the measures for the all round development of the tribal communities.

In all the five year plans emphasis was laid on the major problems of the tribal communities pertaining to their Education, housing and other related activities. Further, the problem of shifting cultivation tribal rights on the forest based produces i.e. Non-timber forest produce have also been covered vigorously.

Role of Non-timber forest produce (NTFP) in the tribal economy has been analyzed. The Non-timber forest produce encompasses add biological materials other than timber which are extracted from the forest for human use. Majority of the forest dependent communities have been depending on the NTFP to a lesser or grater extent. As per the Andhra Pradesh Forest Act of 1967 forest produce has been classified into three categories. The NTFP collectors have also been divided into five categories. Apart from the commercial collectors the forest dependent communities too have realized the importance of NTFP collection with a view earn more so as to enjoy a high standard of living. As a result NTFP assumes paramount importance in the tribal economy. According to the Ministry of Tribal affairs 70 per sent of the total NTFP are being collected in five major states i.e. Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

India occupies approximately 2.5 per cent of the total global geographical area that supports 16 per cent of the planets human population and 18 per cent of the cattle population. In India forest supports to meet the needs of about 10.27 million people.
In India during the year 2004-05 forests have contributed just 0.9 per cent of the India’s GDP.

In Andhra Pradesh most of the NTFP items (in terms of quantity and value) have been obtained primarily from five districts from viz., Adilabad, Warangal, Karimnagar, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam districts, of the five districts three are in telangana region and the two are from costal region. None of the rayalaseema districts represented in the said category. Some of the important NTFP items and their importance, availability and their end use have also been analyzed in this chapter.

The salient features of the Andhra Pradesh NTFP (Regulation of trade) Act, 1971 have explained in this chapter. Restriction on purchase, storage and transport of NTFP, opening of depots, constitution of advisory committee for price fixation, etc. has been explained. Important among them are opening of DR Depots.

Based on the recommendations of the Bhuria committee the panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 passed by the Indian Parliament. This Act is expected to bring certain positive reforms pertaining to the economic, social and cultural aspects of the tribal communities. PESA recognized the traditional community rights of the tribal community over the natural resources with special reference to NTFP. Under the PESA the Grama Sabha has been given more powers. It provides that the Grama Sabha would be empowered to approve all development plans, control all functionaries and institutions of all social sectors. It will have control over all minor water bodies, minor minerals and non-timber forest resources. It would also have the authority to control the land alienation, impose prohibition, manage village markets and resolve internal conflicts through traditional modes.

In order to improve the living conditions of the scheduled tribes and to eliminate the exploitation by the private traders, the Government of Andhra Pradesh
has established Andhra Scheduled tribes Finance and Development Corporation limited. Further, during 1970 it was renamed as the Girijan Cooperative Corporation Ltd. At present GCC is functioning with a view to improve the tribal communities and more specifically the forest dependent communities whose main or subsidiary occupation is NTFP collection. The GCC main aim is to procure the Non-timber forest produce at remunerative prices and to supply the essential commodities needed by the tribal communities at reasonable prices. Further, GCC also provide short term credit to tribal communities through GPCMS. GCC activities are carried out through its affiliated Girijan primary cooperative marketing societies. At present 43 affiliated GPCMS, 839 domestic requirement sales depots, 1441 employees and three industrial units are working in spread over all Integrated Tribal Development Agencies areas of Andhra Pradesh.

Tribal cooperative marketing development federation of India limited was established in 1987 with a view to bring about the socio-economic development of tribals of the country through institutionalizing the trade of non-timber forest produce and surplus agriculture produce being collected by the forest dependent communities. TRIFED in the only body of the Government of India at the national level engaged in the marketing development of tribal products including tribal art and crafts items directly.

Chapter 5 broadly divided in to three parts covering part – I – socio-economic setting of the District, Part – II socio-economic profile of the sample villages and Part – III socio-economic profile of the sample NTFP collecting households

The analysis shows that majority of the sample respondent households are in the age group of 31 to 40. Which means the respondents belongs to either too young or too old. In other age groups the representation of the sample households is
negligible. The gender analysis reveals that of the total 250 respondents chosen for the study nearly 76 per cent of the sample respondents belongs to the male category and the rest to female category.

Though caste system is loosing its important, yet its presence is still felt in the study area. The social status of the sample respondents in the study area shows that the sample respondents have belonged to one of the four tribal communities, i.e. Gonds, Kolams, Lambadas, and Naikpods. Of which Gond Community represented 30.4 per cent of the total sample Households followed by Kolams Lambadies, and Naikpods representing with 27.6\% percentages respectively. Naikpods Non-tribals represented 14 per cent. As far as the marital status is concerned, Out of the 250 sample respondents, 92 per cent belongs to the married, category while the unmarried and widowed constituted 4 per cent each. It was said that in the tribal areas most of the communities prefer early marriages.

Level of education will certainly have positive influence in better understanding the technical and scientific methods of collection of NTFP in a more sustainable way. The sample respondents education status shows that 51.2 per cent of the total sample respondents belongs to the illiterate category, highest per cent of illiterates represented the Bellampalli division with 64.7 per cent and the lowest being the Adilabad division with 34.4 per cent. Can read only and write only categories respondents have constituted 20.12 per cent of the total sample. The respondents who have Intermediate Education and Degree qualification accounted just 2.4 and 0.4 per cent respectively.

Every individual has to earn income by choosing one or more occupations. It is believed that people who do not earn adequate income from primary occupation may resort to secondary or subsidiary occupation. A large percentage of the sample
respondents of the Nirmal division with 70 per cent followed by Adilabad Division with 62.3 per cent followed by Jannaram Division with 57.4 per cent and Bellampally division with 48.5 per cent have chosen agriculture as their principal occupation. There was only one sample respondent just 0.4 per cent just constituting have reported that he not only participate in NTFP collection and also work as casual worker seasonally in the forest department.

Majority of the sample Households belongs to nuclear family category. As far as in the adoption of the family welfare measures are not commensurate with the other categories of households. The land holding pattern of the sample respondents shows that nearly 38 per cent respondents possess land in between 2.1 to 4 acres. Division wise analysis further shows that 57.4 per cent in Adilabad division 25 percent in Bellampalli division belongs to this land holding category. While the land holders of 4 to 6 acres constituted 26.4 in the total. While 19.1 per cent of Bellampalli Division and 36.7 per cent of Nirmal Division have been represented in this category. It is found that in Nirmal division groundwater potential is very high because of more reservoirs and canals are located in this division. In fact only the sample households belonging to Nirmal Division have access to canal irrigation and as such in other divisions they do not have such sources. The distribution of sample households according to number of working adults analyzed that majority of the sample households have 2 to 3 working adults. It is clear that of the total 250 sample respondents households only 19.2 per cent have been received assign land from the government which is in different textures. Out of the total 48 assigned land beneficiaries 39 sample respondents have received less than 2 acres and only 9 respondents have received more than 2 acres. These lands have been in possession soon after the legislation made by the Andhra Pradesh Government.
Almost all the sample respondents have been possessing own houses. About 50 per cent of the total sample respondents were residing in semi-pucca houses. It is also found that during the course of study it was reported that majority of the tribal communities were sanctioned pucca houses under Indiramma Housing Scheme. Once the construction is completed 80 per cent of the sample households may have pucca houses, which may brought certain changes in due course of time. In the preceding analysis it is found that the forest dependent communities have been covered under different housing schemes like ITDA, IAY, Indiramma, and THDCO. It is observed that though the sample households have procured pucca houses on large scale they lack basic amenities such as safe drinking water, sanitation. Access to pucca roads, transportation and communication facilities have also not been encouraging. Moreover some of the sample respondents who have been sanctioned pucca houses still they have also been maintaining the tribal style houses which have no reach to the present sanctioned houses.

It well knows fact that the tribals reside in and around the forest area not only taken up agriculture, allied activities but also depends on the collection and marketing of NTFP. In this context the numbers of adult males, Females and children actually involved in the NTFP collection have been analyzed. As far as adult male involvement is concerned in the collection of NTFP out of 250 sample households 171 households constituting 68.41 per cent of the total sample respondent households have revealed that only one person from the each of their households have involved in the NTFP collection for a specified period. Cross section analysis shows that more percentage of adult male involved in NTFP collection among all the VSS households compared to the non VSS households. It is mainly attributed due to the initiation taken during the periodic VSS meetings.
The assessment of Adult female involvement in the collection of NTFP shows that of the total 250 sample household’s 68.8 per cent of the sample household reported the involvement of only one person from each household in the NTFP collection. The male and female adult participation clearly shows that on an average from each house at least one male and one female were said to be involved in the NTFP collections during the peak season. Nearly 24 per cent of the sample household reported the involvement of 2 adult female members from each household in the said activity. Further only 5 per cent households have reported that 3 female members on an average from each household have attended the NTFP collection. Less than 1 per cent households have reported 4 members from each of the households, only incase of 3 sample households none of the female involved in the collection of NTFP. As many as 30 per cent of the households have also involved their children in the collection of NTFP occasionally. All this clearly shows that either the male or female or other involved for certain days in the specific seasons in the NTFP collection.

In all 72 per cent of the sample respondents were aware of the functioning of the VSS in their area, such a percentage varying from 26.7 percent in Nirmal division to 55.9 per cent in Bellampalli division. The Remaining 47 sample respondents constituting 28 per cent were not aware of the functioning of VSS in their respective villages. Our analysis clearly shows that in all a higher percentage of the respondents were aware of the functioning of VSS. It is found that out of the 168 respondents from eight VSS villages 125 respondents could not find place in the VSS executive committee. Constituting 75 per cent of the sample and the only 43 sample respondents (25 per cent) have represented the VSS executive committee. Further, women have not been adequately represented the executive committee. Though women have been adequately participating in the forestry related works including the collection of
NTFP, they are unable to represent their view or suggestions for improving the VSS forest area. But for the VSS these respondents would not have attained such responsibilities at the village level.

Out of the 168 sample respondents 39 per cent of the total were aware that the main aim of the VSS is to manage the forest with the involvement of the local community. 26.8 per cent of the sample respondents were aware that the VSS aims is to protect the allotted forest area with the cooperation of the VSS members. Nearly one-third of the sample respondents have also expressed that the VSS aims at the improvement of the livelihoods for the local community. As a result the respondents who understood the philosophy of VSS have also been slowly injecting the same to the laggards (who are unaware). Sample respondents participation in VSS meetings indicates that of the total 168 sample respondents belonging to the VSS village only 17 per cent of the total sample respondents have been regularly attending the VSS meetings, which is a lacuna is the effective implementation of VSS activities.

As many as 38 percent of the sample responding were of the view that at present the forest is very thick which is due to the VSS activities, comparison among the forest divisions shows that the VSS villages nearly 54 per cent of the respondents have responded in a similar way. It is interesting to note that 16 percent of the total sample respondents of VSS villages have stated that due to the VSS existence there is a visible improvement in their forest area. Similar response has been stated by 27.5 per cent of the sample respondents of Nirmal division which is highest among all the study divisions and the lowest being with about 10 percent by the Jannaram division.

The VSS members have some idea about the possible actions against the forest crimes for improvement of the forest 126 sample respondents accounting 50.4 per cent of the total sample respondents were aware of the collection of fine (also
known as compound fee) from the forest offenders as per the rules in force. On the other hand still nearly 10 per cent of the sample responds in the study area were not having any knowledge about the forest crimes. Cooperation of the sample respondents with the VSS executive committee in terms of to preventing of the forest crimes 71 per cent of the total sample have positively responded and the rest have responded negatively responded. In the study area the forest dependent communities have also stated that certain development works relating to the NTFP species have been carried out. 31 percent of the samples Households in each of the Adilabad and Bellamplalli divisions were involved in pruning the bamboo with a view to increase its productivity. Moreover the soil and moisture conservation works (SMC works) undertaken in VSS areas have also led to the improvement of the NTFP species.

It is found that out of the total 250 sample respondents 83.6 per cent households have membership in the self help groups and the remaining sample respondents were not having membership in any SHG. The members of the SHGs during the FGD have also revealed that as a result of the SHG finance they could meet some of the immediate cash needs pertaining to education, health, and social functions.

Keeping in view the nature of NTFP commodities these have been categorized into two i.e. Perishable and non-Perishable NTFP items. The first group known as perishable items contains Custard apples, Usiri, Murripandlu, Jeedipandlu and Tunigapandlu and the second group known as non-perishable NTFP items contains Kendu leaves, Mahua flowers, Mahua seeds and gum. These are categorized as Non-perishable because they can be stored for a short while. It is clear that of all the four items stated Kendu leaves collection has been taken up by a maximum percentage
(nearly 84 per cent) of the sample farmers in the study area. On the other hand a least percentage (1.7 per cent) of the sample respondents have collected Gum.

Out of total sample respondents only 16 per cent of them were undergone the training pertaining to incense sticks making at the village level which is being facilitated by the Forest department officials of Adilabad district. Next to the forest department Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) authorities have also trained only 5 respondents (which constitute just 2 per cent of the total) on scientific Gum extraction. Of late the GCC or any other agency has not taken up similar trainings which deserve special attention.

It is pathetic to note that only 5 percent of the sample respondents have reported the value addition practices. In fact only in one VSS village fall under the Adilabad Division have undertaken value addition activity i.e. incense sticks making. Most of the sample respondents are desirous of undergoing such training programmes on value addition practices.

The forest dependent communities are depending on the NTFP collection which is seasonal in nature. It is in this context certain specific problems in collecting the NTFP items have been repeated by the sample respondents. It is clear that of the total 250 sample respondents 26 per cent of the sample respondents have expressed the long travel for NTFP collection is one of the important problem. It was said that the NTFP collectors have to travel varying distances ranging from 1 KM to 4 KMs to collect the NTFP. Some times they may even go to deep of the forests in search of the specific species. It is also been reported due to heavy dependency some times they have to get up early (around 3 to 4 AM) so as to reach the place of collection much before others reach may also leading to untold miseries. As many as 16.8 per cent of the sample respondents have stated multiple problems viz. fear of wild animals, long
travel, sunstroke. In addition to the said problems the fear of wild animals has been reported.

In spite the existence of institutional marketing, certain items are not purchased by GCC one-third of the NTFP collectors are availing the channel of private traders for the said items. During FGD it was stated by the sample households that they have to take the NTFP items to the private traders covering 2 to 3 KMs either to reach nearest shandies or to the location of private traders. It is clear that of the total 82 respondents availed the private traders for NTFP disposal 34 respondents have reported that they were being cheated by the private traders in the weightment, 22 respondents have also reported the under payment. As many as 15 respondents have stated that they have also experienced other problems in the disposal of NTFP. Of late the NTFP collection has becoming commercial activity for the NTFP Collectors. As a result less percentage is being consumed (incase of certain items) and sold the rest so as to earn the income needed for meeting their domestic and other expenses.

NTFP Collectors intended to dispose through GCC DR depots, may not travel much as they are mostly located in the study area in between 1-2 kms. As far as moving NTFP from the villages to the place of market reveals that next to head loads cycle was preferred, followed by bullock carts and a least percentage (5.2 per cent) of the respondents have availed bus transportation. However, even those who have availed this mode of transportation have revealed that as many as 68 per cent of the sample respondents spread over in 8 villages of the study areas have no bus facility from their village and as such they carry most of their NTFP items on head load up to be nearest road point (ranging 2-6 kms).
The storage facilities also plays very crucial role in preserving the perishable NTFP items so as to get remunerative price. However, 99 per cent of the sample respondents have reported that they have their own storage methods which are in different forms. During the course of present study it was observed that these are absolute and unscientific nature. Due to poor knowledge on this aspect the sample households have not given serious thought about this aspect.

As a result 15 per cent of the sample households have reported the storage losses due to rats and rodents. Certain other visible and invisible losses have also been revealed by the NTFP collectors. As a result there is no match between what is collected and what is actually disposed-off. These losses need to be minimized so as to increase the NTFP income share in the total income.

It is found that the GCC is the most preferred source of market information for the NTFP collectors. Next to the institutional sources of marketing information private trader is no less important as still NTFP collectors (5.2 percent of total) have also been depending on the private traders. Of late the sample NTFP respondents to the extent of 17.6 percent are seeking information from multiple sources i.e. from all the sources available.

There are several agencies available for the disposal of the NTFP items. It is in this context it is worth while to know the extent to which each of the source have been utilized by the sample households in the study area. It is clear that as far as Kendu leaves are concerned forest department alone procured from the NTFP collectors by paying them the prescribed price (both in VSS and non-VSS areas with 89 and 92 percent respectively). GCC is the major channel for mahua flower so also for mahua seed. Incase of Gum in VSS areas GCC is the lone source chosen for disposal while in non-VSS areas it is private traders. It is a known fact that GCC DR Depot have not
opened their outlets in certain areas. In case of perishable NTFP items like Murripandlu, Usiri, Custard apple, and Tunigapandlu are disposed either at village shandies or to the trader or to the consumer while Jeedipandlu mainly disposed-off through GCC.

From the analysis it is clear that in all majority of the sample collectors have been associating with the GCC for the past 5-10 years. On the other hand the respondents who have more years of association (above 10 years) are not encouraging. Overall analysis shows that the respondents belonging to the VSS category have utilized the GCC in a big way compared to the respondents of non-VSS areas.

For the benefit of the NTFP collectors the GCC in its D.R. Depots prominently displaying the item wise prices offered for different grades. The Sample respondents awareness levels on GCC procurement prices reveals that out of the 250 sample respondents, 45.6 per cent of non-timber forest produce were aware of the GCC offered prices for different NTFP items. While 54.4 per cent were not aware of same.

The GCC has been established with an avowed objective of protecting the interest of the forest dependent communities mainly in two ways. Primarily the GCC through its D.R Depots has to procure the NTFP items by paying the notified or procurement prices. It is clear that out of 250 sample respondents, 35.2 per cent of the sample respondents have satisfied with the overall functioning of the Girijan Cooperative Corporation, while 36.8 per cent have not been satisfied with the overall functioning of the GCC. However the Remaining 73 (29.2 percent) of the sample respondent have not availed GCC in the disposal of NTFP items through GCC DR Depots and as such they have not responded. Apart from the procurement of NTFP
items the D.R Depots also supply the needed essential commodities for the forest dependent communities through their outlets at fair prices. In order to understand the time gap between the collection and selling of NTFP items the collected data has been grouped into 5 categories. In all 47.6 percent of the sample respondents have disposed off their NFP items ranging between 6-10 days. This may be due to immediate cash needs and the fear of storage losses.

Since 72 percent of the sample respondents have been availing the GCC for the disposal of the NTFP, it is worth while to examine the specific reasons for choosing the GCC. It is clear that as many as 45 sample respondents have stated the prompt payment and correct weighment were the reasons for the sale of NTFP through GCC. 14 percent of the respondents have availed the loan being provided by the Girijan Primary Cooperative Marketing Societies (GPCMS) and as such they preferred GCC in disposal of the available NTFP. As many as 29 percent of the sample respondents have revealed that they have chosen the GCC for more than one reason.

Inspite of the existence of the institutional agencies like GCC still the traditional channels like village shandies are no less important for NTFP collectors. The important NTFP items sold at weekly shandies includes Jeedipandlu, Mahua flower, custard apple, Usiri and Muripandlu. Closer examination of the data shows that except in Nirmal forest division in others forest divisions in the study area the percentage of users of weekly shandies are lower ranging from 43.7 per cent (VSS villages in Bellampalli forest division) to 29.3 per cent (VSS villages in Jannaram division). Contrary to this in Nirmal division users of shandies (in both the VSS and non-VSS category villages) constituted 55 percent. This may mainly be attributed to non establishment of D.R Depots for the procurement of NTFP and sale of the essential commodities.
SUGGESTIONS

Adoption of scientific NTFP collection practices

Unscientific NTFP extraction or collection may lead to depletion of the valuable species and may even disappear in due course of time affecting the forest dependent communities. Over exploitation of NTFP species is also equally dangerous. In fact unscientific extraction may leads to lot of wastage and loss at the time of collection, and it may even adversely affect the life time of such species. Hence, the knowledge on identification of different NTFP species their characteristics and maturity time must be imparted. It is also suggested that the GCC, Forest department and other agencies should train the NTFP collectors on non-destructive or scientific extraction of NTFP for ensuring the sustainable growth o NTFP species.

NTFP Management practices

In order to sustain the NTFP collection in VSS areas there is a need to protect the existing species and new plantations should also be taken in a phased manner. Moreover the VSS should also have inventory of NTFP items like list of NTFP, their characteristics, period of collection, process of collection, primary level value addition, local other uses, domestic consumption storage practices. This information must also be made available for the adequate benefit of the NTFP collectors. If information is made available to the VSS members they may collect the NTFP on a sustained manner. In fact they come to know dos and don’ts in the process of NTFP collection. There should be a ban on felling of NTFP trees and also conserve them by adopting soil and moisture conservation measures.

Promotion of Value addition activities

Efforts should be made to under take certain value addition activities for the NTFP items available locally processed or semi-processed activities at the primary
level through Self Help Groups (SHGs), Village Organizations (VOs) and Mandala Mahila Samakhyas (MMSs) should develop the relevant rural technologies for value addition of NTFP items. This may help the NTFP collectors to gain much with limited cost.

**Improving the post harvesting practices**

Due to lack of proven post harvesting techniques of NTFP items its collectors have been facing the problems of deterioration in quantity and quality of NTFP. Hence, there is a need to build the capacities of the NTFP collectors on post harvesting techniques i.e. drying, cleaning. These measures may also help the NTFP collectors in obtaining higher returns.

**Creation of NTFP based Storage facilities**

Storage plays vital role in getting remunerative price. Almost all the sample respondents have been storing the collected NTFP by the forest dependent communities in their own traditional way. Establishment of adequate scientific storage facilities in the interior tribal areas may help the NTFP collectors to preserve the quality of NTFP items. This may also help the products at appropriate time.

**Improving connectivity to the tribal areas**

Providing adequate transportation facilities for the benefit of the NTFP collectors may improve their access to distant markets where there is adequate demand for the region specific NTFP items.

**Introduction of Grading Methods for NTFP**

Though NTFP is a nature’s gift still it yields admixture of varieties in the collection. If same is sold on as is where is basis it fetches lower price due to impurities and immature varieties. GCC or any marketing agencies are paying procurement prices based on the quality of NTFP items. In this context there is need
to creation of awareness on grading techniques. Other wise even if the quantity collected increases it may not lead to higher income.

**Access to up to date Market information**

At present the NTFP collectors do not have access to adequate, accurate and timely market information. Hence, institutional marketing agencies should create database market information and should provide to the forest dwellers in their understandable language or form through pamphlets, wall writings, electronic media, etc.

**Strengthening the Price fixation mechanism**

There is a need to strengthen the mechanism for fixing minimum support price for different NTFP items. In this context GCC should also fix the NTFP prices on a scientific basis. The NTFP collectors should also be involved in the price fixation process. If the actual collectors are involved the government/GCC may get necessary feedback and they are able to announce prices in a more realistic manner.

**Opening of more GCC DR Depots**

Our study result shows that certain areas lack the facility of DR Depots. Hence, opening of more GCC Daily Requirement Depots in the interior tribal areas, may go in a long way in protecting the NTFP collectors from the clutches of the private traders.

**Creating awareness about the PESA**

Though many sample village (consisting of six VSS and three non-VSS villages) came under fifth Scheduled areas, it is quite disappointing to note that the awareness about the different provisions of PESA among the sample households is quite low. In fact during the FGD and informal interviews with the elected representatives also shows that the awareness among these people is in no way better.
Hence, the Tribal welfare and Panchayat Raj departments should create awareness among the general public and the elected representatives on a war footing. Otherwise for the effective implementation of the Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas (PESA) 1996 Act, may not carry any significance.

**Supply of adequate credit through GPCMS**

Still the NTFP collectors are indebted to the private traders leading to disposal of their NTFP to them or through them. As a result these people heavily loosing by paying exorbitant rate of interest on one hand and he is also deprived of the remunerative/prevailing price leading to considerable loss. To tide over the crisis there is a need to supply adequate credit through GPCMS. Moreover the NTFP collectors should augment their income sources, which may also prevent seeking oftenly the financial support from the private traders.

**Regulation of NTFP trade**

As the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection (DMI) has already recognized the potential of NTFP trade it is high time to centralize the trade of important NTFP items being collected by the forest dependent communities. As a result it creates, competition among other institutional agencies intervening the NTFP marketing. As a result NTFP collectors may avail reasonable returns.

**Periodic Seminars/Surveys**

Our study results shows that the background of the NTFP collectors the potential of the NTFP, period of the availability of NTFP differs from place to place. Hence, periodic surveys/seminars alone may through light on the region specific practical issues relating to the NTFP collection and its marketing. As a result the authorities may take needed steps for the betterment of the forest dwellers.
Market Extension

In order to encourage the NTFP collectors to market NTFP at right place and at the right time strengthening of market extension needs special attention. As the NTFP collectors are mostly illiterates and tradition bound appropriate extension methods needs to be evolved.

Supply of Agriculture inputs through GCC

As the GCC is not only purchasing the NTFP but also supplying the essential commodities at their outlets. It is also equally important to supply the agricultural inputs at subsidized prices. This is necessary because certain NTFP collectors do possess small piece of land and are cultivating the crops.