

From Leaf to Livelihood

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Abstract

Tendu patta collection is one of the important MFP based activity to support livelihood of tribal community. Southern parts of Rajasthan are an area where tribal community faces problem of exploitation in tendu patta and other MFP collection. During nineties ASTHA helped community to initiate Tendu Patta Movement against this exploitation and reap more benefit out of this trade. This case present a record of movement have traveled long distance of community strength, success, challenges, shifts, learning, new strategies, systems, policies etc. Later community also developed a associated called Samarthak Samiti, which helps community in getting control over the trade of MFP in the area.

Introduction

In our country, forest areas are inhabited mostly by tribal population and traditionally they receive livelihood support from forests in the form of food, fodder, fuel and cash. The cash part is generated through collection and sale of firewood and raw materials for various industries including the rapidly expanding ayurvedic and herbal sector. In these forest covered areas privately owned resources such as land and livestock are limited; therefore minor forest produces (MFPs)² play a critical role in the livelihood of poor families. Leaves of tendu(Diosporous melanoxylon) or tendu patta as it is popularly known is a major non timber forest produce of the dry deciduous forests of central India and is a source of income and livelihood for millions of tribal families in the states of Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. In Rajasthan both forest areas and tribal population is concentrated in the southern and southeastern parts of the state which include the districts of Udaipur, Banswara, Chittaurgarh, Dungarpur, Rajsamand, Sirohi, Jhalawar, Bara and parts of Kota district. The livelihood portfolio of people of this region is of subsistence type and presents good example of diversified profile. The key occupations are agriculture, livestock rearing, wage labour, collection of tendu patta and other minor forest produces (MFPs), extraction

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² Minor Forest Produce

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and sale of honey etc. MFPs and rearing of small animals like goat and chicken are sources of cash in family livelihood basket. Almost 15-20% of the rural households depend on MFPs as a critical support to their livelihood. But difficult living conditions and limited interaction with outside world has made them lacking in confidence to handle issues like exploitation pertaining to their livelihood.

It was 1986 when Astha started working as a voluntary agency, addressing the issues of "Tribal Wellbeing". Astha believed that the issue of poverty could not be addressed unless community is organized and enabled to exercise rights over their local resources. Thus it started working on "**Empowerment of community by organizing them into various groups**" (Self Help Groups, Kotra Adiwasi Manch, Vagad Majdoor Kishan Manch, etc.) as a step to help them to bring sustainability to their livelihood. In early nineties one of the initiatives of Astha was "**Tendu Patta Movement**", which later gave way to broader livelihood promotion efforts involving organised collection and marketing of MFPs. The fifteen years of movement and subsequent interventions have impacted the livelihoods of approximately 40000 families in around 800 villages of south Rajasthan. This approach of livelihood promotion through effective community mobilization and organisation has its own dimensions and dilemma and offers learning for livelihood practitioners and development professionals as well. The study is an attempt to bring out the approaches, processes, outcomes as well as learning from Astha's intervention in the forest based livelihood sub sector.

The Methodology

Astha believes in rights based and community empowerment approach as a sustainable and reliable support to livelihood of poor tribal community. This study aims to understand the approach, process and impact of one of its initiatives the "Tendu Patta Movement -TPM". It is also targeted to understand how a single point movement was scaled up both spatially and thematically to address the issues of poverty and livelihood. The study is carried out with the following objectives:

- ¹ To bring out various dimensions of "Tendu patta Movement" in south Rajasthan
- ¹ To understand its process and impacts on livelihood of poor tribal community.
- ¹ To understand how focus shifted from TPM to MFP

Time to time Astha and Samarthak Samiti has documented the process of TPM and its impact on tribals of the area. All those documents were consulted to understand the

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changed livelihood scenario. The insight in the study is derived from the views of different stakeholders, Samarthak Samiti, Ashra members, representatives of cooperatives and *tendu patta* collectors and their informal and formal groups, members of SHGs and cooperative societies. The study involved discussions at different forums. Systematic efforts have been made to understand the factor, demand, industry and institutional conditions so as to enable livelihood practitioners to understand the intervention in a livelihood promotion perspective.

The Area and the Livelihood portfolio

The tribal region of southern Rajasthan includes the districts of Udaipur, Rajsamand, Dungarpur, Banswara, Sirohi, Chittaurgarh, Bara, Jhalawar and parts of Kota. The climatic conditions are semi arid type with mean average annual rainfall ranges from 55 cm to 110 cm, the extent of forest cover is 22 % with dhokra, salar, aonia, tendu, ker and palash as predominant species.

In remote rural villages the main occupation for most of the poor families is agriculture which is limited to hill slopes and smaller holdings. Some families are involved in animal husbandry rearing low productive cattle and small ruminants. Collection and sale of MFP is also a prominent supporter to many a families. Besides *tendu patta*, the most common MFPs in the area are mahua flowers, dolma, amla, custard apple, ber, ratanjot and puwar. The season for these produces are so spread that people get one or two products per month over a period of six months beginning December. The land use pattern for the above mentioned nine tribal districts reveals that 22% of the total area is under the forests. These percentages are very high in case of the tribal sub districts.

The then existing Situation of Tendu Patta Collection in Southern Rajasthan before Intervention

Tendu patta is largely found in the states of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Maharashtra In Rajasthan the only area known for *tendu patta* is southern and southeastern parts of the state. The demand for *Tendu Patta* in Bidi industry is highly fluctuating and southern Rajasthan do not have any Bidi making unit. There are a few contractors and bidi manufacturing groups based at Tonk and Aimer, who supply leaves to Indore and Sagar regions of Madhya Pradesh. The shifts in state policy in association with RAJAS Sangh with monopoly rights for trading, unit reservation etc positive and negatively influenced the overall trade.

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Tendu patta season corresponds to April-May, when most of the tribal families do not have sufficient work in their own agriculture works. This is a short duration (25-30 days) livelihood opportunity but is very important for most of the families. Firstly, due to its timing i.e. May, when most of the people do not get other work opportunities and secondly this offers good opportunity for working while at home as a family affair providing cash which helps them in extreme summer and preparation for monsoon crop.

The *tendu patta* trade is mainly controlled by state forest department who decides wage rate for labour and also royalty payable to the Govt. Forest areas are divided into units and auctioned. The person/entity quoting the highest bid gets the monopoly right to procure *tendu patta* from the specified unit. It involves huge investment and experience thus people who participate in bids are normally non-tribal and outsiders. The minimum rate for collection is decided by a committee, but the committee lacks representative character and the voices of tribals have no place in it. In such conditions rates decided by committee are very low and they do not have proper correlation with minimum wages. Contractor visits to area during seasons and try to buy leaves at the lowest possible rates and go back by making a good sum as profit for labour they put into this.

To reach to remote regions contractors establish local centers called *phad*⁶ for collection in different forest blocks. The areas lack in road connectivity; hence people have to walk 5 to 6 km to reach the nearest *phad*. Mostly women and children are engaged in collection. Fresh green leaves are plucked from *tendu* bushes and dried and bundled. Collectors' access is limited to contractor's local agents only as they do not have any linkages with "Bidi factories".

The rates per bundle of leaves were very low i.e. Rs.7 per hundred bundle of fifty leaves (5000 leaves). Most of the people were involved in collection work as at this time they do not have any other work opportunities and more over this work is available at within a range of five to six kilometer distance saving them of daily commutation and cost of transport. The forest has sufficient production potential so as to provide those hard cash. Contractors were involved in exploitation of collectors by collecting 25 % extra leaves saying that the quality of leaves is not right. The work does not require much technical skills, favoring its suitability for most of the tribal families and also school holidays, this also acted as an opportunity to work jointly.

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Though Govt. promoted cooperative institutions RAJAS Sangh, TRIFED and LAMPS existed but their role was not tribal friendly in true sense. NGOs working in the area did not have *tendu patta*/MFP based livelihood on their plate. The Tendu Patta collector community was only a mechanical component in the whole trade with the institutional conditions not favourable to them.

The Need

The demand conditions for Tendu leaves have always varied from year to year and season to season. For whole community it was always arrival of contractors' person, which will inform them on start and end date of collection, rates and other conditions. People were not aware of further linkages. Tendu Patta demand in South Rajasthan, which was expected to improve further. In this region availability of Tendu trees is reducing due to lack of protection and improper timings of harvest.

The state government has tried to institutionalize MFP business by constituting RAJAS Sangh, who is entrusted with functions of collection, transport and trading in tribal regions, but Tendu Patta is under jurisdiction of Forest Department. Forest department divides area into units and invite tenders for Tendu leaves collection, based on royalty for per beg. These contractors are then authorized to purchase leaves. There was a system for deciding upon wage rate for per hundred bundle of 50 leaves (total 5000 leaves), but it was more or less in the hands of contractors and few government officials. Even though three parties were involved in whole trade - The collectors (Tribal families; the traders (Contractors); and Controllers (Forest Department), but the business was controlled mainly by the farmer two parties and collectors (poor tribal families) were merely involved as labourers at lowest possible wage rates. In this system decisions are taken by forest department, while trading and payments are by contractors, quality and quantity was dependant on climatic conditions.

The tribal community developed a strategically submissive position to the conditions prevailing in the area. The lack of institutional set-up and proper transportation, exposure and credit asked them to adjust to prevailing conditions. People followed strategy of "What ever is available are nothing but our luck and "Nahi Mama Se kana mama achchha hai", they could never think beyond this and continued to get exploited by department and contactors both. The prevailing situation demanded corrective action and people were just waiting for right time and igniting trigger.

The reflections indicate that Astha's decision to work for the empowerment and benefit

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of tendu patta collectors was a choice based on the prevailing factor and demand conditions to support institutional conditions. This also had overlay with vision, mission and available expertise of ASTHA, involvement in wider movement of "Jai, Jangal and Jameen Andolan. It was intended to reduce the vulnerability of the target population thereby enhancing their livelihood security.

ASTHA- the Organization

Astha is a group of development thinkers and facilitators, which started its initiatives in the year 1986 with a mission to help people to organize, expand their capacities, and equip themselves for the struggle they must initiate to overcome the various deprivations under which they live. It believes that poor and deprived people have the ability to work together and take remedial action to change the conditions that affect their lives. But their powers are often not realized due to lack of organization understanding awareness. It is collective analysis, group planning, issue based action which can help community to move from a position of deprivation, powerlessness, poverty towards a society marked by justice, equity, democratic participation, peace and love. Astha works with following approaches.

- 1 Organizational Approach: Helping community in getting organized into community and issue oriented groups
- 1 Educational Approach: Providing training organizing awareness raising camps, facilitating reflection on action, learning from experience and respect for people's knowledge
- 1 Developmental Approach: Initiating processes, forging linkages, setting in motion problem solving actions
- 1 Bottom-up Approach: Working for empowerment of hundreds and thousands of men and women in the villages, towns and cities

Over the years Astha has earned lots of goodwill through its work for tribals and other marginalized communities. Its commitment is reflected in its enduring engagement with the local people and the support it provides in terms of cash, kind, professional expertise and technical skills. It has also developed a reputation with banks and other financial institutions for generating revolving fund. Astha is known for its capacities in organizing community and help them in finding solutions to their common problems, and raising their livelihood. It interacts with them regularly on livelihood, existing problems and potential solutions. In such discussions the issues of problems associated with, for people involved in collection of Tendu patta, and their impact on livelihood came again

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and again. Astha has worked to develop a forum of tribal representatives as "Kotra Advasi Manch", which later led to initiation of a movement. Astha also acquired support for implementing actions required to strengthen people's strategies for improving their resource base and in turn their livelihood sustainability.

Samarthak Samiti - The Association

Samarthak Samiti(SS) is an association of primary co-operatives mandated to create a conducive environment for promotion of livelihoods based on MFP for tribal community in southern and southeastern Rajasthan. Since its start in the year 1994 Astha has provided guidance to SS so as to make them capable to tackle the issues pertaining to forest and forest based livelihood of poor tribal families in the area. Samarthak is governed by its members whose stake is with forest and forest produce. SS also network with other agencies operational in this region with other specific issues for wellbeing of tribal community.

The Intervention

In the initial years Astha was exploring the situation in which tribal community of this resource rich, but remote and under developed area lived. While understanding their livelihood basket and complexities involved, Astha realized the need for people's movements such as Jal, Jangal and Jamin Andolan, tendu patta Sangharsh, etc.

Informal analysis of the whole situation and considering expertise available Astha and **Adiwasi Vikas Manch** set objectives of intervening for **improvement in financial returns form the part of livelihood**. The intervention was on most critical point of "Organizing people involved in Tendu Patta Collection business and to prove their stake in whole trade. All fifteen years of Astha support to community have seen variations in nature of initiatives from time to time for improvement in different external conditions. As a result of factors supporting at internal context both intervening agency and people of the area, Astha Planned the intervention with specific objective, nature and Design

Objective of the intervention was
To empower poor tribal in the area and help them to move towards controlling the income remunerations for higher remuneration for poverty alleviation

Nature of Intervention: It focused on issue of enhancing control and share of trade to deprived community by fighting to establish a system to have proper distribution of share. The intervention focused on issue of economic uplift of resource poor tribal, social up-liftment of deprived sections, organizing cooperatives institutions of indigenous

Design of Activity: The activities have evolved with time initially it was " Sangharsh Samiti" to get them higher wages later moved to develop set of institutions "Tendu Patta Cooperative", but it was realized that for a short duration livelihood (one month) would not benefit much in terms of poverty reduction later interventions moved to " Minor forest produce collection

On the basis of community capabilities, situation existed and livelihood arena which existed and changed from time to time in chronological journey for last fifteen years are given below as **Road Map of Interventions and self generated reactions.**

Year	Actions & Reactions
1988	Formation of Village level groups on diverse concerns of people
1989	Tendu Patta Issue of lower wage (Rs. 7/hundred bundles) as against minimum wages Rs. 14/ eight hours comes out into discussions
	Need for struggle with contractors and government is spelt-out
1990	Tendu Patta Samanvayan Samiti is formed, Block level committee for struggle formed. Meetings with government officials, secretaries, ministers undertook
	Rallies were organised and 17 days long strike was held Government raised Rates to Rs. 10/100 bundles but settled with contractors at Rs.13.5/ hundred bundles (Rs. 13 lakhs was earned for 2000 families in fifteen days)

It was realized that million of rupees are concerned by contractors and they receives only fractions of it	
1991	Struggle extended to Chittaurgarh, Dungarpur and Banswara
	Rate increased to Rs. 26/100 bundles as against government rate of Rs.20/- 100 bundles
	Co-operative formed at Kotra which took two units through tender, Loans of Rs. 14,50,000 from RAJAS Sangh at 6% interest
	Cooperative earned a profit of Rs.6.5 lakhs
1992	Two more cooperatives formed at Chittorgarh and Banswara
	Rs.30/31 paid for per 100 bundles while govt rate was Rs. 22/100 bundles
1993	6 units were reserved for cooperative societies by forests department. RAJAS Sangh gave loan on 13 % interest and profit sharing at the rates of 35:65
	Loss due to centralized policy of RAJAS Sangh; Slump in the market
1994	Constituted a study in association with forest department covering Udaipur, Dungarpur, Banswara and Chittaurgarh district. The purpose of the study was to establish work involved and wages. It was concluded that it required 19 hours to collect 100 bundles of 50 each (5000 leaves) thus at the minimum wage Rs. 22/8 hours ⁴ the
	Cooperative at Pratapgah also formed
1994	7 units are set aside for RAJAS Sangh for Primary societies Rate of interest raised by RAJAS to 13 - 15 %
	Profit to Kotra (Rs 5 Lakhs) but loss to Pratapgah & Banswara cooperatives
	Two more cooperatives (Sirohi and Jhalawar) formed
	Fake cooperatives came into existence at Pratapgah
1994	Working capital was arranged through other cooperatives/GSSS/ advance sale etc.
	RAJAS Sangh refused to sign agreement with cooperatives
	Challenged in High Court and cooperatives won

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1995	Deceit and punitive action by RAJAS Sangh (Records & Accounts seizer by MD of Sangh)
	Great loss to RAJAS (Lack of experience, inefficiencies of employees, mismanagement and corruption)
1996	RAJAS Sangh did collection of Tendu leaves on its own
	RAJAS was barred by Government from Tendu Patta business
1998-2000	Cooperatives decided not to deal with RAJAS Sangh and look for wider based livelihood opportunity. 22 lakhs loan was taken from Bank with 25% margin money
	Decided to form coordination society (Samarthak Samiti) and Broad Based Objective from Tendu Patta to Forest Produce
2001-02	Government disallowed unit reservation to primary cooperatives
	High royalty by Government (25%> from previous year)
2002-03	Contractors lobbied for tenders
	Poor leaf yield due to prevailing drought conditions
2004-05	Formation of SHGs incorporated
	SS and Cooperatives started looking options in other strategies
2001-02	Started Project on promotions of MFP through women SHGs
	Started lobbying with contractors -- No tender for two years
2004-05	Activities started for enhancement of MFP based livelihood; Collection of MFP; Value additions and packing; Marketing; Promoting higher production through increasing plant density in forest and other wastelands; and Creating a network of stakeholders in MFP sectors

Policy Advocacy

In the whole program Astha used liaison with government and other department as advocacy tool. It could mobilize the then good office of Forest Department to reserve of Tendu Units for tribal cooperatives created, which was a real good achievement. Secondly it could mobilize RAJAS sangh to partner in business with loan terms in initial years, but due to lack of long term contract with sustainable terms, the relationship could not continued longer resulting into breach of relationship. Similarly Astha could

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also mobilise local forest departments for reserving Tendu patta units during the year 1991 to 1996; it has not tried to bring a legal binding for that to benefit tribal and cooperatives. Later Forest department also discontinued the process of reserving units for primary cooperatives. Now Samarthak Samiti has undertaken document review to bring out provisions of various rules to benefit community on the front of MFP and Tendu Patta. Samarthak Samiti has also initiated a working group to guide them in policy advocacy for MFP trading by cooperatives.

Credit Availability

It was in the year 1991 Kotra Cooperative came into existence and Astha helped them get loan from RAJAS Sangh @ 6% interest rate. They could earn a profit of 6.5 lakhs, which was indigestible for RAJAS officials, so in 1992 they raised the interest to @13% and a profit share of 35:65. This was not less than exploitation of contractors. Next year they raised the interest to 15% per year. Moreover due to of centralized systems and ill interest of some of the RAJAS officials the relationship faced problems resulting into financial crunch to cooperatives. In the year 1997 Samarthak Samiti could mobilize a good sum of 20 lakhs as loan from Hagwart Foundation and 18 lakhs as grant from IGSSS. Later in the year 1998 Swiss Aid came forward to support a loan amount of Rs.15 lakhs for the purpose of revolving fund. In the year 2000 SIDBI supported a loan of Rs. 20 Lakhs, to two cooperatives. Union Bank also came forwarded and supported these efforts but with 24% interest.

All these credit efforts were of temporary nature, depending on annual loans and highly clumsy sanction process, thus affecting the whole thinking of enhanced control of community over livelihood processes and interventions. Later when SS moved the focus to wider canvas of MFPS through SHG approach, it made a provision of revolving funds and also building skill of the SHGs: This initiative is supported by UNDP under a project on Social mobilisation. In all 25 SHGs are provided an initial revolving fund of Rs. 4,00,000 which will be further grown with income generated with the help of this fund.

The Institution Building

In order to create proper factor, institutional, and industrial conditions for supporting livelihood based on MFP, the initiatives undertaken by Astha, changed from time to time as seen above. The first and fore most institution in the case started with "Tendu Patta Sangharsh Samiti to move to the level of Cooperative and federation at sub district level. Following are the institutional set-up developed through interventions.

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- o The whole programme was initially fuelled by village level groups and "Sangharsh Samitee (coordination committee) organized during 1990-91. This Movement of Kotra became an eye opener to communities in the other regions and next year people and agencies from Banswara, Chittaurgarh, Pratapgarh also joined in the movement and a network of organization and people has been formed and this network is now advancing further for the rights of the people on minor forest produce.
- o During the movement in different regions community organized into "Tendu Patta Cooperatives" which now also act as MFP collective Cooperatives in sub-districts of Jhalawar; Pratapgarh; Ghatol; Kotra; Jhadol; Pindwara; Aburoad; Durgarpur; Salumber etc.
- o In the year 1994 Astha facilitated formation of a society represented by members from all the cooperatives and handed over the responsibility of guiding and take forward the initiatives to it the Samarthak Samiti.
- o 50 SHGs are developed/ Strengthened in 40 villages benefiting 700 families of tribal community. These groups are further federated as clusters in different sub-districts. In all a frame work for institutional set-up is already developed in the area

Creating Resource Base

It was the year 1996 onward when area experienced severe drought condition resulting into loss to forest area both temporary and permanent nature in the form of low production and also large scale tree cutting. Wider discussions with community brought out the need for taking up propagation of MFP cultivation in private and forest area. Since 2003 onwards it has started collection of seed and propagation of MFP through various approach of vegetative dissemination.

It has also initiated cultivation of various medicinal and herbal plants (ratanjot, musali, katkarani, shilkakai, Custard apple etc with community in three sub districts of Udaipur district in 25 SHGs. These SHGs are having a revolving fund of Rs. 4 Lakhs and is being used to prevent distress sale and collective procurement and marketing.

Market Support

During tendu patta collection time the main function was to get proper rate for poor families involved in collection work. During the movement period it was felt that it is very difficult to convince contractors and government officials on regular basis therefore we

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may have to empower local community in getting organized in smaller groups and take charge of collection and trading of Bidl leaves. During the project period SS helped cooperatives in management of collected leaves, by reserved units. SS supported in purchase of begs; transportation support; keeping accounts of trades and also sell of leaves to big business houses at Indore; Sagar etc.

Diversification to other MFPS: Considering various risks involved in working with single commodity based interventions, SS undertook studies on availability of various minor forest produce in the area, and started capacity building and skill development through training, workshops, seminars and exposure visits to other regions in MFP business. It has also started sharing of information on various MFPS, market survey and linkage building exercise for different products such as honey, ratanjot, and custard apple.

It was in the year 1998 onward when Samarthak Samiti, realized need for diversification for community livelihood and thus focus also included aspects of other minor forest produces. In order to improve demand conditions for some of the items Samarthak Samitee started developing pamphlets and charts usages and applications of different products. It also organises exhibitions and presentations on the MFP so as to increase demand conditions in the area. A good demand is being created for products like honey, palash petals, sirka, seeds and other products. The district administration has also started giving retail space to some of the cooperatives to display and sell their products like sirka and honey to Udaipur town. Through such activity Kotra Cooperative has earned around 2 lakhs rupees. Community members are provided training, knowledge, awareness and insight about many of the MFPS and technologies for their cultivations and enhancement for the betterment of the community members.

The Impact

The initiatives and sustained efforts by the organisation in promoting empowerment and welfare of tribal families have impacted the lives and livelihoods in multiple dimensions. Some of them are detailed below.

- 1 Initially community in Kotra came together on the issue and declared "Patta Band Hartal" in all 20000 people, 400 villages, 80 collection centers, 11 units were closed for seventeen days. The rise in wage rate for TP collection have helped a large number of families in 15 sub districts of southern Rajasthan, by increased income to poor families.

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- 1 This whole process has helped them to create an organized structure which can safeguard their interests.
- 1 The rates of Tendu Patta collections have almost stagnated for a decade now.
- 1 The historic struggle waged by tribal community in the year 1991 resulted in rapid increase of wages in the early nineties from Rs. 7 to Rs. 13.50 (almost double) and kept on increasing up to Rs. 31 in 1994 narrowing down the gap between minimum wage and rate of Tendu leaves. It was stagnate for five years then rise to 32 only and again stagnates up till 2001 when it became Rs. 33 while presently it is Rs. 35/-which is almost half of the minimum wage rate. (though automatic updating of rates is not regularized yet)
- 1 A network of people and community leaders is ready in the form of cooperatives and SHGs, which has given confidence among the community members. People now feel confident of fighting against any of the exploitation. The existence of Tendu patta cooperative; SS around and awareness level of community members have drastically cut the exploitation of the forest dwellers by private contractors on various counts.
- 1 Stagnation in rates and decline in TP trade have prompted tribals to move towards other MFPS in the area with SHG approach.
- 1 The large scale dependency of Cooperatives on annual loan and inability to invest due to ad-hoc decisions of various institutions have shown way to SS so as to create revolving fund and capacity building for SHGs involved in MFPS.
- 1 Tribal Community specially women involved in collection of forest produces are successfully organized in SHGs

The Concluding Remarks

The case of "Tendu Patta Movement" to Minor Forest Produce based livelihood provides us space to think that livelihood promotion is a complex issue, which demands a systematic study of society, sector and environment. It is not merely providing one time income generating activity; rather it is a path and vision. The interventions in the program started with the theme "organize community and develop institutions" We also get record of steps followed by Astha, the issues and problems they have undergone in supporting livelihood of poor tribals. This document also indicates the political, institutional and economical hurdles that may arise in promoting livelihood. An analysis of whole process shows how internal and external factors create barriers in livelihood of tribal community. These could either be Govt. policies, laws, rules, regulations and ineffective institutions mechanisms, or the lack of collective will and capacity to take charge of resources.

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The whole movement has seen fluctuations in energy levels from time to time, wherein role played by tribal leadership and collective action in decisions could affect short term actions mainly. Control and decision making in Tendu Patta trade makes all the difference to an important livelihood activity of tribals. Trade is with forest department under the tender system, which does not assure the concept of minimum wages as the two are different thoughts. Hence a change in the revenue centric approach to tendu patta management is the need of the hour. SS would have to explore possibilities of establishing a system of automatic linkages between minimum wages and per bundle rate of tendu patta and also other minor forest produces.

This case also shows that livelihood promotion is not merely initiating new activities, developing new resources; and or extending credits only but it also includes organizing community; advocating for appropriate policy change; creating institutional mechanism for a stakeholder based management; generating opportunities for value addition; federating for better bargaining power and creating a knowledge base. It manifests integration of many activities which continuously and complementarily strengthen the livelihood of poor families.

Annexure - I

Table 1 Comparative Situation of Wages during different period of times.

Year	Minimum wage	Government rate	Community Demand	Actual payments
1989	25.00	7.00		7.00
1990	25.00	10.00	15.00	13.50
1991	33.00	20.00	30.00	26.00
1992	50.00	22.00	35.00	30.00
1993	50.00	22.00	36.00	30.00
1994	50.00	22.00	36.00	31.00
1995	60.00	22.00	36.00	31.00
1996	60.00	25.00	36.00	31.00
1997-98	60.00	28.00	36.00	31.00
1999-2000	60.00	30.00	36.00	31.00
2001-02	60.00	32.00	36.00	32.00
2003-04	60.00	32.00	36.00	33.00
2005	73.00	32.00	36.00	35.00

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Table 2 Economic benefits for four Cooperatives in the area

Year	Kotra	Pratapgarh	Jhalawar	Abu Road
1991-1992	7.00			
1992-1993	1.40	-3.40		
1993-1994	-26.00	-76.90		
1994-1995			2.04	
1995-1996	5.50			
1996-1997	0.50		-7.43	
1997-1998	1.50	-2.50		
1998-1999	9.35		0.51	5.66
1999&2000	6.30		0.29	4.62
2000&2001	-2.86	2.71	0.46	0.69
2001&02			3.50	0.35
2002&03	4.41		2.00	4.00
2003&04	-4.00		-2.00	-5.00
2004&05				

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