

Voices from the forest



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LESSONS FROM INDIA

tapping into gums & resins

By SNEHLATA NATH

The collection of gums and resins is common in various parts of India. Done mostly for commercial trade, India is now the third largest exporter of gums and resins in the world. However, some methods adopted for extraction are unsustainable, causing significant damage to the tree. There is also little information about quality parameters, markets and trade and harvesting methods.

With the aim of bringing together and sharing information amongst a diverse range of people working with gums and resins, two workshops were organized in different parts of the country, covering varying ecozones. The meetings were organised through the members of the Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme.

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KILLING THE KING OF SPICES

A day's harvest of *Sterculia* gum for an experienced resin tapper in the vicinity of Karjat, Maharashtra



S. NATH

{CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE}

The Keystone Foundation in Nilambur, Kerala organized the first meeting. Tackled were resins and gums from *Canarium strictum*, *Boswellia serratus*, *Kingiodendron pinnatum* and *Vateria indica*. This primarily focused on the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala which have evergreen/semi-evergreen forest areas.

The second meeting, held in Karjat, was organized by the Academy of Development Science (ADS). This covered gums and resins from *Sterculia urens*, *Shorea robusta*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, *Pterocarpus marsupium* and other minor gums. This primarily focused on the states of Maharashtra, Andhra

Pradesh, Orissa and Chattisgarh which have dry/moist deciduous forest types.

Adivasi people who collect these gums and resins were the primary participants of these meetings.

Others were researchers, co-operative societies, trading

organisations and NGOs working in this field.

Two technical resource persons also attended the meetings. One was Mr. Luu Hong Truong, an ecologist at the SIERES Research Institute in Saigon, Vietnam. He is currently finalizing his PhD thesis on dipterocarps, especially those harvested for resins. Another was Mr. Jenne de Beer, an anthropologist with over 20 years of experience in working on NTFPs in South and Southeast Asia. He is presently Field Coordinator of the NTFP-Exchange Programme.

The main objectives of the meetings were to:

- ▶ Exchange information amongst primary collectors and other roleplayers;
- ▶ Discuss possibilities to improve harvesting, quality and market links;
- ▶ Initiate discussion and dialogue; and
- ▶ Form an informal forum for continued exchange on this NTFP.

at Nilambur..

As *Canarium strictum* or Black Dammer is collected using destructive methods, discussions focused on sustainable harvesting. Quality and pricing parameters also play an important role in determining harvests.

The representative of the co-operative society explained market trends and the system of sale/auction. Researchers deliberated lengthily on the type of cuts to be made for resin extraction, their spacing, depths and shapes. Live demonstration of sustainable harvesting was done by the adivasis from the different zones of the Western Ghats. Truong played an active role in the discussions and shared his work on dipterocarps from Vietnam and the 14 km long trek to see a Dammer Tree was indeed interesting!

at Karjat...

Close to Pune, Karjat is located almost where the Western Ghats start. The meeting was held in the medicinal garden of ADS and started out by listing out trees yielding gums and resins and their local names in different languages represented.

Truong gave an overview of the status of gums in India and its trade in the world market. The most important gum is *Sterculia urens* which is exported

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S. NATH

Ecologist Mr. Truong shares his own experiences with gums and resins in Vietnam to Indian participants

Welcome to your new Voices! As you have welcomed new people and partners into the fold that is the NTFP-EP, we also hope that you welcome the exciting changes and challenges that the coming years have in store for us. Soon, the website www.ntfp.org will also sport a new look, as we aim to bring information to you in new ways and in more accessible forms.

Filling the information gap for communities and their support groups – in order for them to make informed decisions in managing various NTFPs – has been a cornerstone of the NTFP-EP's efforts. In our cover story, Snehlata Nath of Keystone recounts their education and advocacy efforts in relation to gums and resins in face of the growing demand for resins in the world market. In the Philippines, meanwhile, government's massive campaign pushing oil palm as the new wonder crop has raised the alarm on its impacts on communities. AFRIM shares their advocacy efforts so that the Philippines does not blithely go down the road of Malaysia.

The successes of other's endeavors provide inspiration on how to better manage our NTFPs. In Ketapang town in Indonesia, Jenne de Beer stumbles upon "swiftlet hotels." Hotels have literally becoming the new homes of these birds. The culprit is the unsustainable harvesting of birds' nests from caves in the nearby forests. Ironically, the local Dayak now want to lure the birds back from town!

In the Exchange News, it is heartening to look back on the past year and see that much has indeed been done in the field ranging from sustainable management to policy advocacy and even marketing. Everyone deserves a pat on the back!

Cinnamon is known as a money plant in India. Pandurang Hegde wonders why government, supposedly intent on conserving forests is in the forefront of maximising revenues from auctions of cinnamon leaves. Fortunately, Appiko-Chipko's campaigns have made inroads in national policies towards protecting the "King of Spices."

Lastly, the most recent NTFP regional meeting was given a warm reception in Vietnam, where the meeting was held. With the national eye trained on harnessing the potentials of its rattan and bamboo, stakeholders have come on board to better understand how to manage this resource. And that is what it is all about - working together towards a common goal.

- Aloisa Zamora-Santos

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in large quantities from India. Commonly known as Gum Karaya, its main use is in the food and pharmaceutical industry and it is consumed mainly in Europe. He emphasized pricing, quality and sustainable harvesting criteria. A variety of issues are associated with gums; some of the ones pointed out related to state laws, uncontrolled collection, tapping techniques and poor access to fair markets.

Discussions likewise revolved around uneven pricing in the different states and lack of regulated marketing avenues in Chattisgarh and Orissa. The example of Andhra, as elaborated by Manoj, was useful in knowing about the Co-operative Corporation there and its functioning. The field trip to the Thakur Village, Pinglewadi had the team discussing private forests prevalent in the area, the extraction of *Anogeissus* gum and its marketing.

The workshops have initiated a process with regard to gums and resins. Interested members/participants may pursue the issue in terms of community-based research, trials and experiments, observations and studies or market interventions. The EP is conducting a world market study on gums and resins which will soon be circulated.



Tribal leader Mr. Bhau explains the local resin situation during the workshop in Karjat

J. DE BEER



A demonstration of how *Anogeissus* gum is harvested

S. NATH

exchange news

Around the region from April 2004-February 2005

Training on Product Selection, Marketing and Value Chain Analysis

Participants from Vietnam, India, the Philippines and Indonesia attended the meeting held in Puncak, Indonesia from 20–22 April 2004. The objectives of the training were to:

- ▶ Learn to use the production selection matrix in NTFP development prioritization;
- ▶ Learn how to use value chain analysis to arrive at well-informed decisions with respect to assistance to community-based enterprise development;
- ▶ Enhance skills in market analysis and strategy formulation;
- ▶ Learn how to design market intervention and support strategies for NTFP enterprises. {See full article in NBTA 7.}

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ARLAN M. SANTOS

Bridging culture and commerce

About 50 indigenous craft makers, NGO supporters and government representatives met to discuss issues facing indigenous Philippine crafts in Cavite, the Philippines from 4–6 October 2004. Among the issues was how to secure the integrity of indigenous designs when going commercial. Expert Johnny Utama of Dian Niaga (Indonesia) attended as resource person. {See NBTA 7 for full article.}

The crafts conference aptly ended in a night of diverse song and dance by participants from indigenous peoples groups.

PCART (Palawan) to Indonesia

A two-person team from PCART/BioFarm, in October, visited cosmetics company Martha Tilaar and herbal medicine producer Sido Muncul in Indonesia. BioFarm is involved in the processing of medicinal plants {See NBTA 5}. BioFarm is considering, instead of producing raw materials for herbal medicine only, to take the step and make their own end products. The purpose of the visit was to get a better idea of how to proceed in that direction. The team got ample inspiration and plenty of tips, in particular during their two-day stint at Martha Tilaar. Accompanied by Director for R&D Ibu Nuning, the team also visited a farmers' extension programme run by the company.



ABOVE: Erosion is one of the many environmental effects of oil palm plantations. RIGHT: A sign leading to an oil palm plantation in Malaysia.

Oil palm study tour to Sarawak

As oil palm promoters are knocking at the door of indigenous peoples communities in Mindanao and elsewhere in the Philippines, those communities and local NGOs supporting them are trying to find out what impact the oil palm industry could have on their lives. What better way to find out than visit Sarawak, Malaysia which is now largely covered by oil palm plantations? A group of six representatives from Mindanao-based NGOs and indigenous communities hied off for five days to Sarawak in December 2004. They visited two communities: Sungai Bong where the community has refused entry of oil palm, and Ketip which has suffered the realities of oil palm plantations existing with their native customary land. {See related article on page 6.}





Resin tapping involves risking life and limb: demonstration by participant from Bastar

Annual regional NTFP meeting

The meeting, with over 100 participants, took place in Ha Thin, Vietnam in November 2004 and focused on the potential of developing bamboo and rattan products. {See full article on page 9.}

EP Board meeting for strategic planning

The EP board met in Manila last February 2005, with the aim of further strengthening the EP's professional strength and operational effectiveness.

MODI makes it mark!

The Craft Centre in Manila launched its high-end product line MODI (Modern Indigenous) in October 2004. The launch got maximum attention in the Philippine press, where MODI was more than once mentioned in one sentence together with such brands as Gucci, Prada and Hermes. Not bad for a start!

MODI as featured in Philippine magazine "Preview" – MODI products are clutch bag made of indigenous fabric Higaonon hinabol, jacket of handwoven Maranaw fabric with T'boli beading, and Mangyan Alangan tabud basket (doubling up as vase holder).



Workshops on resins & gums

Two workshops on improved tapping of various gums and resins were organized in respectively Kerala and Maharashtra, India, in December 2004.

The workshops were facilitated by SIERES (Saigon) expert Mr. Truong.

As an immediate follow-up, a third workshop – organized by Appiko in Karnataka – aimed at sharing the learnings from Kerala. {See full article starting on the cover page}

National workshop on management & use of forest bees

The workshop was conducted from 24–31 January 2005 in Danau Sentarum National Park, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Its 24 participants included indigenous honey gatherers, support NGOs and government representatives from six different areas in Kalimantan and Sulawesi.

The participants shared experiences with the harvesting and marketing of wild honey, while the head of the Honey Gatherers Association of Danau Sentarum revealed how they had learned better harvesting methods from a visit to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

Riak Bumi and Dian Tama shared the lessons they learned during on-the-job training on quality improvement at Keystone in the Nilgiris.

The workshop resulted in the establishment of the Forest Honey Network Indonesia. The network will promote sustainable harvesting, better processing and more successful marketing.

Pontianak-based EP partner Riak Bumi was selected as the national secretariat for the network, while Johnny Utama of Dian Niaga was the choice for coordinator for marketing and promotion for honey and other bee products. {Watch out for article on the network in the next issue of Voices.}



Honey hunting by boat in Danau Sentarum, Indonesia

the oil palm debates

By AFRIM

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In the recently concluded National People's Organisations and Non-Government Organisations Forum on Oil Palm, held 22-23 February 2005 in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, POs and NGOs defined their positions vis-à-vis the expansion of oil palm plantations. Some organisations expressed their decision to resist efforts to develop oil palm plantations in their communities while others shared their reasons for opting to continue planting oil palm. The forum is part of a research and education project on oil palm coordinated by the Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc. (AFRIM) and participated in by various NGOs, POs and cooperatives. The project is jointly supported by 11-11-11, Doen Foundation and ICCO.

The forum aimed to come up with measures on how communities can protect their interest in the face of the expansion of oil palm plantations. Although no common stand on oil palm plantations was arrived at, participants were able to define their differing positions based on their specific contexts. In the forum, 11 organisations mostly composed of indigenous people's organisations and some farmers groups and apostolate of the Catholic Church took a stand against plantations expanding in their communities. Meanwhile, seven organisations composed mostly of agrarian reform beneficiaries of oil palm plantations took a definite stand to continue planting oil palm. Four other organisations, two of which were Moro community organisations, are thinking of planting oil palm but are still studying their options. The groups explained their positions while expressing respect for the position of the other groups.

indigenous peoples say no to oil palm

Indigenous peoples' groups are opposing the expansion of oil palm plantations in their communities because they see plantations as a threat to their food security, the environment and their culture and tradition.

Food security will be threatened owing to the reduction of land dedicated to food production. They oppose producing exclusively for trade because it will leave them at the mercy of market forces over which they have no control. This is especially true

for oil palm fruits which they do not eat.

Plantations are also seen as a threat to their forests from which they get materials for housing and medicines. Because plantation management is dependent on chemical inputs and destroys natural flora and fauna, the group also fears that nothing will be left for the coming generations but barren lands.

The greatest concern, however, is that the indigenous peoples' groups are afraid that plantations will destroy their culture and traditions. They recognize that their culture and traditions are largely a result of their indigenous agriculture, hunting and gathering, activities which will be totally wiped out when large tracts of land are devoted to a single crop which is also very unfamiliar to them.

While seeing the damage that oil palm plantation could bring to their community, indigenous peoples' groups remain aware that the palm oil companies' promise of a good and stable income will be difficult for communities to resist. Thus they believe that continuing education on the effects of the plantations on the communities should be accompanied by a presentation of feasible alternatives.

... while AR beneficiaries say yes

On the other hand, agrarian reform beneficiaries or former workers of oil palm plantations who are now the landowners, favor planting oil palm because it is economically beneficial to them. They say that that compared to traditional crops, such as corn, oil palm is much more profitable and has a stable market because demand is consistently high and is even growing. Compared to other plantation crops common in the region such as banana and pineapple,



Mr. Bobby Taguntong of the Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc. (KFI) shares his views on oil palm's effects. KFI was one of the organisers of the forum.

What say you on OIL PALM PLANTATIONS?

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES GROUPS SAY: a threat to food security, the environment and their culture

AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES SAY: lucrative because of growing markets, less damaging to the environment

ALL PHOTOS IN THIS ARTICLE BY AJIM INNI / AFRIM

they view oil palm as the least damaging to the environment because it uses the least chemical inputs. Furthermore, they said that damage to the environment can be minimized depending on the management practice. One cooperative of oil palm planters, for example, are starting to use organic fertilisers. However, since oil palm fruits are bought by only a few palm oil companies, these companies can influence whether the planting of oil palms will actually be beneficial to landowners or not.

Palm oil companies' influence starts even before a landowner plants his first oil palm tree. Initial capitalisation for oil palm plantations is high, and often, there is a need for landowners to borrow capital. The only source of capital for such enterprise are government banks which require that borrowers have existing marketing agreements with palm oil companies before they are granted loans. A warning raised was that contracts with oil palm companies should allow landowners full control over their lands and the management of the plantation. In this respect, the members of the group said they can help interested landowners in getting the best contract from an palm oil company.

The national forum is the last in the series of forums. Three regional forums had been held prior

– in Cagayan de Oro City for Northern Mindanao region, in Tacurong City for Southern Mindanao region, and Pagadian City for Western Mindanao region. The forums were a reaction of POs and NGOs to government plans to develop 100,000 hectares of oil palm plantation by 2010. Because oil palm is a relatively new crop to the Philippines, almost nothing is known about it by communities who are being enticed by local government and palm oil companies to plant oil palm. Much less is known about the palm oil industry.

The regional forums presented both the threats and the opportunities related to planting oil palm. Speakers at the forum included representatives from government agencies, including the Land Bank of the Philippines; representatives of agrarian reform beneficiaries of redistributed oil palm plantations, and representatives of communities affected by the expansion of oil palm plantations. In the national forum, a speaker from AIDEnvironment, a Dutch consulting and research organisation, shared their research on the experiences of communities in Indonesia and Malaysia which are affected by oil palm plantations. In all, the forums were able to reach some 75 organisations from 13 provinces.

The forums were organized by Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, Inc. (AFRIM) together with the *Kahiusahan sa mga Higao-on, Inc.* (Unity of the Higao-ons, KHI), Green Mindanao, Balaod Mindanaw, the Legal Rights Center-Kasama sa Kalikasan (LRC-KsK), Inter-Peoples Exchange (IPEX), National Commission on the Indigenous Peoples in Region 9, *Tindig Bansa Subanen sa Tigbao* (TBST), Kadtuntaya Foundation, Inc. (KFI), *Demokratikong Magbubukid ng Sultan Kudarat* (DEMASKU), Tribal Filipino Program of the Diocese of Kidapawan and the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP).



... while Bae Lina voices out her concerns on how her tribe, the Higaonon, will be affected by oil palm plantations.



Dian Tama's discussion with a major NTFP trader in Ketapang Town.

In the streets of Ketapang, the architecture looks a bit odd. And how come you hear bird's non-stop twitter everywhere? It turns out that these strangely featured concrete buildings are 'hotel walet' or swiftlet hotels. As their natural nesting places have become pretty

uncomfortable, the birds have been looking for an alternative. That alternative is now being offered by wealthy citizens of this small town. To make the place even more attractive to the birds, tapes are played all over town with a constant twitter, twitter. These town people must be animal lovers, all of them!

A few days later, in the village of Beringin, a two-hour drive from Ketapang, I was amazed to hear that within the village's territory are located a number of caves where swiftlets have been breeding in great numbers since time immemorial. However, zero management in an open access situation has led to a steady decline of the swiftlet population.

Meanwhile, the buying price for quality A nests, as quoted by a local shop owner, is a whopping US\$ 1,000 per kg. Whatever way you look at it, allowing this precious resource to go down is not smart. One guy in Beringin even wants to know where he could get the funds to also build a swiftlet hotel.

Earlier, still in Ketapang, an established *towkay* and (thus) hotel owner confessed that he would rather buy from the caves to make a real good soup for his own family. The quality is just so much better. "But sadly," he adds, "mostly they bring us immature nests. You know the young birds were not on the wing yet. It is silly."

Back in the village an energetic discussion is taking off. "You guys are sitting at the gate of immense wealth," I say, "as the caves are the ideal habitat for the birds. It can't be better. But what would you

do, if you were the mother bird and your eggs were thrown away again and again?"

Then, advice was given in a direct manner:

▶ Get together those involved in collecting and establish a bird's nest group.

▶ Amongst yourselves develop rules and regulations.

▶ Make sure no logging, let alone burning of forest, takes place in the vicinity of the caves.

▶ Establish the optimal date for starting collective harvesting.

▶ Guard the caves around the clock to make sure nobody enters



before that date.

▶ Finally, go to the head of the district and register your group, formalize the arrangements made – ensuring that no one is allowed

to enter the caves before becoming a member of the group and adhering to the rules.

▶ In addition, try to organize an exchange visit to Walet Lubuk Ulang Aling, a long-established walet cooperative in Padang, Sumatra.

This all happened in June 2004. Seven months later, a pleasant surprise. A participant from Beringin to the honey workshop in Danau Sentarum (See Exchange News) comes forward very enthusiastically.

"It has all been done," he says.

"What?" I ask.

"The things we discussed the other day. Except, I must admit, the study tour to Sumatra. That is still in the planning. Oh, and by the way," he adds, "we are now also setting up similar groups for honey gathering."

Footnote: Pontianak-based **Dian Tama** – with support from the **European Commission** – is facilitating activities to improve NTFP management and marketing in Beringin and other villages in Tumbang Titi district, regency of Ketapang.

a swiftlet hotel in ketapang town

a story from west kalimantan

By JENNE DE BEER



One of the swiftlet hotels in Ketapang Town

On 16 November 2004, the regional partners of the NTFP-EP boarded the train at Hanoi bound for Ha-Tinh to hold its annual workshop and meeting, this time in the member country of Vietnam. This five-day conference was hosted by the NGOs Towards Ethnic Women (TEW), Center for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development (CIRD) and Center for Human Ecology Studies of the Highlands (CHESH).

In Ha-Tinh, the national and international guests were also welcomed by the supportive Ha Tinh Provincial Peoples Committee. Representatives from India, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, China, the Netherlands, joined Vietnamese NGOs, researchers, indigenous community members and government representatives to tackle the issues of NTFPs in Vietnam as well as to share learnings from other countries.

Each day was interspersed with a mix of presenters both locally and international to get a global mix of inputs. Each day was also marked by very lively workshop discussions to further deepen topics.

day 1

After introductions and background preliminaries, there were presentations on the status and potentials of Vietnam's rattan and bamboo industry as well as locally in the nearby district of Hung Son. A local farmer from the Truong Son Cooperative also elaborated on the benefits gained by the 788 has of community managed area which gave security to the people to plant trees and forest products. He challenged the audience to support their efforts to further develop this project. The presentations were supported by the Cambodian report of Ms. Uch Sophay on bamboo products in her country. Mong Tam Le of Profound also gave an input on marketing of NTFPs. In the afternoon, there were discussions on a broad range of topics from land

from hanoi to ha-tinh

The International NTFP Conference, 16-20 November 2004



By MARIA CRISTINA S. GUERRERO

rights and land use management, to the development of rattan and bamboo resources as well as the storage and preservation of these products.

day 2

More international presentations covered the morning session with Mr. Wang Kuanglin of the Kunming Institute of Botany in Yunnan, China presenting on the diversity and management on rattan and bamboo in China. Over the course of the conference, Mr. Wang also gave inputs on the production and industry aspects for the development of Vietnamese rattan. This was followed by a presentation of Ms. Maria Cristina S. Guerrero on the value addition of rattan, bamboo and other NTFPs into modern indigenous apparels and home-ware positioned at the high-end market. After a video on bamboo presented by Indonesian colleague Mr. Ridzki Sigit of Telapak, the group again went into workshops in the afternoon which tackled market analysis, resource assessments, rights and technology

improvement, as well as negotiations between farmers and companies. Healthy group discussions lead to proposals on providing increased participation and support to local farmers in planning and production aspects as well as in consolidated marketing activities.

field visits

After a final day of plenary sessions, the participants were then divided into two groups to visit the Truong Son Cooperative and the Huong Son Forestry Service Company. Suggestions were made on the community organization, quality of rattan, and further engagement between communities, researchers, government and the private sector to develop the rattan and bamboo industry in Vietnam.

Outputs

The final evening was one of sumptuous food and international song and dance. The results of the NTFP conference in Vietnam include the following:

- ▶ A very supportive and optimistic local government who seemed open to the technical and social inputs and experiences provided by the international guests on community NTFP management and marketing;
- ▶ An initial action plan on how to develop traditional rattan and bamboo products in Ha-Tinh Province; and
- ▶ An established network between the Vietnamese people for continued exchange on rattan production and craft between institutes of excellence such as the Kunming Institute of Botany in Yunnan China and the Kalimantan indigenous rattan farmers and craft producers.

TOP: Harvesting bamboo from the common forest area of the Truong Son Cooperative
 BOTTOM: Workers demonstrating handicraft production at the Huong Son Forestry and Services Company



ALL PHOTOS FOR THIS ARTICLE BY P. HEGDE

killing the king of spices

By PANDURANG HEGDE

It is a cool winter morning in front of the office of Deputy Conservator of Forests, Sirsi. Outside the office numerous forest contractors are loitering, waiting for the final tender cum action of the extraction of (Dalchinni) cinnamon leaves.

While they are waiting, a group of volunteers from Parisara Samrakshana Kendra, an NGO, appeal to the contractors. Environment activist Narasimha says “We know you have come here for the auction of cinnamon leaves. The extraction of leaves is possible only by lopping and cutting the cinnamon trees. Owing to over extraction the trees are dying. There was a ban on extraction for ten years. The trees have not healed. But the government is desperate to auction them. We request you not to enter the auction. If you take

the bid, the risk is yours. We will defiantly organise people to stop the extraction if we find that trees are damaged.”

Inspite of this sincere appeal the contractors went ahead with the auction. The entire auction for Sirsi Forest Division fetched Rs 36 lakh to Karnataka Forest Department. Mr. Abhuy Singh, the Deputy Conservator of Forests in Sirsi says “We expected to earn Rs 12 lakh in the auction. Now we have got an income of Rs 36 lakh. This is the highest price the Sirsi Division has from Dalchinni leaves, till date.”



To extract the leaves, the branches of the trees are lopped bare, an unsustainable means of harvesting

Money plant

Why are these leaves so precious? Why are the contractors competing to get the rights to collect the produce? The answer is very simple. The leaves of this particular tree is money!

This article first appeared in the Deccan Herald, 15 February 2005. Since then, the forest dwellers in Sirsi region, Western Ghats in South India have launched a campaign to protect against over extraction. They have forced the Forestry Department to rewrite the agreement with the contractors to extract the leaves with following conditions:

- only 50% percent of the canopy can be lopped,
- the main tree trunk should not be lopped or cut,
- stringent measures are acceptable if there is over extraction.

LEFT: Drying of cinnamon leaves

In connection with the campaign, Appiko-Chipko is organising a multi-stakeholder workshop in May 2005.

The contractors pay Rs 3 per kilo of dried cinnamon leaves to the collector. These collectors are adivasis or poor forest dwellers. However the contractor sells the same leaves at Rs 18 per kilo to the wholesale dealer. The wholesale dealer sells it at Rs 40 per kilo to the retailers.

Cinnamon leaves are used not only as spice but for medicinal purposes as well. The oil extracted from the leaves is exported. Thus, it has multiple uses and the demand is high. In order to meet this ever increasing demand the resource base is under severe pressure to yield maximum quantity.

According to a rough estimate the trade in cinnamon leaves in Western Ghats forest region is to the tune of Rs 20 crore. It is definitely greed which is the cause for downfall. There are private cinnamon plantations in Tamilnadu and Kerala. But the trees that exist in natural forests yield better quality of leaves, which has higher oil content, and fragrance. This special feature of the cinnamon trees and leaves has become the threat to its existence. While collecting the leaves, the collectors climb the tree and cut the branches of the tree instead of just plucking the leaves endangering the tree.

Over extraction

Owing to increased demand the cinnamon trees were cut down and there was the threat to the resource base. As the leaves and buds were extracted, there was no fruit or seeds to regenerate young saplings. Realising this threat and due to pressure from environment organisations the Karnataka Forest Department imposed ban on extraction of cinnamon leaves in 1994 for ten years in Uttara Kannada district.

Unfortunately this ban existed only on paper and no auctions were held. But the leaves was removed illegally with the collaboration of lower level forestry staff. The material was moved with pass issued in Shimoga and regions where the extraction was permitted.



The tender sprouts of the leaves of the cinnamon tree

In 2004 the Karnataka Forest Department lifted the ban in Canara Circle and the auction process was started once again. Shri Aralikatti, the Conservator of Forests for Canara Circle says, "We have given the permission to extract only the leaves. If they cut branches, we will cancel the permission to collect the leaves." It is true that on the paper it looks environmentally sound. But Nasir Khan, one of the contractors who is involved in the business of collection for past 30 years says "How is it possible to collect only the leaves? We will have to employ monkeys to pluck the leaves. But we will try not to damage the trees."

Obviously, the rhetoric of forest conservation and the reality of extraction are very different. The pressure on the resources is so high that it is going to be harvested at any cost, whether despite the ban.

Narasimha, a researcher involved in sustainable harvesting says, "We need to study the resources base and then scientifically decide how to extract the leaves. This provides good chances for regeneration. We need to evolve sustainable harvesting practices to collect cinnamon leaves."

Appiko Anath, an activist of Appiko Movement says, "While exploiting forests, first the government took our timber, then they auctioned the fruits and now they want to auction the leaves. Is this conservation of forests? Can the government allow such destruction for earning the revenue of some lakhs of rupees?"

It seems that the government as well as Forest Department is geared towards maximising the revenue from forests. A few lakhs is more important for the State than the crores, which are given for eternity by these trees. We are well and truly headed toward disaster if we do not realise our folly.

While the world leaders debate on extinction of spices in international seminars on biodiversity, the policies of our state government and Forest Department is causing extinction of another spices for sake of earning revenue. Is it a loss to forests or to humanity?

On our Calendar

APRIL

22-23 April: Mini-seminar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on sharing of experience of management of ancestral domains/native customary land between Malaysia and the Philippines. Keynote speaker is the chairman of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (Philippines). Preceding the KL seminar, a more informal exchange with government officials, lawyers, community representatives and others will take place in Kuching, the capital of Sarawak.

MAY

Telapak (Bogor) visits partners in Malaysia and the Philippines to shoot a jointly produced film with the NTFP-EP on best practices in NTFP management.

JUNE

Exposure visit by the Director of SIERES (Saigon) to Keystone (Nilgiris).

JULY

On-the-job training of sales staff of Keystone (Kotagiri) and Riak Bumi (Pontianak) at the Upland Marketing Foundation, Inc. (UMFI) in Manila, the Philippines.

AUGUST

Second meeting of Forest Honey Network Indonesia in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi. Mr. Francis Leo of Keystone is scheduled to attend as resource person.

26-30 August: CustomMade/MODI will attend Tendence Lifestyle, an international trade fair in Frankfurt, Germany, to explore potential markets.

OCTOBER

Week 2: Annual EP Regional Meeting in Hulu Baram, Sarawak.

NOVEMBER

Training course on natural dyes in Yogyakarta, Indonesia for Philippine craftmakers from Mindanao, Mindoro and Negros.

My goodness!

(seen at Kuala Lumpur International Airport):

"We green the earth with nature's goodness."

Signed, Malaysian Palm Oil Promotion Committee.

Free book service



Boa, Eric. 2004. **Wild Edible Fungi, a global overview of their use and importance to people.** Non-Wood Forest Products Series 17, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome. This excellent

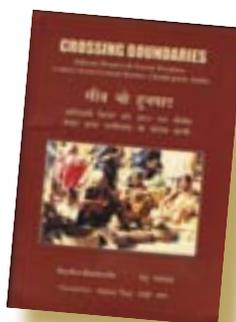
and comprehensive report reviews the characteristics of fungi biology and ecology, as well as fungi management and their importance to people. The publication is highly recommended and can be obtained from FAO Rome, free of charge. Email to: copyright@fao.org. Also available online at http://www.fao.org/documents/show_cdr.asp?url_file=/docrep/007/y5489e/y5489e00.htm

products in the face of a long history of non-advansi monopoly over forest resources. Also provides critical lessons on how the local movement Mahila Arthik Samooh has been instrumental in this continuing struggle. For your copy, contact the author at shakun2000@eth.net. Or call 07782-261204 (Ms. Kalawati) 07782-223541 (Arjun Nag).



Stockdale, Mary. 2005. **Steps to sustainable and community-based NTFP management. A manual written with special reference to South and Southeast Asia.** Made for those

working in or with a community – communities themselves, NGOs and other support organisations – this manual is a practical guide to working with a community towards sustainable NTFP management. By describing a step-by-step process and providing practical advice, a community can confidently develop, implement and monitor its own plan for community-based NTFP management. Request your copy through the NTFP-EP at ntfp.ep@gmail.com



Ramnath, Madhu. 2004. **Crossing Boundaries. Adivasi Women and Forest Produce - a story from Central Bastar, Chattisgarh, India.** This bilingual booklet (English and Halbi) recounts the struggle of adivasi women in Bastar to

gain control over non-timber forest

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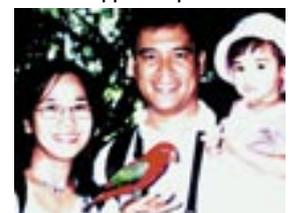
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Gus Gatmaytan awarded Darrell Posey Small Grant

Our colleague Augusto "Gus" Gatmaytan is one of the Small Grants recipients of the Darrell Posey Fellowship for Ethnoecology and Traditional Resource Rights for 2004-2006.

Gus is one of the few lawyers in the Philippines who has devoted his professional life to the cause of indigenous peoples' rights. His achievements include helping to found the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, securing land rights for tribal communities in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur provinces, and representing indigenous groups before the Philippine Supreme Court to defend the constitutionality of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, which was attacked by mining and other interests.

He will use the Darrell Posey Small Grant to provide legal and anthropological services to Tagdumahan, a federation of tribal Banwaon communities in San Luis, Agusan del Sur province. These services include protection of indigenous tenure rights of the Banwaon, development of a resource management plan, human rights advocacy, and production of an ethnographic description of Banwaon culture to support ancestral ownership of territory.



Gus with wife Memen and daughter Bea