COVID-19 and TRIFED-Tribal rights

Part of: GS Prelims and GS-II- Governance (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

TRIFED asks state implementing agencies to initiate procurement of MINIMUM FOREST PRODUCE at MSP.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) which functions under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has asked the State Nodal Departments and Implementing Agencies to initiate procurement of Minor Forest Produces (MFPs) at Minimum Support Price (MSP) from the available funds under MSP for MFP Scheme.

TRIFED in collaboration with UNICEF is hosting Webinar sessions for the Van Dhan Self Help Group members of the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras.

He said, it’s objective is to create awareness among the tribal gatherers for following social distancing measures and maintaining necessary hygiene required for carrying out their operations.

APEDA & TRIFED

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985. It functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Authority has its headquarters in New Delhi.

Functions

- APEDA is mandated with the responsibility of export promotion and development of the scheduled products viz. fruits, vegetables and their products; meat and meat products; poultry and poultry products; dairy products; confectionery, biscuits and bakery products; honey, jaggery and sugar products; cocoa and its products, chocolates of all kinds; alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages; cereal and cereal products; groundnuts, peanuts and walnuts, pickles, papads and chutneys; guar gum; floriculture and floriculture products; herbal and medicinal plants.
- APEDA has been entrusted with the responsibility to monitor import of sugar.
- It looks after the development of industries relating to the scheduled products for export by way of providing financial assistance or otherwise for undertaking surveys and feasibility studies, participating through subsidy schemes.
- Registration of persons as exporters of the scheduled products and fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports.
- Carrying out inspection of meat and meat products in slaughterhouses, processing plants, storage premises and improving packaging of the scheduled products.

Composition of APEDA Authority

- The APEDA Authority consists of the following members namely:
  - A Chairman appointed by the Central Government
The Agricultural Marketing Advisor to the Government of India, ex-official
Three members of Parliament of whom two are elected by the House of People and one by the Council of States
Eight members appointed by the Central Government representing respectively; the Ministries of the Central Govt.
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Commerce
- Finance
- Industry
- Food
- Civil Supplies
- Civil Aviation
- Shipping and transport

Five members appointed by the Central Government by rotation in alphabetical order to represent the States and the Union Territories
- Seven members appointed by the Central Govt. representing
  - Indian Council of Agricultural Research
  - National Horticultural Board
  - National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation
  - Central Food Technological Research Institute
  - Indian Institute of Packaging
  - Spices Export Promotion Council and
  - Cashew Export Promotion Council
- Twelve members appointed by the Central Government representing
  - Fruit and Vegetable Products Industries
  - Meat, Poultry and Dairy Products Industries
  - Other Scheduled Products Industries
  - Packaging Industry
- Two members appointed by the Central Government from amongst specialists and scientists in the fields of agriculture, economics and marketing of the scheduled products.

TRIFED

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) came into existence in 1987. It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
TRIFED has its Head Office located in New Delhi and has a network of 13 Regional Offices located at various places in the country.

Objectives

- The ultimate objective of TRIFED is socio-economic development of tribal people in the country by way of marketing development of the tribal products such as metal craft, tribal textiles, pottery, tribal paintings and pottery on which the tribals depend heavily for major portion of their income.
- TRIFED acts as a facilitator and service provider for tribes to sell their product.
- The approach by TRIFED aims to empower tribal people with knowledge, tools and pool of information so that they can undertake their operations in a more systematic and scientific manner.
- It also involves capacity building of the tribal people through sensitization, formation of
Self Help Groups (SHGs) and imparting training to them for undertaking a particular activity.

Functions

It mainly undertakes two functions viz. Minor Forest Produce (MFP) development and Retail Marketing and Development.

Minor Forest Produce (MFP) development

- An important source of livelihood for tribal people are non-wood forest products, generally termed ‘Minor Forest Produce (MFP)’. This includes all non-timber forest produce of plant origin and include bamboo, canes, fodder, leaves, gums, waxes, dyes, resins and many forms of food including nuts, wild fruits, honey, lac, tusser etc.
- The Minor Forest Produces provide both subsistence and cash income for people who live in or near forests. They form a major portion of their food, fruits, medicines and other consumption items and also provide cash income through sales.
- MFP has significant economic and social value for the forest dwellers as an estimated 100 Million people derive their source of livelihood from the collection and marketing of Minor Forest Produce (Report of the National Committee on Forest Rights Act, 2011).
- Around 100 million forest dwellers depend on Minor Forest Produces for food, shelter, medicines and cash income. Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from Minor Forest Produce on which they spend major portion of their time.
- MFP also has strong linkage to women’s financial empowerment as most of the Minor Forest Produces are collected and used/sold by women.
- The people who depend on MFP are generally beset with a number of other problems such as perishable nature of the produce, lack of holding capacity, lack of marketing infrastructure, exploitation by middlemen, etc. Due to this, the MFP gatherers who are mostly poor are unable to bargain for fair prices.
- To cope with the above problem, Govt. of India has decided to introduce the scheme of “Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and development of value chain”.
- The scheme is designed as a social safety net for improvement of livelihood of MFP gatherers by providing them a fair price for the MFPs they collect.

Retail Marketing and Development

- TRIFED aims to improve the livelihood of the tribal communities by creating a sustainable market and create business opportunities for tribal people.
- It involves exploring marketing possibilities for marketing of tribal products on a sustainable basis, creating brand and providing other necessary services.
- It has a network of 13 regional offices across the country which identifies and source tribal products for marketing through its retail marketing network of TRIBES INDIA outlets.
- It has been undertaking sourcing of various handicraft, handloom and natural & food products through its empanelled suppliers across the country. The suppliers comprise of individual tribal artisans, tribal SHGs, Organisations/ Agencies/NGOs working with tribals. The suppliers are empanelled with TRIFED as per the guidelines for empanelment of suppliers.
- TRIFED has been marketing tribal products through its Retail Outlets located across the country and also through exhibitions. It has established a chain of 35 own showrooms and
8 consignment showrooms in association with State level Organisations promoting tribal handicrafts.

Van Dhan Scheme

The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED. It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.

The scheme will be implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level. At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to play a pivot role in scheme implementation at grassroots level. Locally the Kendras are proposed to be managed by a Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs in the cluster.

Minor Forest Produce and tribal livelihoods (Mains Analysis)

Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood for tribals living in forest areas. The importance of MFPs for this section of the society can be gauged from the fact that around 100 million forest dwellers depend on MFPs for food, shelter, medicines and cash income. It provides them critical subsistence during the lean seasons, particularly for primitive tribal groups such as hunter gatherers, and the landless. Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP on which they spend major portion of their time. This activity has strong linkage to women’s financial empowerment as most of the MFPs are collected and used/sold by women. MFP sector has the potential to create about 10 million workdays annually in the country.

Key Highlights of Van Dhan Initiative

- At unit level, aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members each forming Van Dhan Vikas ‘Samuh’. The SHGs would also undertake primary value addition of the MFPs using equipment such as small cutting and sieving tools, decorticator, dryer, packaging tool etc based on MFPs available in the area.
- A typical Van Dhan Vikas Samuh would have the following facilities:
  - Provision for required building/ infrastructure support to be established in one of the beneficiary’s house/ part of house or Government/ gram panchayat building
  - Equipment/ Tool Kit comprising of equipment such as small cutting and sieving tools, decorticator, dryer, packaging tool etc. based on MFPs available in the area
  - Fully equipped training facilities for a batch of 30 trainees with provision for raw material for training purpose and supply of trainee kits (comprising of bag, scribbling pad, pen, brochures, training manual, booklet etc)
  - Provisioning of working capital for the SHGs through tie up with financial institutions, banks, NSTFDC etc
    - A cluster of ten such SHGs within the same village shall form a Van Dhan Vikas Kendra. Subject to successful operations of the samuhs in a Kendra, common infrastructure facilities (pucca Kendra) may be provided to the Kendra
in the next phase in terms of building, warehouse, etc. for use of the samuh members

- **An illustrative list of major MFPs** which may be covered under the initiative are tamarind, mahua flower, mahua seed, hill broom, chironjee, honey, sal seed, sal leaves, bamboo split, myrobalan, mango (amchur), aonla (churan/candy), seed lac, tez patta, cardamom, black pepper, turmeric, dry ginger, cinnamon, coffee, tea, sea buckthorn tea, etc. Apart from these, any other MFP with potential for value addition may be included.

**Implementation of the scheme**

Under Van Dhan, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers are constituted. The establishment of “Van Dhan Vikas Kendra” is for providing skill upgradation and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facility. They are then trained and provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the jungle. Working under the leadership of Collector these groups can then market their products not only within the States but also outside the States. Training and technical support is provided by TRIFED. It is proposed to develop 3,000 such centres in the country.

Value addition assumes critical importance in ensuring remunerative prices to the tribals in this approach. Three stage value addition would be the corner stone for enhancing incomes of the tribals under the scheme. The grass root level procurement is proposed to be undertaken through Self Help Groups associated with implementing agencies. Convergence and Networking with other Govt. departments/scheme shall be undertaken to utilise the services of existing SHGs like Ajeevika, etc. These SHGs shall be appropriately trained on sustainable harvesting/collection, primary processing & value addition and be formed into clusters so as to aggregate their stock in tradable quantity and linking them with facility of primary processing in a Van Dhan Vikas Kendra.

The stock after primary processing shall be supplied by these SHGs to the State Implementing Agencies or direct tie up for supply to corporate secondary processor. For creation of secondary level value addition facility at district level and tertiary level value addition facility at State level, Big Corporates shall be involved under PPP model. This PPP model will be based on utilising Private entrepreneur skills in undertaking processing as well as marketing of the produce and Central/ State Govt. support in terms of creating infrastructure and providing enabling environment for undertaking value addition of systematic scientific lines. These will be sophisticated large value addition hubs managed by Private entrepreneur.

The Van Dhan Vikas Kendras will be important milestone in economic development of tribals involved in collection of MFPs by helping them in optimum utilization of natural resources and provide sustainable MFP-based livelihood in MFP-rich districts.