



Value Addition



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Address : AME Foundation
No. 204, 100 Feet Ring Road, 3rd Phase,
Banashankari 2nd Block, 3rd Stage,
Bangalore - 560 085, India
Tel: +91-080- 2669 9512, +91-080- 2669 9522
Fax: +91-080- 2669 9410
E-mail: leisaIndia@yahoo.co.in

Leisa India

Chief Editor : K.V.S. Prasad
Managing Editor : T.M. Radha

EDITORIAL Team

This issue has been compiled by T.M. Radha
and K.V.S. Prasad

ADMINISTRATION

G.G. Rukmini

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Contact: G.G. Rukmini

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*Farm women sort and prepare fruit bunches
of litchi*

(Photo: ICAR-NRC on Litchi)

The AgriCultures Network

LEISA India is a member of the global AgriCultures Network. Seven organisations that provide information on small-scale, sustainable agriculture worldwide, and that publish:

Farming Matters (in English)

LEISA revista de agroecología (Latin America)

LEISA India (in English, Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, Oriya, Marathi and Punjabi)

AGRIDAPE (West Africa, in French)

Agriculturas Experiências em Agroecologia (Brazil).

The editors have taken every care to ensure that the contents of this magazine are as accurate as possible. The authors have ultimate responsibility, however, for the content of individual articles.

The editors encourage readers to photocopy and circulate magazine articles.

www.leisaIndia.org

Dear Readers

Small farmers who dominate Indian agriculture have seldom made profits from agriculture. Improvements in yields and enhanced marketable surpluses hardly transform into better monetary returns owing to absence of value addition, weak value chain system and weak market linkage. But of late, farmer producer organisations are helping small farmers to process their harvests providing better linkages to markets.

In this issue we have included experiences of farmers, farmer producer organisations and institutions that are promoting value addition. You will find that most of the value addition processes are not only simple, but less cost intensive, bringing in enhanced returns to the farm families. We hope these experiences will interest and inspire many farmers to practise value addition, preventing them from distress sales.

We look forward to your feedback, as always. We remain deeply indebted to you all for your commitment to promotion of LEISA.

The Editors

LEISA is about Low-External-Input and Sustainable Agriculture. It is about the technical and social options open to farmers who seek to improve productivity and income in an ecologically sound way. LEISA is about the optimal use of local resources and natural processes and, if necessary, the safe and efficient use of external inputs. It is about the empowerment of male and female farmers and the communities who seek to build their future on the bases of their own knowledge, skills, values, culture and institutions. LEISA is also about participatory methodologies to strengthen the capacity of farmers and other actors, to improve agriculture and adapt it to changing needs and conditions. LEISA seeks to combine indigenous and scientific knowledge and to influence policy formulation to create a conducive environment for its further development. LEISA is a concept, an approach and a political message.

AMEF is a member of AgriCultures Network, which is involved in co-creation and sharing of knowledge on family farming and agro ecology. The network is locally rooted and globally connected. Besides magazines, the network is involved in multi stake holders' engagement and policy advocacy for promotion of small holder family farming and agroecology. The network consists of members from Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Netherlands, Peru and Senegal. The secretariat of the network is located in IED Afrique, Dakar, Senegal.

MISEREOR founded in 1958 is the German Catholic Bishops' Organisation for Development Cooperation. For over 50 years MISEREOR has been committed to fighting poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America. MISEREOR's support is available to any human being in need – regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender. MISEREOR believes in supporting initiatives driven and owned by the poor and the disadvantaged. It prefers to work in partnership with its local partners. Together with the beneficiaries, the partners involved help shape local development processes and implement the projects. This is how MISEREOR, together with its partners, responds to constantly changing challenges. (www.misereor.de; www.misereor.org)

AME Foundation promotes sustainable livelihoods through combining indigenous knowledge and innovative technologies for Low-External-Input natural resource management. Towards this objective, AME Foundation works with small and marginal farmers in the Deccan Plateau region by generating farming alternatives, enriching the knowledge base, training, linking development agencies and sharing experience.

AMEF is working closely with interested groups of farmers in clusters of villages, to enable them to generate and adopt alternative farming practices. These locations with enhanced visibility are utilised as learning situations for practitioners and promoters of eco-farming systems, which includes NGOs and NGO networks. www.amefound.org

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Value addition of MFPs

Potential tool to empower tribal community

Archana Bhatt and Vipindas

Value addition of MFPs is a great way to utilize the hidden potential and value of forest produce which can improve the social and economic conditions of the community. Handholding by grassroot institutions along with governments support will go a long way in creating better livelihood opportunities for the tribal and marginalized community.

Community engaged in the segregation of wild gooseberry





Nutri-rich food fest

Table 1 Value addition of MFPs by Vanamallika SHG

S. No.	MFPs	Value added products
1.	Wild Gooseberry (Amla)	Pickle, Honey with Amla, Amla Candy, Dried amla, Amla powder, Amla seed for medicinal purpose.
2.	Honey	Processed honey (Heating, filtering and double boiling methods).
3.	Jackfruit	Payasam, Jack varatti, Jack biriyani, Jack fritters, jack Samosa, Jack seed powder.
4.	Ginger	Dried ginger, Ginger powder, Ginger coffee
5.	Yam	Yam mixture
6.	Curry leaves	Curry leaves powder, Curry leaves tamarind mix powder
7.	Moringa	Moringa leaves powder

community in marketing their raw materials or products as well. At present, the SHG is following two main marketing strategies i.e. one through direct sale of the products and second by utilizing the various ecoshops/organic product outlets spread across the state. Being an intervention at its budding stage, the team expects it to be more successful in the coming years.

Impact

As the initiative is fairly new, it is difficult to ascertain the impact of products at the family level. However, based on the study done till now, wild arrowroot powder has comparatively more demand. This is because unadulterated good quality arrowroot powder is rarely available in the market. But, the lacuna here is related to the processing part. Even though the product has enough demand, the production is very low owing to time consuming traditional processing methods. Wild arrowroot is available in abundance in the forest but due to a lower price for the raw produce, the community is reluctant to collect it. But now with the machinery available, it became easier to process and sell it in the market at a higher price which also reduced the drudgery of the community. Last year, 20 kg processed arrowroot was sold at a price of Rs 1500/kg. Overall, in the last year MFP based value added products sale turn over came out to be around one lakh rupees.

The value addition effort helped tribal women's financial inclusion as the group formation and joint effort helped to improve their social and economic solidarity in the community. The efforts of the initiative including the

purchase of MFPs from the community, support in facilitating the sale of the raw and value-added products and developing entrepreneurial skills among the members highly improved the self-esteem of the group members among the community. This made them realize their own strength and potential in generating better livelihood opportunities for themselves and also for the entire community. After attaining skill and knowledge through various training and capacity-building activities by the centre, their experience with technology made them as a skilled labour and empowered them.

With the outbreak of covid, which made huge labour displacement in tribal pockets, in such adversities, SHG *Vanamallika* group members were able to gain fair income (Rupees 600/per person) on a daily basis through the production and marketing of value-added products. The SHG group's demonstration of "Nutri-rich" value-added products in different forums as a food fest helped to generate high-level consumer awareness as well. Also, for the consumers, *Vanamallika* groups' value-added products were assured as safe to eat products since they were homemade, natural, organic and close to home.

Challenges and future endeavors

The recurrent restrictions due to Covid created an unprecedented crisis on the value addition process. The Covid outbreak affected the access to raw material demand of value-added products. Most of the raw materials for developing value-added products by the SHG are largely seasonal MFPs namely wild arrowroot, wild gooseberry, wild honey, wild mango, jackfruit seed, etc. that are available only in seasons. Raw material which are highly perishable in nature, need to be stored for the entire year which requires technology and expensive facilities. Moreover, value addition is profitable only when the raw material is available in the vicinity and easily accessible since that only determines the sustainability of the unit.

Demonstration of "Nutri-rich" value-added products in different forums helped to generate high levels of consumer awareness.

Many factors like inadequate storage facilities, low grade packing (inadequate packing reduces shelf life as well as attraction from consumers), lack of marketing strategies like advertisement were identified as limitations to sustain in the market. Further, a recurrent covid situation also destroyed the supply chain of products which is an issue that is difficult to comprehend at this point.

Another challenge at the group level was the reduction in the availability of certain MFPs due to unsustainable harvest by the tribal community. Since the Adivasi community is traditionally a marginalized community and the group members don't have credible skills in community and capacity mobilization it becomes difficult to carry out all activities in a professional manner. These issues even affect all the processes from production to distribution level. It is important to note that external handholding is necessary initially for empowering group members in various aspects of product development and distribution. Handholding by grassroot institutions along with governments support will go a long way in creating better livelihood opportunities for the tribal and marginalized community.

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Archana Bhatt

Scientist, Community Agrobiodiversity Centre
MSSRF, Wayanad, Kerala
E-mail: _archanabhatt1991@gmail.com

Vipindas

Development Associate
Community Agrobiodiversity Centre
MSSRF, Wayanad, Kerala



Women groups built their own capacities to choose crop varieties which are suitable to their needs and local situation

In 2020, FPO focused on Pathiyoor Farmers brand. The products being marketed under the brand name are: Virgin Coconut oil (VCO), turmeric to turmeric powder, sesamum to sesamum oil, cowdung to shade dried cow dung and vermicompost from farm organic residues, Ghee and butter from desi cows. A rural 'agrimart' was opened for procuring and selling of these products, planting materials, cowdung, other bio inputs, vermicompost etc., under the FPO. The FPO could initiate small support during Covid pandemic in procuring farm produce on call and door delivery on demand.

The major lessons learnt have been that value addition is achievable through simple practices, through cooperation, coordination and convergence and inclusiveness of communities and how a premier research institute can promote social innovation. The major challenges confronted in this period are: acute shortage of skilled coconut climbers, mobility

restrictions during covid situations, climate change induced untimely heavy rains; socio economic changes leading to rapid conversion of paddy lands to housing areas resulting in drainage problems and fragmentation. However, farming interventions remained as the silver lining during covid period with active farming, active and continued interactions through mobiles and income generation.

Anithakumari P

Principal Scientist (Agrl.Extn.)

ICAR Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI)

Kayamkulam, Kerala 690 533

E-mail: anithacpcri@gmail.com

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