

People all across are passing through an unprecedented challenging time because of the Covid-19 global pandemic. The country is currently in the midst of a total lock down for twenty one days as social isolation seems to be the only effective deterrent against the spread of the novel corona virus. However social isolation has its own repercussions as well. This has impacted all sections of the society - men and women, poor and affluent, young and old. The weaker sections of the society, specifically the tribal communities are more vulnerable to this situation. There is a palpable perception of lack of safety, freedom and there is a sense of insecurity and loss.

Current lock down has unsettled the tribal life and livelihoods significantly. Food and nutrition which remain the core issue of the tribals for decades has been pushed to oblivion. NTFP collection, harvesting of crops and earning of day to day livelihood through labour has been in a state of grinding halt. Presently, tribal families are finding it hard to confine themselves in their one-room huts and facing difficulty to self quarantine which is in force till 14th of April.

Thousands of job seekers under MGNREGA are going to face serious threat to their livelihoods due to lockdown situations. Migrant labourers returned from different states have added pressure on the existing employment situation. Many of them are not paid their dues and there is little hope that they can earn anything for the next few months. In many of the cases, the private contractors have denied the daily wage labourers to come for work due to imposition of lock down. Their livelihood is at stake now.

Farmers have not been to go to their farm land for last two weeks. In many of the situations where the crops are ready for harvesting, due to closedown of marketing infrastructure and storage facility, the farmers are forced to distress sale of perishable produces like vegetables. This is the time of harvesting Minor Forest Produces like Tamarind, Mahua, Sal seeds and Kendu leaves. However, the villagers are abstaining them from collecting such forest produces due to the present situation. The Kharif crop may also get affected, as necessary preparatory activities including collection of seeds and other inputs will not be possible at this point of time. It will have a bearing on the livelihoods of the people who primarily depend on the Kharif crop for their livelihoods.

The people living in the last mile are facing lot of difficulties to access their daily requirements and inputs relating to farm activities, avail other services including banking service due to watch and ward situation.