

Plan to train forest protectors in making mahua concentrate

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Sambalpur: The Sambalpur forest division has decided to provide training to the members of Vana Samrakshyana Samiti (VSS), particularly women, on making mahua flower concentrate, which has high demand in the market, to increase their income.

Officials of the forest division have already discussed with the biotechnology department of Sambalpur University in this regard.

Sambalpur divisional forest officer (DFO) V Neelannavar said, "The biotechnology department of Sambalpur University has evinced interest in providing training. We have decided to arrange training for 30 VSS members in the first phase. The training, which will be imparted for two months, will begin shortly."

Neelannavar said mahua flower is generally collected for making liquor. However, mahua flower concentrate is sold at a much higher price in the market. Training will be provided to VSS members to make the product under phase-II of Orissa Forestry Sector Development (OFSD) project," said the DFO.

Head of the biotechnology department of Sambalpur University, Pradeep Kumar Naik, said mahua flower is rich in iron and can be helpful in tackling anaemia and malnutrition.

"Moreover, at least 16 types of food items like cake, cookies, jam and laddu, can be made from mahua flower concentrate. We have planned to provide training on making the food items so that forest dwellers can earn a good income," he said.

For branding and marketing of mahua flower concentrate and food items, the Sambalpur forest division has also tied-up with Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar.

“The technology business incubator (TBI) of KIIT has been entrusted with branding and marketing of mahua flower concentrate besides food products made by the VSS members,” said the DFO.