

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

Blogs

[Home](#) [Blogs](#) [Times View](#) [Times Impact](#) [City](#) [India](#) [World](#) [Entertainment](#) [Tech](#) [Sports](#) [Lifestyle](#) [Environment](#) [Science](#) [Spirituality](#) [Q&A](#) [Roots & Wings](#) [Business](#) [Reviews](#) [News](#) » [Blogs](#) » [India Blogs](#) » [Clouds loom above the solar sector](#)

WRITE FOR TOI BLOGS

Clouds loom above the solar sector

May 2, 2018, 4:20 PM IST

Armin Rosencranz and Siddharth Johar in [Voices | India | TOI](#)

The Indian solar sector has seen major growth in the past few years. India is home to the world's largest single-location solar park – the 1 GW Kurnool Ultra Mega Solar Park. Several more ultra mega solar parks are undergoing construction, or are being planned.

Despite such ambitious steps towards the growth of renewables, India continues to be heavily dependent on coal-fired power plants to meet its burgeoning energy needs. The Government of India, while promoting solar and other forms of renewable energy over the past few years, continues to support the development of coal-fired power plants. The government has at times faltered in its solar energy agenda. The government needs to walk the talk to truly establish solar as the primary source of energy in India in the foreseeable future.

At the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris, Prime Minister Modi promised a 33-35% reduction in carbon emissions relative to India's GDP by 2035. He also proposed a treaty-based International Solar Alliance (ISA). ISA aims to raise US \$1 trillion to develop 1,000 GW of solar energy by 2030 in countries located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. ISA is the first treaty-based organisation to have a secretariat in India. Since its introduction in 2015, 61 nations have signed and 32 have ratified the ISA framework agreement. The ISA is India's attempt to establish itself as a global leader in the emerging renewable energy market.

At home, India aims to create a 275 GW capacity of total renewable energy by 2027, and targets to achieve 100 GW of solar power by 2022. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), solar energy capacity in India has increased eight-fold over the past 4 years. In May 2017, the price of solar energy reached an all-time low of Rs. 2.44 per unit during an auction in the sun-rich state of Rajasthan. This was well below the National Thermal Power Corporation's average tariff of Rs. 3.20 per unit for coal-based power.

Even though the growth of the Indian solar energy sector has been impressive, it only accounts for around 6% of India's installed power capacity. Coal-fired power plants account for a staggering 58% of installed power capacity. Instead of decreasing, this coal capacity is increasing. From 2006 to 2017, India added 152 GW of coal-based power capacity. Worldwide, only seven countries initiated construction of new coal-fired power plants in 2017, India being one of these seven. As of January 2018, 43 GW of coal-based power plants were under construction in India.

Coal's continued growth can be credited to its reliable nature and abundance as an energy source. However, if the Government of India wants sustained energy security balanced with environmental preservation, there must be efforts to phase out coal-fired power plants. The growth of the solar sector must be planned and implemented efficiently and quickly.

For the year 2017-18, an MNRE target of 10 GW was set, out of which about 6 GW had been achieved by January 2018. The parliamentary standing committee on energy observed that to meet the 2022 solar target, 32 GW of solar capacity should have been installed by January 2018, as compared to the 20 GW actually installed. The target for roof-top solar is 40 GW by 2022 out of which only 1 GW has been installed till date. In the past three years, the MNRE has been able to use only 66% of the funds allocated to it.

International solar developers have expressed concerns regarding the issuance of approvals. In certain states it is easier for developers to set up solar projects than in other states, where getting an initial approval is an uphill task. There needs to be uniformity in the procedure to get approvals across all Indian states.

The sanctity of power purchase agreements is also a source of concern for solar developers. Some state utilities have refused to buy power at pre-decided rates when there is a fall in the rates in other states. Such incidents create an atmosphere of mistrust amongst developers and can lead to lower investments in the long run. Regulatory mechanisms need to be in place which penalise state utilities for such behaviour, to promote developer confidence.

While India's solar sector has indeed progressed and India is taking the lead for solar development worldwide through the ISA, more needs to be done for India to truly take the lead in the global solar market. India needs to streamline its policies to ensure consistency in regulations across all states. Issues being raised by developers need to be taken seriously and addressed immediately. The MNRE needs to take seriously the observations of the parliamentary standing committee on energy and set realistic targets for complete use of its allocated budget. Because of the slow growth of rooftop solar, financial incentives need to be introduced for home and business owners to install rooftop solar panels. This should lead to a decrease in the demand for coal.

These efforts will help India become carbon neutral and truly set an example for member countries of the ISA, while establishing India as a global leader in the renewable energy sector.

DISCLAIMER : Views expressed above are the author's own.

AUTHOR



Armin Rosencranz and Siddharth Johar

Dr. Armin Rosencranz is a Professor of Law & Public Policy at Jindal Global University. Siddharth Johar is an Environmental Lawyer and a graduate of Jin. . .

[more](#)

FROM AROUND THE WEB



Transforming IT with complete hyperconvergence
CISCO



Enjoy happy holidays for the next 25 years
Sterling Holidays



दोबारा बाल उगाने का 1 नेचुरल तरीका
Regrow

MORE FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA



Salman Khan calls Katrina Kaif his 'baby'
Times of India



Sonali Bendre shows the way to fight
cancer with a smile
Times of India



This is why Shah Rukh Khan thanked
wrestler John Cena
Times of India

Recommended By Colombia

FROM AROUND THE WEB

- Amazon Business-GST Invoice & Bulk Discounts
Amazon SME
- Holiday across the world for the next 25 years
Sterling Holidays
- Worried about hair loss? Here is the best product in market!
HealthyAyurveda
- Publish your brand story here
Colombia
- Download MProfit - Easy to use Portfolio Management Software
MPROFIT SOFTWARE PRIVATE LIMITED

MORE FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA

- Shama Sikander shares her suicide attempt incident
Times of India
- Sonali Bendre diagnosed with cancer
TIMES OF INDIA
- Ex-flames Ranbir, Katrina's viral pic
TIMES OF INDIA
- Watch: Rakhi Sawant's raunchy dance moves
Times of India
- Wedding photos of Mithun's son
TIMES OF INDIA

Recommended By Colombia

VIEW 1 COMMENTS

POST A COMMENT



Vivek Johar

Pening down the summary of the very wide subject requires a lot of time and effort to research. This is very well done research and put up in the ri...

REPLY



**NEXT
POST**

Taking steps to safeguard trade interests of tribals

Next Post

Taking steps to safeguard trade interests of tribals

May 1, 2018, 6:54 PM IST

Pravir Krishna in Voices | India | TOI

Sukhmati wakes up early, because it is Friday, a weekly market day at Lohandiguda in Bastar. The market place is 10 kms from her village. She has readied a basket full of tamarind. The crop was from the tree in her farmstead. Her husband felled the pods on three Sundays. Sukhmati manually removed the shell and fiber and seeds from the pods. It is now ready for sale in the market. She will bear the load on her head and walk the distance to the market. Agents of the merchants based in Jagdalpur will be there with their mini-trucks and sacks and scales and cash. There will be sweet talking and haggling, and then the basket will be softly wrested off her head by the merchant's operative to add to the pile on a plastic sheet in a make-shift tent that serves as a procurement-window.

This is the 'trade' that has been enacted countless times week after week by these two and their forebears for over a century now. There are an estimated five crore Sukhmatis in tribal India, who gather nearly a hundred types of forest produces whose value aggregates to a whopping Rs.2,00,000 crores a year. The produce that begin their journey in the nondescript backyards and farmsteads of Sukhmatis, are raw materials for myriad industries: food, beauty-care products, drugs and pharmaceuticals in and outside of India. The produces return processed and packaged as chocolates, spices, home-care, beauty-care and health-care products, and much more. They adorn the best of retail outlets in swanky malls in urban metros and cities.

This is the curious story of forest produces that are available largely in tribal-dominant pockets. Many urbanites may be aware of, in different degrees, the trade-cycle of forest produces. What they are not aware of is the gross inequity that characterizes this trade cycle. The tribal gatherer, who under law is the 'owner' of these produces, receives barely twenty percent of the last-point sale price of the raw produce; the bulk part gets cornered by a chain of middlemen. At the cutting edge, the first point of sale in the weekly market, the buyer is often a predator, whose credentials are his cunning skills in under-valuing, under-weighting and deliberate under-computation of the exchange payable.

It is a fact widely acknowledged that forests in India have survived mostly in areas that have a high percentage of tribals. This is largely because the tribals traditionally have had an interest in forest conservation and development. Their economy, culture, and every other aspect of life is closely related to forests. They have a symbiotic relationship with forests: the survival of one depends on the survival of the other. Over generations, they have built an enormous traditional knowledge base regarding forests and forest produces.

After 1927, when the Forest Act was enacted, the State adopted a timber-centric, commercial approach towards forest development. Timber, especially high-value timber like teak, found focus. The various 'crops' of the forests (the non-timber products) were dismissively clubbed as 'Minor Forest Produces' (MFP). The fact is that the tribals' dependence on forests was chiefly for these MFPs; to them timber was secondary. It was precisely for this primacy of MFP that they were nurturing the trees. However, tribals were overlooked. Their voice went unheard.

The State's interest being supreme, the mixed forests were systematically replaced by high-value timber plantations. The tribals' protests were disregarded because they were viewed as 'encroachers' and as axemen who posed a threat to forest development. This thinking had disastrous consequences. The forests became places of civil unrest and collective angst. This was conducive to left-wing extremism.

The Government after much thought, which took a rather long time, brought the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Earlier, Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 conferred ownership rights on tribal Gram Sabhas in respect of MFP found in their area. In 2014, the Scheme of MSP for MFP was introduced.

All of the above are steps in the right direction, but they are inadequate to achieve the desired object. Why? Because of several 'gaps'. As a result of the timber-first policy still being pursued by the Forest Department, the area under MFP-bearing trees is shrinking. This is reflected in a general fall in production figures of various MFP.

The trade mechanism of MFP at the primary haat bazar level remains highly exploitative and inequitable to the tribal. As a result of this, even when the market prices appear impressive, the cash that comes to the tribal's hands remains low. Substantial gain is reaped by the long chain of middlemen. This is diluting the interest of the tribals in MFP.

In other words, the first mile and the last mile intervention by the Government to safeguard the tribals' trade-interests in MFP is still pending. The result is that the forest-tribal areas continue to remain hotbeds of unrest and continue to bleed under Left-wing extremism.

The Government has now resolved to address the gaps. Aptly named Van Dhan (Wealth of the Forests), a new scheme has been mooted for training and strengthening the activity of primary processing of MFP in the villages in common facility centres to be called Van Dhan Vikas Kendras.

Trifed, an organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has begun active advocacy to impress upon all concerned for institutionalizing through legislation that a certain percentage of the forests, especially in the vicinity of forest-villages, must be developed as MFP-bearing forests and not timber plantations. This would address the first mile 'gap'. It will ensure sustainability of MFP production.

Another point on which Trifed has stepped up advocacy relates to tribal market (haat bazar) reforms. Infrastructure in the haat bazars, which generally are the first point of sale of MFP by the tribal gatherer, need to be strengthened and the capacity of these bazars must be built to ensure proper weighing/measuring of the produce sold by the tribal and due transparency in the arithmetic and payment made to him by the trader.

Secondly, it needs to be appreciated that the tribal forest gatherer cannot interact equitably with the professional operatives of the mainstream merchants. Hence, collective strength needs to be promoted. Community structures in the form of women's SHGs (MFP largely is a women's affair) must be created, trained and supported to handle the trade of MFP at the first tier so that the predatory middleman, ubiquitous at present in tribal haat bazars, is eliminated/tamed.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the Van Dhan Vikas Kendra scheme from Bijapur (Bastar) in Chhattisgarh on April 14. This should set the ball rolling for replication of such centres in all Schedule-5 districts in the country that have minor forest produces.

DISCLAIMER : Views expressed above are the author's own.

AUTHOR



Pravir Krishna

The author is MD, TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

FROM AROUND THE WEB

MORE FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA

Recommended By Colombia

FROM AROUND THE WEB

MORE FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA

Recommended By Colombia

VIEW COMMENTS

POST A COMMENT



Arihant Men

Farmers & Tribals should get remunerative price for their produce.....

REPLY

Economic relevance of wedding celebrations happily ever after



Economic relevance of wedding celebrations happily ever after

Other Times Group news sites

The Economic Times

इकॉनॉमिक टाइम्स | ईकीनोमिक्स टाइम्स

Pune Mirror | Bangalore Mirror

Ahmedabad Mirror | ItsMyAscent

Education Times | Brand Capital

Mumbai Mirror | Times Now

Indiatimes | नवभारत टाइम्स

महाराष्ट्र टाइम्स | ವಿಜಯ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ

Go Green | Eisamay | IGN India

NavGujarat Samay

Living and entertainment

Timescity | iDiva | Entertainment

Zoom | Luxpresso | Gadget Reviews

Online Songs | MensXp.com

Hotels | Travel Destinations

Cricbuzz.com

Network

itimes

Hot on the Web

World | Politics

Business | Sports

Entertainment

New Cars

Bike Price India

Car Price

Used Cars

Services

Book print ads | Online shopping |

Matrimonial | Ringtones | Astrology | Jobs | Tech Community | Property

Buy car | Bikes in India | Free Classifieds | Send money to India | Used Cars

Restaurants in Delhi | Remit to India | Buy Mobiles | Listen Songs

Real Estate Developers | Restaurant Deals in Delhi

Trending Topics

Samsung Mobile | Micromax Mobile | You Tube | Delhi Travel Guide | Renault

Duster | Katrina Kaif Photos | Sony Mobile | Hindi Songs | Horoscope 2015

Predictions | Asus Mobile | Facebook | Sunny Leone Photos

Copyright © 2018 Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd. All rights reserved. For reprint rights: Times Syndication Service