Value addition
The good quality mahua collected through nets is used to prepare jam. This quality is a prerequisite for processing into any food products.

The following has been ensured for the jam processing:
• Proper drying and cleanliness.
• No moisture retention and fermentation.
• No addition of any adulterants.
• No infestation or fungal and bacterial contamination.

Mahua
Mahua (Mahula in Oriya) is very popular among the tribal areas of Orissa since time immemorial. Mahua, also known as butter tree, is indigenous to India and holds a special position in tribal culture. It is a deciduous tree found both in forest as well as non forest areas in all parts of Orissa. It is found throughout Central India, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Botanical name: Madhuca indica, Madhuca longifolia
Family: Sapotaceae
Local names:
Hindi: Mahua, Bonga
Oriya: Mahula, Minut, Marathi

Harvesting
The perfect harvesting season for mahua flower is from mid March – mid April. Usually the harvesting takes place between 4 am to 12 noon everyday depending on the local weather condition. The primary collectors clean the ground by removing the leaf litter and sometimes setting fire underneath the trees so that the falling flowers would remain free from unwanted materials like leaves and insects. The collection hour starts early in the morning and may continue up to noon where almost all members of the family are involved. Majority of the collectors are women and children. Women are more involved into collection, drying and storage of the product. The collection season lasts for a maximum of three to four weeks.
**Uses of Mahua:**

Flowers (Mahula): The corollas of Mahua flowers are commonly called Mahua. Flowers are edible and form an important content of tribal diet. The tribals have traditionally been using Mahua as a major food item. It is eaten either raw or cooked (boiled, fried or cooked with other ingredients). Sometimes ladoos are also made from it. However, the most popular use of Mahua is in liquor making. The distilled liquor thus prepared is known as Mohuli and is a major source of drink for the tribals of Orissa during all occasions.

Seeds (Tolo): Historically Mahua has been the single largest indigenous source of natural hard fat in the soap manufacturing industry. It also finds use as such and in refined form for edible purposes. Oil is extracted from the seeds throughout the State.

**Therapeutic Application**

- In Charak Samhita, reference of mahul has been given in various therapeutic applications.
- Flowers are expectorant and are used in chronic bronchitis.
- Leaves of Madhuca are effective in treatment of eczema.
- The bark of the tree is an astringent and the tonic is used internationally in rheumatic diseases and diabetes mellitus.
- Madhuca oil extracted from the seeds has laxative properties. It cures piles by relieving chronic constipation.
- It is also used in the treatment of diarrhea and hiccups.
- The tannin content in Madhuca is useful in arresting secretion or bleeding.

**Impact of Better Collection Practice:**

- Use of nets to collect falling flowers.
- No forest fire, soil moisture is retained, no loss of soil bearing micro-organisms.
- Reduction in collection time. More time for the collectors for other productive work.
- Good quality mahua collected. It fetches a high price (Rs. 12/kg).
- The mahua can be used for processing of food products.
- As the entire tree does not get covered by the net, the left over flowers can be used by wild animals.

**Impact of traditional collection practice:**

- The cleaning and burning of the ground leads to forest fire, reduced moisture content in the soil, death of micro flora and fauna.
- The forest fire have resulted in almost no or reduced regeneration of mahua trees.
- The collectors gather all the flowers from the ground depriving the wild animals dependent on mahua flowers for their food.
- The quality of mahua is affected by the current method of collection fetching low market price (Rs. 6/kg).
- The processing of low grade mahua for food products is almost impossible.
- Traditional method of collection involves all members of family and is time consuming (approximately 8 hours each day in the collection season).
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**Family:** Sapotaceae  
**Local names:** Hindi: Mahua, Bonga, Bongal, Mahula, Minul, Marchi; Gujarati: Mahuda; Tamil: Illupai, Elupa; Kannada: Ile; Malayalam: Illu; Poonam; Oriya: Mahula, Moha, Modgi

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