Honey procured and processed by tribals from the forests in Telangana has become the chosen product to bathe the idols of deities at Yadadri - the popular abode of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

The GCC organic honey has been preferred over other brands in the market because of its pure quality by the Yadadri temple authorities. Not only honey, over 20 forest-based products procured and processed by tribals and marketed by the GCC under the brand name, Giri, has been gaining popularity in the market, disclose the Tribal Welfare Department sources.

The Giri brand products include toiletries such as soaps, shampoos, edible products like turmeric, tamarind, chilli powder, and other forest-based products. Some of their honey, aloe vera and neem-based soaps and aloe vera-based shampoos have garnered good feedback.

The GCC has also been supplying its products in the popular department stores chains like Balaji and Ratnadweep to make them accessible to all sections of people. Its products are also supplied to all the ashram, residential schools under the Tribal Welfare Department in the State.

“The turnover of Giri products touched ₹6.2 crore during 2018-19 with a profit of ₹1.2 crore,” said B.M.D. Ekka, Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Department.

The department trained tribal communities for processing the produce procured from the forest for giving them employment and better wages with attractive packing and placing them in the market shelves.

Once the activity is stabilised, the proposal is to group tribals processing various forest products into societies and scale up their operations in future, sources say.

Fortified millets
The Tribal Welfare Department introduced fortified millets in place of fortified rice in the Anganwadi centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme. The change was made after a baseline survey in Asifabad and Adilabad mandals under the jurisdiction of ITDAs which revealed that because of malnourishment, women and children suffered from low haemoglobin count, body mass index, low birth weight and such conditions would later give rise to other medical complications.

After giving fortified millets to pregnant and lactating women and children in Anganwadi centres, the health parameters showed 30% improvement in just 10 months, Mr. Ekka said.

The mandals where fortified millets are supplied are Lingapur, Sirpur, Jainoor and Thiryani under ITDA Ut- noor, Gundala, Allapally and Cherla in ITDA Bhadrachalam and Eturunagaram, Kannaigudem, Mangapet, Thadai and Govindaraopet under Eturunagaram ITDA.

Honey and over 20 forest-based products procured and processed by tribals are marketed under the brand name Giri. • FILE PHOTO