

**Interrelationship between Potato Cultivation and Sal-Leaf
Collection:
A Case Study from Chandrakona Road, Midnapore¹**

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ABSTRACT The four-point crossing at Chandrakona Road of Midnapore district has been witnessing rapid socio-economic changes during the last two decades due to the introduction of potato as a cash crop. Large tracts of agricultural land have been employed for potato cultivation by the local rich agricultural entrepreneurs. Linked with this cultivation of potato a flourishing business of huge cold stores as well as transport have grown up over the period. All these developments have connected this region with the wider economic network crossing the boundaries of the district and the state. Some fifteen years ago the traditional collection of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) leaves from the adjoining forests by the local tribals and backward caste peoples met the local demands only. But nowadays truck-loads of Sal leaves are being transported by a group of non-local businessmen to distant regions of the country. This has not only led to an unprecedented increase in the volume of business relating to Sal leave plates, but it has also given rise to wanton exploitation of Sal plants in the forests