

SOME LESS KNOWN PLANT FOODS AMONG THE TRIBALS OF ANDHRA PRADESH AND ORISSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Twenty-two unknown or less known food plants used by the tribes such as Saoras and Kondhs of Orissa and Chenchu, Reddi, Gonds, Koya, Bagata and Valmiki of Andhra Pradesh are discussed in this paper. Most of the uses of the plants reported by the tribes are not recorded earlier.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of human history, man is using the plants of his surrounding for food, medicine, shelter, oilseeds, fibre, drink, narcotics etc. Some remnants of old civilisation are still remaining in the tribal people of the country. In the present day these people are living in remote areas, some still keeping themselves aloof from modern civilisation.

In order to study the indigenous plants used by the tribal people of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, several field trips were undertaken in these provinces. Observations were made also on local names, process of collection and preparation of food.

In the present note only the unknown or less known indigenous plants eaten by them are discussed.

Many plant species were reported to be eaten as cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, nuts, beverage, condiments and pickles. About 22 plants which are known for their edible products among the tribal inhabitants of these provinces but are not well known in civilised societies are discussed here. A study of some important works on Indian economic plants such as Watt (1889-1899), Wealth of India (Raw Materials, 1948-1971), Dastur (1951), Maheshwari & Umrao Singh (1964), Sundararaj & Bala Subramanyum (1957) etc. indicates that these plants are not commonly known as food plants. Moreover workers on ethnobotany in India such as Bressers (1951), Jain (1964), Jain & De (1964, 1966) have not mentioned some of these as edible plants.

So it is considered interesting to report the information about these plants used by the tribal people for food.

The plant names are arranged alphabetically. After that, the name of the family is given in brackets. For botanical account of these plants,

a reference has been given of the 'Botany of Bihar and Orissa' (B. & O.) or 'Flora of Madras' (M). Thereafter the local names of the plants and the localities where the information was obtained are given. For citing the locality, the name of the district is followed by the name of some important town and then actual locality.

(Abbreviations: K—Kondhs or Kui; O—Oria; S—Saora; Tel.—Telugu; Loc.—Locality).

ENUMERATION

Borreria articularis (Linn. f.) F. N. Will.

Spermacoce hispida Linn. (Rubiaceae). B. & O. 472.

Loc. Distt. Phulbani: Phiringia: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8324.

The young leaves are eaten as vegetables.

Caesulia axillaris Roxb. (Compositae). B. & O. 499.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana-Barakhani: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8237.

Loc. name: Sarvabajin (S.), Guttikuncha (K).

The fresh plants with young leaves are mixed with rice and cooked; these are eaten by the 'Saoras'.

Casearia tomentosa Roxb. (Samydaceae). M. 368.

Loc. Distt. Warangal: Warangal-Chinnaboinapally: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7234.

Loc. name: Chika duddi (Tel.).

The fruits are eaten as pickle during winter by 'Gonds' and 'Koya'.

The milky juice of the fruits is employed to poison fish (Chopra *et al.* 1940, Sundararaj & Balasubramanyum 1957, Wealth of India 1950).

Cayratia auriculata Gamble (Vitaceae). M. 170.

Loc. Distt. Vizag: Lotheru—Lotheru: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7201.

Loc. name: Pallagumadi (Tel.).

The leaves are used in curry by 'Bagata' and 'Valmiki'.

Cissus setosa Roxb. (Vitaceae). M. 168.

Loc. Distt. Kurnool: Nandikutkur: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7256.

Loc. name: Bacchalika (Tel.).

Leaves are used as curry by tribes of Kurnool District. The whole plant is very acrid and the juice if brought into contact with skin produces dermatitis (Chopra *et al.* 1940, Gamble 1936, reprinted 1957, Wealth of India 1950).

Cycas beddomei Dyer (Cycadaceae). M. 976.

Loc. Distt. Chittoor: Tirumala: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8235.

Loc. name: Perita (Tel.).

The tender leaves are eaten as vegetables after cooking. The seeds are processed and also eaten in mixture with 'Ragi' cereal. The crude flour made out of pith of this plant is used in large scale for hand made bread.

Diospyros montana Roxb. (Ebenaceae). B. & O. 542.

Loc. name: Halda (O), Tarel (S).

The tender leaves are eaten as vegetables by 'Kondhs'. Jain & De (1964) have reported the same use from Purulia, West Bengal. The crushed leaves are used for poisoning the fish (Chopra *et al.* 1940).

Gardenia gummifera L. f. (Rubiaceae). B. & O. 450.

Loc. Distt. Phulbani: Ganinga: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8314.

Loc. name: Kurdu (O), Biling (S), Birlig (K).

Ripe pulp of the fruits is eaten. After removing the shell, seeds are also eaten by 'Saoras'.

Jain (1964) and Jain & De (1964) have reported the same use from Baster in Madhya Pradesh and Purulia in W. Bengal.

Garuga pinnata Roxb. (Burseraceae). B. & O. 176.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Panigunda: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8294.

Loc. name: Saradi (O), Sarodi (S), Saradil (K).

The ripe fruits are eaten by 'Saoras' and 'Kondhs'. Maheshwari & Umrao Singh (1964) and Jain & De (1964) have reported the edibility of this fruit.

Glycosmis pentaphylla Correa. (Rutaceae). B. & O. 169.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana-Ladrimi: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8219.

Loc. name: Chauhi (O), Tarang (S), Rasguni (K).

The ripe fruits are eaten raw by children of 'Saoras' and 'Kondhs' tribals.

Grewia rhamnifolia Heyne (Tiliaceae). B. & O. 92.

Loc. Distt. Cuddapah: Kodur-Ballapalli Range: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7287.

Loc. name: Potrenya (Tel.).

Fruits are eaten by tribal people of this area.

Holoptelea integrifolia Planch. (Ulmaceae). B. & O. 847.

Loc. Distt. Kurnool: Kurnool-Pecheru: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7272.

Loc. name: Thapasi, Tarisi (Tel.).

Flowers are eaten as vegetables.

Hugonia mystax Linn. (Linaceae). B. & O. 156.

Loc. Distt. Cuddapah: Kodur-Ballapalli Range: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7298.

Loc. name: Gatrinta, Kakibira (Tel.).

Fruits are eaten by the local tribals.

Indigofera pentaphylla Linn. (Leguminosae). B. & O. 249.

Loc. Distt. Chittoor: Tirumala: Jain & Banerjee C.B.L. 7303.

Loc. name: Pulchintaku (Tel.).

Leaves are sour and put in pulses and curries. They are sold in markets.

I. pulchella Roxb. (Leguminosae). B. & O. 251.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana-Ladrimi: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8228.

Loc. name: Giridiphul (O), Uihef (S).

Flowers are cooked and eaten as vegetables. Sometimes this is also used as one of the ingredient of other vegetables.

'Saoras' take it as 'Uihef'. 'Uihef' is a mixture of its flowers and green pigeon pea seeds. The mixture is eaten with boiled rice and chapatis (made out of *Caryota urens*). The former use has been reported by Jain (1964).

Jasminum auriculatum Vahl (Oleaceae). B. & O. 551.

Loc. Distt. Cuddapah: Kodur-Ballapalli Range: Jain & Banerjee C. B. L. 7289.

Loc. name: Magadhi, Mallatiga (Tel.).

Leaves are used in curry. Such use of this plant in Andhra Pradesh is interesting as Jasmine is one of the most highly esteemed perfumes.

Leonotis nepetaefolia Br. (Labiatae). B. & O. 789.

Loc. Distt. Phulbani: Phiringia: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8299.

Loc. name: Sidho (O), Gubbaphul (S), Gubbaphal (K).

The nectar of the flowers are sucked by tribal children.

Leucas aspara Spr. (Labiatae). B. & O. 788.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana: Jain & Pal C.B.L. 8222.

Loc. name: Gorges (O), Patotap (S), Kuppung-Kucha (K).

The tender leaves are cooked and taken as vegetables.

Ocimum canum Sims. (Labiatae). B. & O. 763.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana: *Jain & Pal* C.B.L. 8226.

The nutlets are soaked overnight in water, the seeds become gelatinous and are eaten.

Phoenix humilis Royle (Palmae). B. & O. 924.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Ramgiri-Randiba: *Jain & Pal* C.B.L. 8265.

Loc. name: Kujji (O), Andeng (S).

The ripe fruits are eaten. The white pith and the tender portions of the leaf bases are also eaten, raw or cooked.

Sphaeranthus indicus Linn. (Compositae). B. & O. 496.

Loc. Distt. Ganjam: Mohana.

Loc. name: Buikadam (O), Gandhakucha (S).

The young scented plants are eaten as vegetables by 'Saoras'.

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