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 Goundus, Kona, 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 (1889-1895), Wealth of India (Raw Materials, 1948-1973), Dastur (1951), Maheshwari & Umrao Singh (1964), Sundararaj & Bala Subramanyum (1957) etc. indicates that these plants are not commonly known 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; T-Telugu; L-Locality)

ENUMERATION

Borreria dcalaris (Linn. f.) F. N. Will. (Rubiaceae). B. & O. 472.
The young leaves are eaten as vegetables.

Casearia tomentosa Roxb. (Samydaceae). M. 368.
The fruits are eaten as pickle during winter by 'Gonds' and 'Koya'.

Cayratia auriculata Gamble (Vitaceae). M. 170.
The milky juice of the fruits is employed to poison fish (Chopra et al. 1940).

Cayratia auriculata Gamble (Vitaceae). M. 170.
The milky juice of the fruits is employed to poison fish (Chopra et al. 1940).
The leaves are used in curry by ‘Bagata’ and ‘Valmiki’.

_Cycas setosa_ Roxb. (Vitaceae). M. 168.


Loc. name: Bacchaliaka (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. 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.


Loc. name: Haldia (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).


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.

_Carissa pinnata_ Roxb. (Bursaraceae) B. & O. 1796.


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.


Loc. name: Chauli (O), Tarang (S), Rasgum (K).

The ripe fruits are eaten raw by children of ‘Saoras’ and ‘Kondhs’ tribes.


Loc. name: Potrenya (Tel.).

Fruits are eaten by tribal people of this area.


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

Flowers are eaten as vegetables.

_Hugonia mystax_ Linn. (Linaceae). B. & O. 156.


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

Fruits are eaten by the local tribals.

_Indigofera pentaphylla_ Linn. (Leguminosae). B. & O. 249.


Loc. name: Pulchintaku (Tel.).

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


Loc. name: Giridiphul (O), Uifef (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 ‘Uifef’. ‘Uifef’ 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).


Loc. name: Magadhdi. 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.


Loc. name: Sidho (O), Cubbaphul (S), Cubbahphal (K).

The nectar of the flowers are sucked by tribal children.

_Lucas aspara_ Spr. (Labiatae). B. & O. 788.

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

The tender leaves are cooked and taken as vegetables.

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


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

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


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). R. & O. 496.


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

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

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