

Wild Food Resource Utilization in Tribal Communities of South Gujarat**Ankita Patel*, Virag Chaudhari, Patel Arti, Deep Patel, H.T. Hegde and R.P. Gunaga***Dept. of Forest Products and Utilization College of Forestry, Navsari Agricultural University, Navsari, Gujarat, India -396 450**Email: ankitakp98@gmail.com**Keywords:** Food, wild, tribe, pods, nuts, mushroom, lifestyle**1. Introduction**

Since ancient times, wild food supplements are helpful in maintaining the dietary balance of the tribal communities. Wild plants are a crucial source of food, healthcare and material subsistence in much of the tribal communities and carry a strong association with their ethnic culture. Wild edibles continue to be a preferred food in much of the tribal communities. A consensus has now been formed that information on wild edibles is an important part of ethnobotanical knowledge. Elucidating patterns of ethnic food culture will help in developing the conservation strategies for those wild resources. With this background, present study was conducted to document the collective knowledge of wild edibles possessed by selected ethnic communities of south Gujarat.

2. Material and methods

Information on the utilization pattern of wild edibles were collected through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method. Data collected from 100 respondents and they were mainly from Dhodia, Kukna, Varli, Gamit and Naika communities of south Gujarat region. Expert interviews with key informants were also conducted to know past and present consumption trends.

Table 1. List of wild food sources utilized by the communities

Sr. No.	Type of food resources	Number of species	Sr. No.	Type of food resources	Number of species
1	Fruit trees	23	5	Tubers	01
2	Green leafy vegetables	09	6	Tree Seeds	01
3	Wild flowers	03	7	Mushroom	03
4	Bulb	01	8	Young shoot	02

3. Result and discussion

It was found that, 40 species of wild food plants belong to 21 families were commonly consumed by the local communities of south Gujarat region namely, Dhodia, Kukna, Varli, Gamit and Naika. The various wild food sources recorded are tree-based food, tuber crops, leafy vegetables, fruit crops, bulb, pods, seeds, nuts, mushroom (Table 1). Study revealed that, in recent days, ethnic food culture is declining due to many reasons like unavailability, deforestation, over-harvesting, indiscriminate way of utilization, change in food preference and modern lifestyle. These factors eventually leading to resource degradation as well. This study generated the baseline data helpful for prioritization of conservation strategies helpful for sustainable utilization and management of these resources. Community based conservation efforts will be more effective way for resource management and maintaining the ethnic food culture of the communities in long run.

Reference

Chauhan SH, Yadav S, Takahashi T, Luczaj L, Cruz LD and Okada K 2018. Consumption patterns of wild edibles by the Vasavas: A case study from Gujarat, India. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, **14** (57).