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## **Tribal Way of Livestock Husbandry: An Ethnobotanical Survey of Purulia District, India in Search for Fodder Plants: Neutraceutical and Pharmaceutical Relevance**

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### **ABSTRACT**

An ethnobotanical survey was conducted in the Purulia district, India in order to explore the use of plants as fodder as a part of the traditional livestock husbandry practiced by the aboriginal groups such as Santhal, Bhumija, Munda, Oraon, Birhor, Mal Paharya, Kharia, Kharwar, Gond and Ho. A total number of 103 informants (78 males and 25 females) were chosen for the interviews and 33 ethnobotanicals were reported as fodder plants for the domesticated animals. Poaceae and Moraceae represent maximum number of forage plants (6 each) whereas, leaves represent the most prolific plant part consumed by the animals. Aspects such as nutrient and anti-nutrient content, pharmacological and neutraceutical significance of the forage plants were added which reflects the scientific and economic aspects of such folkloric uses.

**Key words:** Traditional, livestock husbandry, purulia, neutraceuticals

### **INTRODUCTION**

From prehistoric time, plants have been consumed by man and animals for nutrition squires. Ever since the human race had started domesticating animals, they had to depend on natural vegetation to feed them. Plants have always provided food, fodder, fuel, fibre and medicine to the mankind. Civilizations have flourished amidst plants in order to build an intimate relationship between man and the surrounding vegetation. A branch of botany, now known as ethnobotany studies these relationships and seeks to explain the nutritional and pharmaceutical wisdom of the people who rely so heavily on plants for food, medicine and other therapeutic uses.

In the modern world also, the plants and plant based foods are considered as the prime source of nutrients for the domesticated animals especially for the cattle. Ethnobotanical investigations have always played a crucial role in documenting the fodder plants used throughout the world (Omino and Kokwaro, 1991; Guarrera *et al.*, 2005; Bussmann, 2006; Bussmann and Sharon, 2006; Bussmann *et al.*, 2006; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2011). Fodder plants were evaluated for nutritional and elemental resources, anti-nutrient contents, edibility related toxicity, pharmaceutical and neutraceutical considerations. Nutritional analyses were performed in some of the fodders reported from the traditional systems (Bahadur *et al.*, 2011). Some of these plants were also evaluated for their potential use in terms of nutrient and anti-nutrient contents (Ngodigha and Oji, 2009). Fodder plants are considered as one of the prime aspects of agroforestry considering its economic aspects

(Von Carlowitz, 1989). The fodder and food trees not only provide food security but can add to the economic benefits to the aboriginals using them in the rural livelihood. The present study focuses on some of the well and less known or non-conventional food resources used by the ethnic groups of a remote district of West Bengal, India. The article also provides a light on the possible exploitation of such forage plants by considering their nutrient, anti-nutrient, pharmacological and nutraceutical aspects.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Study area:** Purulia, the Western-most district of West Bengal state of India is located between 22°51'N and 23°42'N and 85°51'E and 86°54'E and represented by undulated terrain and extreme weather. It constitutes an area of 6529 sq km with an altitudinal variation from 250-700 m above sea level (asl). Ajodhya is one of the important hill ranges of the district with a highest peak of Gorgaburu (677 m asl). Santhal, Bhumija, Munda, Oraon, Birhor, Mal Paharya, Kharia, Kharwar, Gond and Ho are the various ethnic groups present in the area (Dey and De, 2012a, b). Several small hills and hillocks are present throughout the landscape. Unsuitable topography and less rainfall are responsible for lack of cropping agriculture in the district. As a result of that, the tribal people residing in the forests of hills and hillocks and open villages, depend on the surrounding wild vegetation for survival. Similarly, the livestock forage is also collected from the forest botanicals.

**Data collection:** Initially, several surveys were conducted at different parts of the rural areas of the district. Informal camps were arranged and villagers were asked for the use of ethnobotanicals to feed the domestic animals. It was a venture associated with the study of ethnomedicine for human being and cattle. An ethnobotanical approach was taken during the surveys as described by Dey and De (2012a, b) with slight modifications in approach as and when required. A total number of 103 informants (78 males and 25 females) were chosen on the basis of their relevant experience and a semi-structured questionnaire was given to them regarding the use of plants as fodder for the cattle. The data was collected and documented as name of the plant, family, vernacular names(s), reporting tribe, consumed part(s) and reporting area(s). Authors have noted a social hierarchy among the tribals and domesticated animal husbandry was found to be a privilege of the upper segment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A total number of 33 ethnobotanicals were reported as fodder (Table 1). Among the plant families, Poaceae and Moraceae represent the maximum number of forage plants (6 each) followed by Fabaceae (4), Combretaceae, Malvaceae, Commelinaceae, Rubiaceae (2 each) and others (1 each) (Fig. 1). Among the consumed part(s), leaves were found to be the most popular diet eaten by the animals (50% of the total plant parts), followed by stem (21%), whole plant (15.8%), fruits (10.5%) and receptacles (2.6%) (Fig. 2).

Use Value (UV) was calculated following the equation reported by Phillips *et al.* (1994):

$$UV = \Sigma U/n$$

where, U is use report number for a forage plant reported by each informant, n is total informants interviewed for a specific forage plant). Quotation Frequency (QF) was calculated following

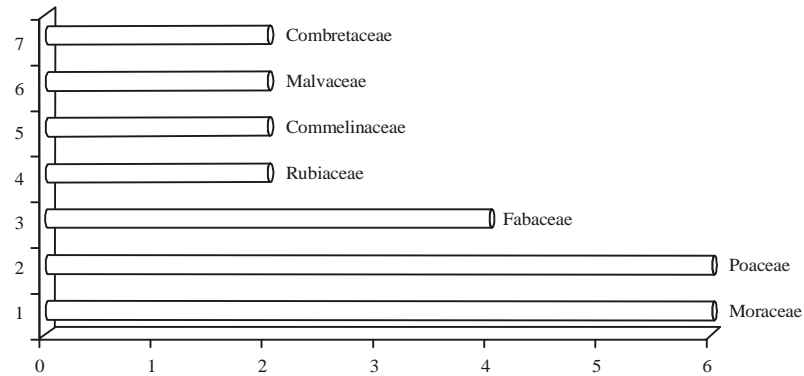


Fig. 1: Distribution of fodder plant families

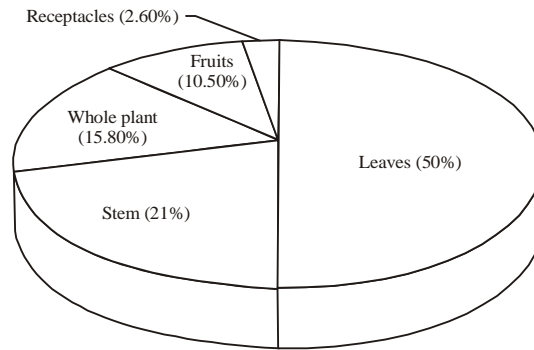


Fig. 2: Percentage distribution of the consumed plant part(s)

Table 1: Use of ethnobotanicals as fodder plants by the tribals of Purulia district

Botanical names	Family(s)	Vernacular name(s)	Reporting tribe(s)	Consumed plant part(s)	Reporting area(s)	Use Value (UV)	Quotation Frequency (QF)
<i>Acacia nilotica</i> (L.) Willd. ex Delile	Fabaceae	<i>Babur, Babla</i>	S, Bh, M	Fruits	Dhabani, Kulai	0.45	+++
<i>Ailanthus excelsa</i> Roxb.	Simaroubaceae	<i>Pirininim</i>	S, Bh, M, O	Stem	Kushtaur, Jambad	0.44	+++
<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> (Roxb. ex DC.) Wall. ex Bedd.	Combretaceae	<i>Dhaunta, Dhaontha</i>	S, Bh, O	Leaves	Kantadih,	0.56	+++
<i>Bombax ceiba</i> L.	Malvaceae	<i>Simbali, Simul</i>	S, Bh, M	Stem, leaves	Jabarra, Neturia, Bahara	0.32	++
<i>Bridelia retusa</i> (L.) A. Juss.	Phyllanthaceae	<i>Kaji, Kaj</i>	S, M, H	Leaves	Baghmundi, Bundwan	0.55	+++
<i>Coix lacryma-jobi</i> L.	Poaceae	<i>Bakri horenga</i>	S, O, M	Leaves	Hura, Neturia	0.09	+
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L.	Commelinaceae	<i>Golgola sag</i>	S, O	Whole plant	Pakhuria, Pilai	0.78	+++
<i>Commelina longifolia</i> Lam.	Commelinaceae	<i>Mad kongra ara</i>	M	Leaves	Jindaru	0.09	+
<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i> Roxb. ex DC.	Fabaceae	<i>Sisu</i>	S, Bh, O	Leaves, green stem	Siringi, Korang	0.21	++
<i>Diospyros embryopteris</i> Pers.	Ebenaceae	<i>Gara tiril</i>	S, Bh, M	Fruits	Kalma, Matha	0.32	++
<i>Ehretia laevis</i> Roxb.	Boraginaceae	<i>Chamror, Kindar kan</i>	S, Bh, M, Kh	Leaves	Balarampur, Naogarh	0.49	+++
<i>Ficus cunia</i> Buch.-Ham. ex Roxb.	Moraceae	<i>Ari</i>	S, Bh, M, H	Receptacles	Chorda, Panchakot	0.33	++

Table 1: Continue

Botanical names	Family(s)	Vernacular name(s)	Reporting tribe(s)	Consumed plant part(s)	Reporting area(s)	Use value (UV)	Quotation Frequency (QF)
<i>Ficus lucescens</i> Blume	Moraceae	<i>Phutkal</i>	S, M	Leaves, stem	Berada, Arsha	0.29	++
<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L.	Moraceae	<i>Poroh, Dumbari</i>	S, M, Bh, O	Leaves	Kalma, Chatni	0.87	+++
<i>Ficus rumphii</i> Blume	Moraceae	Not found	S, M	Leaves	Tentulhiti, Parbelia	0.34	++
<i>Ficus tomentosa</i> Roxb. ex Willd.	Moraceae	<i>Barun, Lupu hesa</i>	S, Bh, M	Stem, leaves	Kandyar hills, Darodih	0.18	++
<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Roxb. ex Sm.	Lamiaceae	<i>Kashmar</i>	S, Bh, O	fruits	Bara Urma, Jhalda	0.45	+++
<i>Grewia tiliacifolia</i> Vahl	Malvaceae	<i>Dhamil, Ahsing</i>	S, Bh, Kh	stem, leaves	Sharberya, Ajodhya	0.56	+++
<i>Habenaria plantaginea</i> (Lindl.) Lindl.	Orchidaceae	<i>Maradichad ba</i>	M	Whole plant	Takriya, Para	0.07	+
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i> (L.) P. Beauv. ex Roem. and Schult.	Poaceae	<i>Saiya, Sauri ghas</i>	S, M, Kh, H	Whole plant	Khenna, Pakhuria	0.54	+++
<i>Lannea coromandelica</i> (Houtt.) Merr.	Anacardiaceae	<i>Nanam, Genjon</i>	S, Bh, M	Stem	Bansketia, Santuri	0.47	+++
<i>Leptochloa chinensis</i> (L.) Nees	Poaceae	Not found	Bh	Whole plant	Ajodhya	0.26	++
<i>Merremia aegyptia</i> (L.) Urb	Convolvulaceae	Not found	S, M	Leaves	Ichhar	0.67	+++
<i>Mitragyna parviflora</i> Korth.	Rubiaceae	<i>Guni</i>	S, M	Leaves	Jaipur	0.31	++
<i>Phragmites karka</i> (Retz.) Trin. ex Steud.	Poaceae	Not found	M	Stem	Balrampur, Jhalda	0.52	+++
<i>Pithecelobium dulce</i> (Roxb.) Benth.	Fabaceae	<i>Bilati amlī</i>	Bh, M	fruits	Gobria forest, Kuilapal	0.58	+++
<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxb.	Fabaceae	<i>Bija-sal</i>	S, Bh, M, O	leaves	Matha	0.76	+++
<i>Schleichera oleosa</i> (Lour.) Oken.	Sapindaceae	<i>Pusra</i>	S, Bh, Kh	Leaves	Sarajang	0.25	++
<i>Setaria glauca</i> (L.) P. Beauv.	Poaceae	<i>Kaun</i>	S, O, M	Whole plant	Palma, Puncha	0.15	++
<i>Streblus asper</i> Lour.	Moraceae	<i>Soor, Saroa</i>	S, Bh, H	Leaves	Matha, Berada	0.67	+++
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Combretaceae	<i>Hara, Hadra</i>	S, Bh, O	Leaves	Punura	0.77	+++
<i>Triticum aestivum</i> L.	Poaceae	<i>Gom</i>	S, Bh, M	Whole plant	Neturia, Kalma	0.89	+++
<i>Vangueria spinosa</i> Roxb.	Rubiaceae	<i>Maina</i>	S, Kh	leaves	Jhalda, Siringi	0.20	++

(Mustafa *et al.* 2012). +, ++ and +++ indicate “quoted by <10, >10 and <40 and >40% of the informants, respectively (Table 1). In the end, the collected data was supported by consulting with the existing reports on the botanicals value as fodder/forage, nutrient, anti-nutrient content, pharmacological and neutraceutical aspects (Table 2).

The results reflect the potential of fodder plants used by the indigenous people of Purulia district in animal husbandry. Earlier ethnobotanical excursions were carried out in the area and plants were reported as active against gastrointestinal problems, snake venom and as potential

Table 2: Relevant reports on fodder, nutrient/anti-nutrient content and pharmaceutical/neutraceutical aspects of the reported botanicals

Botanical names	Relevant reports as fodder/forage/dietary inclusion as livestock feed	Nutrient/ anti-nutrient content	Pharmaceutical/neutraceutical aspects
<i>Acacia nilotica</i> (L.) Willd. ex Delile	Chaudhary and Taparia (1990)	Sotohy <i>et al.</i> (1997)	Gastroprotective (Bansal and Goel, 2012), antioxidant (Maldini <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
<i>Ailanthus excelsa</i> Roxb.	Kumar (1999)	Lavhale and Mishra (2007)	Gastroprotective (Melanchauski <i>et al.</i> , 2010), antihistaminic (Kumar <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> (Roxb. ex DC.) Wall. ex Bedd.	Kumar and Bhatt (2006)	NCF	Hepatoprotective (Pradeep <i>et al.</i> , 2009), antiulcer (Govindarajan <i>et al.</i> , 2006)
<i>Bombax ceiba</i> L.	Chand and Singh (1999)	NCF	Antioxidant (Vieira <i>et al.</i> , 2009), hypoglycaemic (Saleem <i>et al.</i> , 1999)
<i>Bridelia retusa</i> (L.) A. Juss.	Burte <i>et al.</i> (2008)	Burte <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Antifungal (Jayasinghe <i>et al.</i> , 2003)
<i>Coix lacryma-jobi</i> L.	Arora (1977)	NCF	Gastroprotective (Chung <i>et al.</i> , 2011), anti cancer (lung and colon) (Lee <i>et al.</i> , 2008)
<i>Commelina benghalensis</i> L.	Lanyasunya <i>et al.</i> (2008)	Souza <i>et al.</i> (1999) and Gupta <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Sedative, anxiolytic (Raquibul Hasan, 2009)
<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i> Roxb. ex DC.	Larbi <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Larbi <i>et al.</i> (2005)	Nitric oxide inhibitory (Shrestha <i>et al.</i> , 2007), anti-inflammatory (Hajare <i>et al.</i> , 2001)
<i>Ficus racemosa</i> L.	NCF	Bhatta <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Hypercholesterolemia and diabetes protective (Velayutham <i>et al.</i> , 2012), antidiarrheal (Mukherjee <i>et al.</i> , 1998; Patil <i>et al.</i> , 2012), antihyperglycemic (Ahmed <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Roxb. ex Sm.	Okagbare <i>et al.</i> (2004)	NCF	Hepatoprotective (Anthony <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
<i>Grewia tiliaefolia</i> Vahl	Gad and Shyama (2011)	NCF	Antioxidant (Ahamed <i>et al.</i> , 2010), wound healing (Ahamed <i>et al.</i> , 2009)
<i>Heteropogon contortus</i> (L.) P. Beauv. ex Roem. and Schult.	Siebert and Kennedy (1972), Hunter and Siebert (1985a, b), McSweeney <i>et al.</i> (1998) and Naidum and Swamy (2000)	Blake and Richards (1970), Playne and Haydock (1972) and Thirumalai <i>et al.</i> (1990)	NCF
<i>Lannea coromandelica</i> (Houtt.) Merr.			Zoosporicidal (fungi) (Islam <i>et al.</i> , 2002)
<i>Pithecolobium dulce</i> (Roxb.) Benth.	Kundu <i>et al.</i> (1983), Chaudhary and Taparia (1990) and Paengkoum and Paengkoum (2010)	Pinos-Rodriguez <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Antiulcerogenic (Megala and Geetha, 2012), Hepatoprotective (Manna <i>et al.</i> , 2011)
<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxb.	Ally and Kunjikutty (2003)	Ally and Kunjikutty (2003)	Hepatoprotective (Devipriya <i>et al.</i> , 2007), hypoglycaemic (Dhanabal <i>et al.</i> , 2006)
<i>Schleichera oleosa</i> (Lour.) Oken.	Prasad <i>et al.</i> (1991) and Sreemannarayana <i>et al.</i> (2001)	Makkar <i>et al.</i> (1990)	Cytotoxic, radical-scavenging (Thind <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
<i>Setaria glauca</i> (L.) P. Beauv.	Marten and Andersen (1975)	Marten and Andersen (1975)	NCF
<i>Streblus asper</i> Lour.	Akbar and Alam (1991) and Paengkoum (2011)	Akbar and Alam (1991)	Anti hepatitis B (Chen <i>et al.</i> , 2012; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2012), anti-inflammatory (Sripanidkulchai <i>et al.</i> , 2009)
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Rana <i>et al.</i> (2012)	Khanal and Subba (2001)	Antioxidant, anti-diabetic (Kim <i>et al.</i> , 2011; Sasidharan <i>et al.</i> , 2012)
<i>Triticum aestivum</i> L.	Obert <i>et al.</i> (2004)	Gahlawat and Sehgal (1993) and Masud <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Antioxidant (Liyana-Pathirana and Shahidi, 2005, 2006)
<i>Vangueria spinosa</i> Roxb.	NCF	NCF	Antibacterial (Chatterjee <i>et al.</i> , 2009, 2011)

NCF: No citation found

medicine against diseases of mother, newborn and children and also as ethnoveterinary medicine (Dey and De, 2010, 2011, 2012a, b). They not only use the medicinal herbs to treat several ailments, a huge number of plants are consumed by human (unpublished data) and animals directly and/or indirectly. Table 2 represents the relevant literature survey involving the nutrient, anti-nutrient content, pharmacological and neutraceutical aspects of the plants reported in the present investigation. Interestingly, most of the plants were evaluated for nutritional and/or

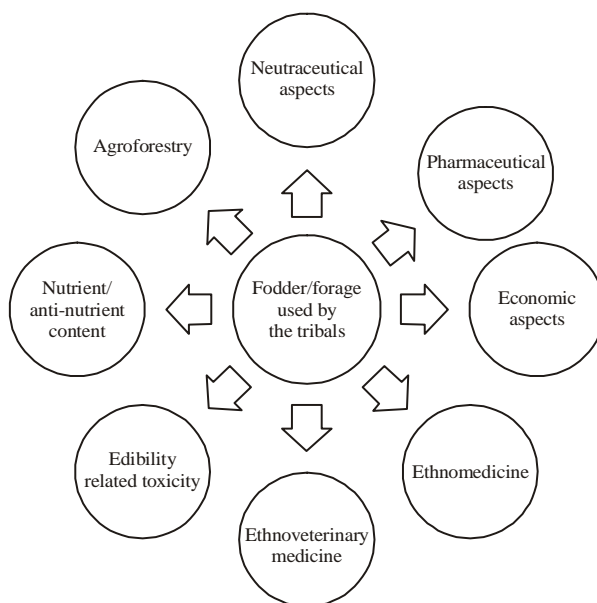


Fig. 3: Scientific and economic aspects of fodder plants used by the tribals of Purulia district

pharmacological efficacy indicating a possible role of food for healing which is these days termed as neutraceutical ability of certain foodstuff (Fig. 3). Fodder plants also hold their importance in agroforestry management. Moreover, edibility related toxicity is another important aspect of plant foods which is more often than not, ignored by the rural people. Proper scientific evaluation of forage plants for anti-nutrient content (such as phenolics, tannins etc.) and toxic chemicals prevent an error of judgement when choosing a herb to feed livestock. In the rural livelihood, the ignorant aboriginals must be conveyed with the latest scientific outcome related to herbal use in order to promote the use of botanicals and prevent the hazardous aspects of toxic plants.

## CONCLUSION

Proper conservation and documentation of both the indigenous knowledge and the flora are required in order to develop a sustainable man-plant relationship. Rapid urbanization, pollution and lack of interest in traditional methods of animal husbandry result in a decline in certain practices. Proper care and scientific evaluation of the folklore is an immediate need for survival and sustenance.

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