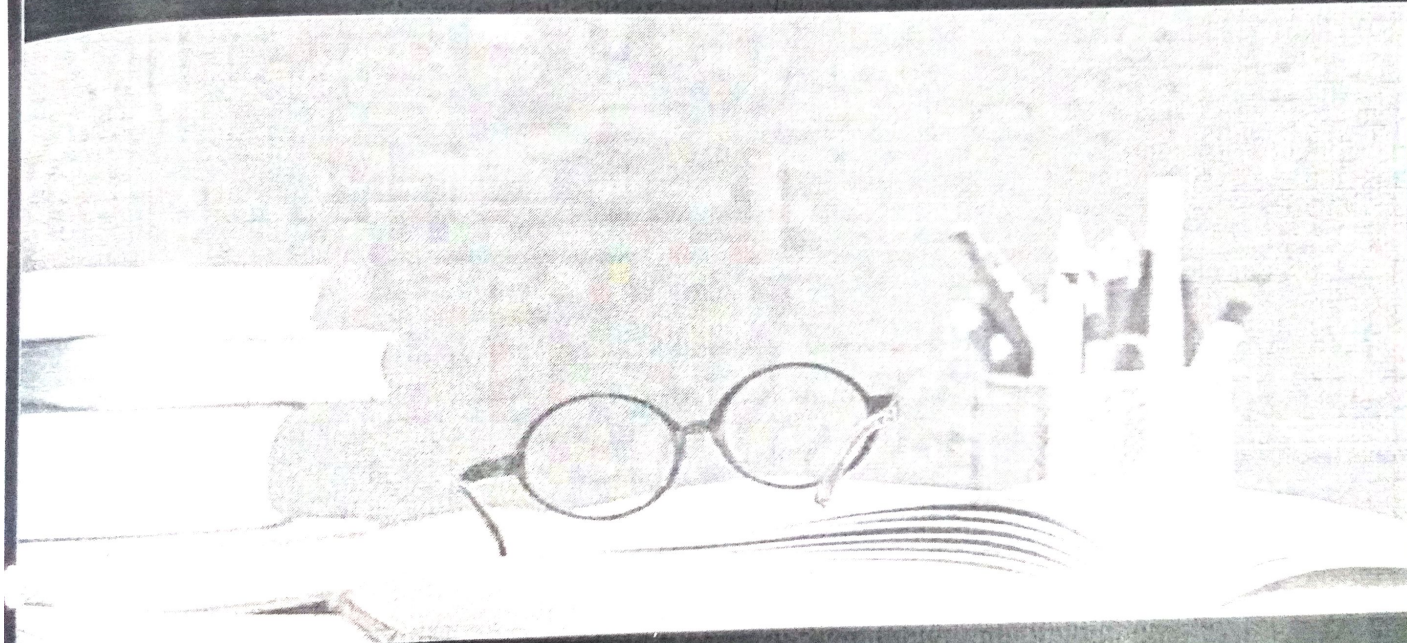


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Exploration of Wild Vegetable plants from Melghat Forest, District Amravati, Maharashtra State

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Abstract

Melghat forest is dominated by *Tectona grandis* (Teak). Melghat forest is dry deciduous forest. The forest has great diversity of medicinal plants, wild vegetables and timber plants. Korku, Gond and Nihal are the tribes of Melghat. The wild vegetables are used by the tribes as a food as well as medicines in different seasons. 21 different wild vegetable plants are studied from the Melghat forest. The wild vegetables have economical as well as medicinal value.

Key words: Melghat forest, wild edible vegetables, Korku.

Introduction -

Biodiversity has become a topic of serious consideration through-out the world. Very few attempts are being made to know it. Melghat forest of Amravati district of Maharashtra state, with its varied physical features, harbor us a great diversification of biological wealth. But in spite of its luxuriant vegetation and rich plant wealth, the forest remain botanically poorly explored. The forests of *Melghat* are entirely dry deciduous and belong to the formation 'Dry Tropical Forests' of the Champion and Seth's "Revised Survey of the Forest Types of India" and fall under the sub-group 5-A 'Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests'.

East *Melghat* Forest Division is situated in the North East of *Amravati* district of *Maharashtra* State and administratively it is under *Amravati* Forest Circle. Geographical coordinates are Latitude $21^{\circ} 13' 14''$ to $21^{\circ} 46' 6''$ North & longitude $77^{\circ} 10' 39''$ to $77^{\circ} 36'$ East.

Area:

This plan covers an area of 56087.60 ha. The details are as under.

Area taken out from erstwhile East <i>Melghat</i> Division	--	30936.81. ha.
Area taken out from erstwhile South <i>Melghat</i> Division	--	14182.96 ha.
Area taken out from erstwhile West <i>Melghat</i> Division	--	10946.76 ha.
Areas of compensatory afforestation		21.07 ha.

-- 56087.60 ha.

Total area

The above areas were finalized as a result of reorganization of various forest divisions and *Melghat* Project Tiger in Amravati district in the year 1998. The head quarter of the East *Melghat* Division was shifted from Amravati to Chikhaldara.

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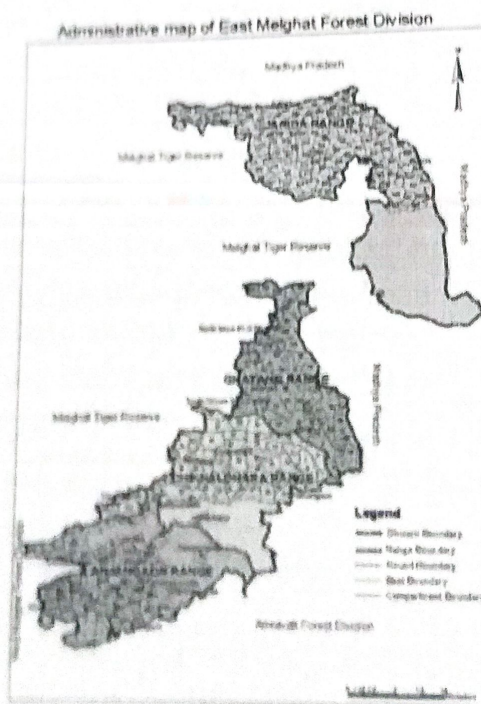


Boundaries:

Betul District of Madhya Pradesh lies to the north and to the east. It is bound by West Melghat and Melghat Project Tiger on South and West. The Core area of Project Tiger is on NorthWest side of the Division. Small section of SouthEast boundary is shared with Amravati Forest Division.

The tract is situated on the branch of Satpuda range to the south of Tapti River, known as the Gavilgarh hills of Melghat, Gavilgarh being the name of an old fortress and Melghat being the name of confluence of Khapra and the Tapti rivers in the north. Gavilgarh fort, now in ruins, is situated along the southern spurs of Gavilgarh hills in compartment number 29 and is about 2km. from the Chikhaldara plateau to the south. Entire tract lies in Chikhaldara taluqa and Chinchona-Nimkhera 'C' class forest lies in Anjangaon taluqa.

Korku tribes of Melghat have more knowledge of Medicinal plants and wild vegetables which is comes from generation to generation. Only they donot have the documentation. So we try to collect it and documents the valuable information. In Melghat Korku use the medicinal as well as wild vegetables for their food as well as medicinal uses. Korku uses rice, kutki, Kodo in their han, wild tomato, wild mungo, wild spinach etc. as a food. They also earn the money from wild vegetables by selling them in weekly bazaar. Holi is a main festival of Korku.



Methodology:

The sites are selected for the enumeration, identification and documentation of wild vegetables of Melghat forest area. The tribes of Melghat forest areas Amzari, Salona, Memna, Mariyumpur which are the tribal villages of the Chikhaldara Taluqa are visited from July to September in rainy season to collect the information and its documentation. The plants are collected, identified with the help of National and regional floras. The edible and medicinal values are noted from tribes of Melghat.

Observations –

Sr. No.	Botanical name	Common name	Family	Uses
1	<i>Amaranthus viridis</i>	Chavali	Amranthaceae	Iron rich vegetable used by Korku tribes in rainy season specially from August to October.
2	<i>Plumbago zelynica</i>	Citrak	Plumbaginaceae	Monsoon vegetable used by tribes of Melghat in September
3	<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>	Suvabhaji	Ophioglossaceae	Leaves of the plant used as vegetable rich in iron content. It is used in Shravan Chatur-mas
4	<i>Cassia tora</i>	Tarota	Caesalpinoideae	Young shoots are used as vegetable.
5	<i>Dijera muricata</i>	Math	Amaranthaceae	Leaves are good source of iron , used as vegetable.
6	<i>Mucuna prointis</i>	Kuyari	Papilionoideae	Fruits are good source of iron.
7	<i>Mililotus alba</i>	Ran methi	Papilionaceae	Leaves are used as vegetable.
8	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Amaltas	Caesalpinoideae	Flowers are used as vegetable.
9	<i>Coccinia indica</i>	Tendule	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits are used as vegetable.
10	<i>Cordia dicotoma</i>	Bhokar	Boraginaceae	Leaves and flowers used as vegetable. Fruits are edible.
11	<i>Capparis zelynica</i>	Waghathi	Capparideaceae	Leaves and fruits are used in vegetable.
12	<i>Boerhavia chinensis</i>	Ran methi	Nictagineaceae	Young leaves used as a vegetable.
13	<i>Dendrocalamus strictus</i>	Bamboo	Poaceae	Rhizome edible.
14	<i>Telosma palida</i>	Jivti	Asclepiadeaceae	Flowers are used as vegetable in August -September
15	<i>Memordica diocea</i>	Kartule	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits are used in vegetable in Shravan maas.
16	<i>Dioscoria bulbifera</i>	Babra	Dioscoriaceae	Bulbils are edible.
17	<i>Basella rubra</i>	Wavding	Basellaceae	Young Leaves are used as vegetable.
18	<i>Diospirus melanoxyton</i>	Tendu	Ebenaceae	Fruit is edible.
19	<i>Commelina bengalensis</i>	Kena	Commelinaceae	Leaves are used as a vegetable
20	<i>Moringa olifera</i>	Shevga	Moringaceae	Leaves flowers and fruits are used as vegetabl.
21	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Chamkura	Araceae	Leaves are edible.roots are edible.(Arvi),good source of vitamin- A.



Discussion =

With reference to the Ethno botanical study of Melghat Forest, the tribes of Melghat Gond, Korku and Nihal use the wild plant parts as a food material in the green stages as well as dry stages. The consumption of wild vegetables in the form of leaf, Fruits, seeds, roots, rhizomes contributes to the nutritional well being of tribal peoples collect the wild vegetables is higher than conventional vegetables. The market which is the good source of revenue generation and livelihood practices.

Conclusion

From the above findings 20 genera from 18 families, 21 species of the forest plants are used as wild vegetables which are non cultivated. The only work required is further facilitation of wild vegetables through awareness programs among the tribal community as well as in the rural and civil community. The loss of habitats of wild vegetables is a major issue in forest conservation plan. The documentation, enumeration and identification of the wild vegetables should be conducted on priority by the forest department.

Acknowledgement

The author is thankful to tribal people of Melghat Forest specially from Amzari, Salona, Memna, Mariyumpur which are the tribal villages of the Chikhaldara Tahsil.

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