

Ethnobotanical Studies of Some Wild Food Plants of District Umaria, Central India

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Abstract: *Paper paper deals the survey an attempt has been made to collect and record the folklores pertaining to the food utility of 38 plants species and 25 family of Angiosperms. The botanical name followed by local names and along with parts used are furnished. The tribal sects of Central India use under normal monsoon conditions, more or less the same food grains as that of civilised people of the society. The food grains include Avena sativa, Vicia sativa, etc. However, during the time of scarcity and famine they utilise other wild plants.*

Keywords: Ethnobotanical, Wild Food Plants, Central India, District Umaria.

1. Introduction

District Umaria is located to the North East of Madhya Pradesh. Mathematically the coordinates of the District extend from 23°38' to 24° 20' North and 80°28' to 82°12' East. It has geographical area of 4548 sq.km. The greatest length of the district is about 150 km. from north to south and the greatest width is about 60km from east to west. The population of the district on the basis of 2001 census is 515963. Out of which about 83% population resides in rural areas.

The district has extensive forests. About 42% of the total area is covered by forests only. The District is rich in minerals. The most important mineral found in the district is coal and as a result 8 mines are being operated by South Eastern Coalfield Limited in the district.

The famous Bandhavgarh National Park (Tala) and Sanjay Gandhi Thermal Power Station Mangthar (Pali) are located in the district. Umaria was formerly the headquarters of the South Rewa District and thereafter the headquarters town of the Bandhavgarh tehsil. It is situated at a distance of about 69 Km. from Shahdol, the parent district. Metalled roads connect the town with Katni, Rewa Shahdol etc., on which regular buses ply. Umaria is also a railway station on the Katni-Bilaspur section of the South-Eastern Railway.

Bandhavgarh is the name of tehsil in Umaria District. Formerly it was the capital of the Bandhavgarh Kingdom of the Magha dynasty, then the head-quarters of the tehsil. At present its headquarters is Umaria. The fort of Bandhavgarh is a place of considerable archaeological and historical importance. It is a natural impregnable fort and stands on a hill, at an attitude of about 2430 metres above sea-level. The Bamnia hill is also a part of the fort, because it is enclosed by a rampart. The fort is on the Rewa-Umaria road, at a distance of about 41Km from Umaria Town.

Chandia is situated on the Umaria-Katni road, at a distance of about 21 km. from Umaria. The railway station of Chandia Khas, known as Chandia railway station. The most important spot of Chandia Khas is a small temple,

enshrining Goddess Kalika. Her mouth is wide open, but her out-stretched tongue is broken. There is also a old temple of god Rama and his consort Janaki. It was the seat of Thakur of Chandia. A small fair meets at Suraswahi Chandia for 3 days in February/March, on the occasion of Shivaratri.

Pali Birsinghpur is situated on the Umaria-Shahdol road, at a distance of about 36km. from Umaria. Another road goes from Pali to Mandla via Dindori. Pali is also a railway station, and there is a rest house for the tourists to stay. The Station is known as the Pali-Birsinghpur station. Near the railway station there is a temple, enshrining Birasini Devi. By popular belief she is Goddess Kali, represented here as skeleton Goddess, but with her mouth closed. Many remains of old Jain idols kept here in some Hindu temples. The annual fairs are held both in October and March, on the occasion of Navaratri, near the temple of Goddess.

Umaria Town The headquarters town of the Umaria district and Bandhavgarh tehsil, formerly Umaria was the headquarters of the South Rewa District. It is situated at a distance of about 69 km from Shahdol. Near the railway station stands a Siva temple, known as the Sagara temple. It was an old shrine, recently remodeled. Its main gates are still intact with beautiful stone statues, carved in Khajuraho models. Near about is Jwalamukhi temple. About 6.5km away from the town, there is another temple, with similar carvings of the Khajuraho pattern. It is known as the Mariwal temple. Umaria is famous for its coal-mines, which were opened in 1881 by the Government of India and transferred to the Rewa Darbar in the same year, mainly to meet the requirement of railway at Katni. The topography is divisible into plains, mountains and plateau. Plateau occupies the middle part of the district. This is called plateau of Baghelkhand. Maikal range constitutes southern part of the district. The hilly tracts of Central India are covered by luxuriant vegetation. The tribals are distributed mostly in the aforesaid hilly tracts of the thick forest. They are adopted to live in these habitations.

A perusal of the available literature reveals that a few regions of Central India have been explored to locate wild food plants and enumerate their ethnobotanical utility. (Jain,

1964,1981; Dwivedi and Singh , 1984; Manilal , 1991; Maheswari , 1984, 1990; Pandey and Oommachan , 1992 ; Oommachan and Masih , 1988; Verma , 1993; Shukla , 1996), Khan,2008 and Ahirwar,2011. Shahdol is one of the key regions of Central India with floristic richness; which remains ethnobotanically unexplored . To fulfill the above gap in our knowledge the present work, therefore, was undertaken to enumerate the wild food plants of this region which the local people use for their day to life.

The present information is based on personal interview between the authors and various tribal sects such as *Gond , Kol, Baiga, Panika , Khairwar, Agaria , Bhil , Bhilala , Korku , Maria , Muria and Patelia* . Umaria district of Shahdol division. The queries were made as per plan suggested by Jain and Goel (1987) . The plants were identified with the help of Floras (Hooker, et. al . 1872-1897; Duthie, 1973, and preserved following the methods prescribed by Agrawal (1983).

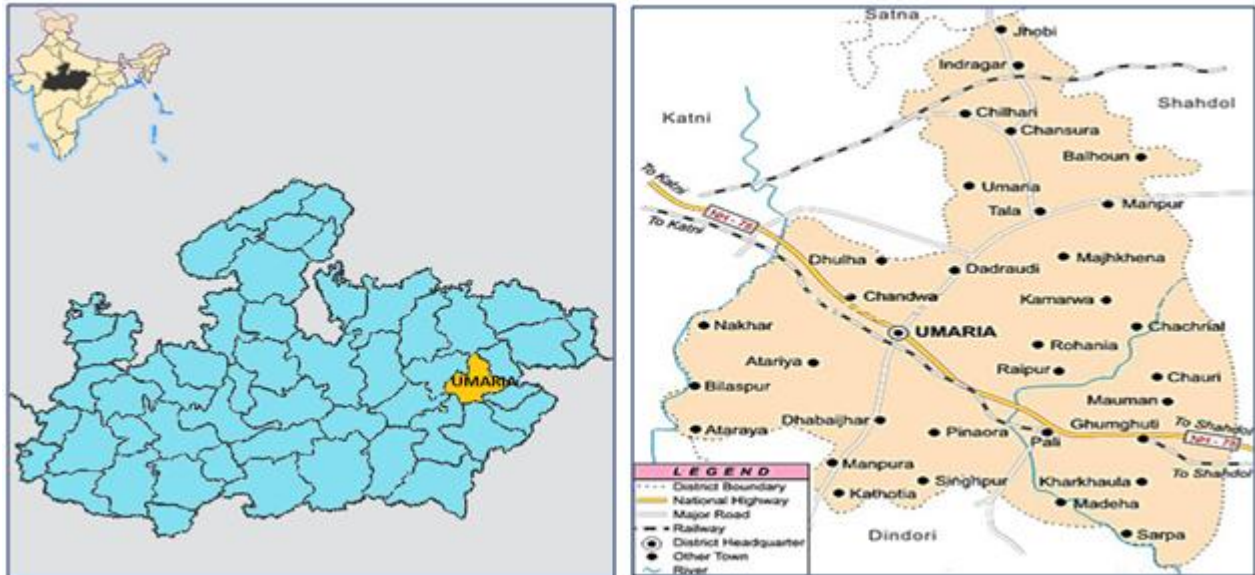


Figure 1: Location Map of Madhya Pradesh and District Umaria.



Figure 2: Location Map of Study area

2. Material and Methods

The 38 species and 25 family included of flowering plants are known to be of Ethnobotanical significance particularly serving as source of food. A brief account about these plant species is mentioned below.

Table 1: Wild Food Plants used by various Tribes District, Umaria of Central India

Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts used
<i>Achyrenthes aspera</i> , Linn	Chirchita	Amaranthaceae	Leaves
<i>Aegle marmelose</i> , corr.	Bel	Rutaceae	Fruits
<i>Amaranthus spinosus</i> Linn	Katili Chaurai	Amaranthaceae	Tender shoots and leaves
<i>Amaranthus viridis</i> Linn	Chaurai	Amaranthaceae	Leaves
<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> Wall	Dhawa	Combretaceae	Stem bark and gum
<i>Annona squamosa</i> Linn	Sitafal	Annonaceae	Ripe fruits
<i>Avena sativa</i> Linn	Jai	Poaceae	Seeds
<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> Linn	Kachnar	Fabaceae	Floral buds
<i>Bombax malbaricum</i> Dc	Semal	Bombacaceae	Young flowers
<i>Buchanania lanzan</i> , Spreng.	Char	Anacardiaceae	Fruits and seeds
<i>Butea monosperma</i> , Lamk.	Palas	Fabaceae	Young Floral buds
<i>Carissa carandas</i> Linn	Karonda	Apocynaceae	Ripe fruits
<i>Cassia tora</i> Linn	Chakaunda	Caesalpiniaceae	Tender shoots

Cassia fistula Linn	Amaltas	Caesalpiniaceae	Leaves and young floral buds
Chenopodium album Linn	Bathua	Chenopodiaceae	Tender shoots
Coccinia grandis Voigt.	Berikand	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits
Coccinia indica W.& A.	Kundru	Cucurbitaceae	Unripe fruits
Cyperus esculent Linn	Gondila	Cyperaceae	Rhizome
Dendrocalamus strictusNees.	Bans	Poaceae	Young stem and leaves
Diospyros melanoxylon Roxb.	Tendu	Ebenaceae	Ripe fruits
Embica officinalis, Gaertn.	Amla	Euphorbiaceae	Fruits
Ficus benghalensis, Linn	Bad/Bar	Moraceae	Ripe fruits
Ficus racemosa, Linn	Gular	Moraceae	Unripe fruits as vegetable
Ficus religiosa, Linn	Peepul	Moraceae	Ripe fruits
Madhuca latifolia, Roxb.	Mahua	Sapotaceae	Flowers and fruits
Momordica dioica, Spreng.	Kheksa	Cucurbitaceae	Fruits
Moringa oleifera, Lam.	Munga	Moringaceae	Tender Shoots and fruits
Nelumbium nucifera , Gaerth	Kamal	Nymphaeaceae	Rhizome
Phoenix sylvestris, Linn	Chhindi	Arecaceae	Pulp of roots
Pueraria tuberosa, Linn	Bidarikand	Fabaceae	Young tuber
Schleichera oleosa, Oken	Kusum	Sapindaceae	Fresh fruits
Semecarpus anacardium, Linn	Bhelma	Anacardiaceae	Fruits
Shorea robusta, Gaertn	Sarai	Dipterocarpaceae	Leaves and Seeds
Solanum nigrum, Linn	Makoi	Solanaceae	Ripe berries
Syzigium cumini, Skeels	Jamun	Myrtaceae	Ripe fruits
Tamarindus indica, Linn	Imali	Caesalpiniaceae	Fruits
Terminalia bellerica, Roxb.	Bahera	Combretaceae	Kemels of the fruits
Zizyphus jujube, Lamk	Ber	Rhamnaceae	Ripe fruits

3. Results and Discussion

The Tribals of Central India in District Umariya, use more or less the same food grains used by other classes of the society during normal monsoon seasons the grains such as *Avena*

sativa are gathered from natural stands growing in their vicinity. but during famine and acute scarcity. They utilise other wild food plants (Table 1 and Figure 3).

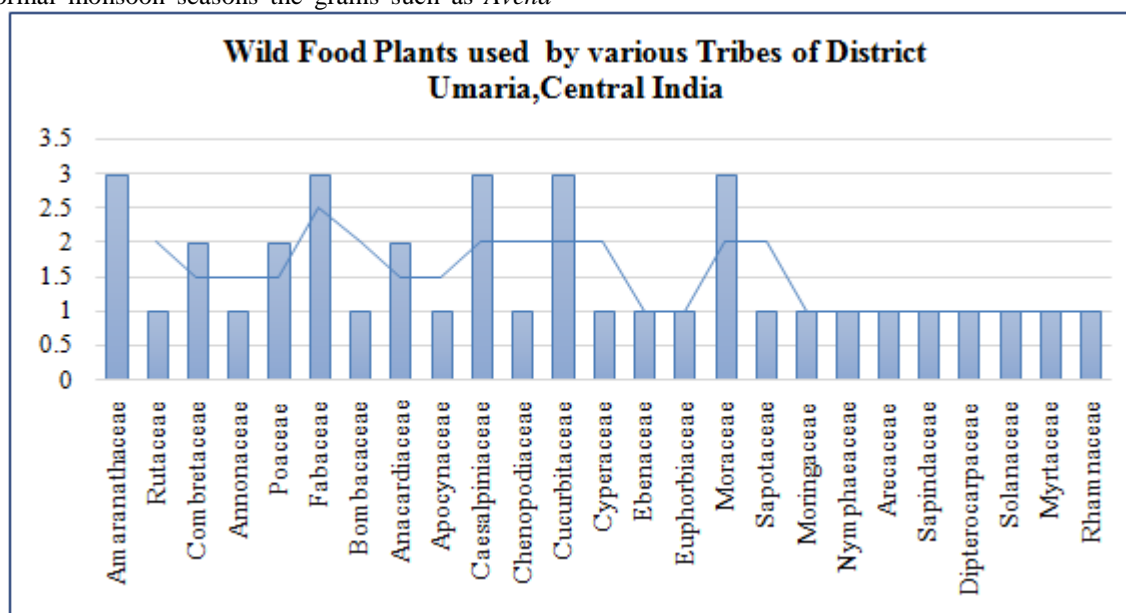


Figure 3: Representing of Dominant Family of the Study area

The underground stem of *Amaranthus viridis*, *Nelumbiumnucifera* and tender shoots and leaves of *Achyranthus aspera*, *Amaranthus spinosus*, *Cassia tora*, *Casia Fistula* are used as vegetables and some plants species uses fruits and *Syzigium cumini* and *Tamarindus indica* are eaten both by Tribes and other natives. Fruits pulp of has delicious taste and is known to be eaten mostly by rural and Tribal communities.

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