

Ethnobotanical study in a village at Rukum District, Nepal

L. R. Bhatta¹

The present study gives information on the indigenous use of various plants locally available at Vijayashori Village Development Committee (VDC) of Rukum District. Forty-four species have been reported to be used for various purposes that include medicine, food, furniture making, agricultural implements, etc.

Keywords: Ethnobotany, Rukum District, Nepal

Plants have been utilised for various purposes in Nepal since prehistoric times. Majority of rural population depend on plants for fodder, construction, food, firewood and to cure ailments. The country has more than 800 species reported to be of medicinal value; about 100 for fodder; 70 for fibre and 450 species for food or as a food substitute by the country's rural communities (Manandhar 1995). In developing country such as this, majority of population depend on traditional remedies. This is partly due to poverty, and partly because the traditional systems are more culturally acceptable. However, not always plants used by the local community for a variety of purposes may suited them, but they are the one best available locally. It is therefore, compulsion, rather than choice become sometimes, the factor for a particular use (Jain 1991).

Previous studies on ethnobotany have been carried out at different places of Nepal. Important among them are that of Banerji (1957), Sacherer (1979), Manandhar (1980, 1992, 1995, 1996), Shrestha (1987), Kaphle (1988), Bhattarai (1989, 1993) etc. But, the same for the Rukum District, especially that of Vijayashori Village Development Committee (VDC) was lacking. The present study is, therefore expected to fill this gap for the district.

Methods

Site

Rukum, a hilly district (area is 2877 sq. km) of mid-western development region, is situated between 754 to 6072 m. Vijayeshwari VDC lies at the southern most part of the district. Most part of the VDC is occupied by a small valley of Chaurjahari. Population of the VDC is 6897 with 1248 households (Sharma and Vaidya 1997) and is inhabited by several ethnic/caste including Brahmin, Thakuri, Kshetri, Magar, Kumal, Kami, Damai, Sharki etc. Rural economy is based on agriculture

and animal husbandry. People depend upon forest resources for fuel, fodder, construction, furniture, fibre, medicine, basketry, etc.

The vegetation consists of riverine forest which includes- *Bombax malbericum*, *Acacia catechu*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Shorea robusta*, *Mallotus philippensis* etc. along with hill sal and *Pinus roxburghii* forests. Much of the forest has been degraded by forest fire which is accelerated at an alarming rate in recent years especially after the Maoist activities in the district.

The information on indigenous use of plants were gathered from local people especially from traditional healers, elderly people of households, women and other knowledgeable persons. In addition, group discussions, individual interviews were also carried out. For reliability, further crosschecking of data was also done.

Specimens were examined and identified with the help of available literature and was cross-checked at the National Herbarium, Godawari. Herbarium of the cited species have been deposited at the Department of Botany, Patan Multiple Campus, Lalitpur. The plant species have been arranged in alphabetical order with botanical names followed by family and local names.

Results and discussions

Forty-four species were reported to be used by the local people for various purposes. Eighteen of them are used as medicinal uses; twelve for fodder; ten for construction, furniture and making agricultural implements.

Leucaena leucocephala, *Grewia oppositaefolia* and *Litsea monopetala* were preferred for fodder. *Shorea robusta*, *Toona ciliata*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Bassia butyracea* and *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii* are used for

¹ Department of Botany, Patan Multiple Campus, Lalitpur

construction whereas *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Mangifera* making, *Engelhardtia spicata*, *Mortis alba* are used for *indica*, *Pinus roxburghii* are used for furniture making agricultural implements (Table 1).

Table 1: Plants used for various purpose by the local residents

S. No.	Species	Family	Local Name	Use	
Medicinal plants					
1.	<i>Acacia catechu</i>	Leguminosae	Khayar	Red thick syrup from boiled wood used for body pain and skin diseases (externally), relaxed sore throat, loss of voice.	
2.	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i>	Acantheceae	Ashuro	Dried leaves are smoked and eaten by the patient of asthma.	
3.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Rutaceae	Bel	Thick pulp is eaten for curing diarrhoea, dystentery constipation and abdominal disorders. Leaf for diabetes.	
4.	<i>Barberis asiatica</i>	Barberidaceae	Chutro	Root decoction is eaten during abdominal pain.	
5.	<i>Bassia butyracea</i>	Sapotaceae	Cheuri	Seed oil is applied on skin to prevent dryness during winter; Oil is edible Flowers are	
6.	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>	Leguminosae	Koiralo	boiled and eaten in diarrhoea and dysentery, bark used in skin diseases. Leaf	
7.	<i>Bombax malabaricum</i>	Bombacaceae	Simal	decoction used in cut, wound.	
8.	<i>Calotropis gigantea</i>	Asclepiadaceae	Ank	Sap is used in case of bone sprain.	
9.	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Umbelliferae	Ghorta	Fresh leaves have marked stimulating and pre healing action and Sarbat (cold drinks) for summer season.	
10.	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	Anap	Fruits edible; bark extract is used in haemorrhages.	
11.	<i>Mentha spicata</i>	Labiatae	Pudena	Leaves stimulant, stomachic	
12.	<i>Myrica esculenta</i>	Myricaceae	Kaphal	Fruits for diarrhoea and dysentery. Bark decoction used in bronchitis.	
13.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Amala	Thirst, cooling and refrigerant an astringent medicine in diarrhoea, haemoptysis, laxative Rind	
14.	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Rosaceae	Darim	decoction with cloves used in diarrhoea and dysentery.	
15.	<i>Sapindus mukorossi</i>	Sapindaceae	Rittho	Fruit pulp is used for hair tonic.	
16.	<i>Semecarpus anacardimn</i>	Anacardiaceae	Bhala	Fruit rind used in piles and skin diseases	
17.	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>	Solanaceae	Kande, Bhatkan de	Fruit is used in headache, body pain, teethache, Root decoction used in abdominal pain. Flower decoction used in fever.	
18.	<i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i>	Lythraceae	Dhange ri		
19.	<i>Zizyphus mauritiana</i>	Rhamnaceae	Bayar	Bark juice used in diarrhoea.	
Fodder plants					
1.	<i>Bassia butyracea</i>		Sapotaceae	Cheuri	Tree
2.	<i>Baub in la variegata</i>		Leguminosae	Koiralo	> j
3.	<i>Engelhardtia spicata</i>		Juglandaceae	Mauwa	"
4.	<i>F.Semicordata</i>			Khanyu	
5.	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>		Moraceae	Nibaro	>>
6.	<i>Garuga pinnata</i>			Ransin	"
7.	<i>Grenia oppositifolia</i>		Tiliaceae	Bhimal	5 1
8.	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>		Leguminosae	Epil-epil	

9.	<i>Litsea monopetala</i>	Lauraceae	Kothemouro	>>
10.	<i>Mai lotus philippensis</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Ruino	>>
11.	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Myrtaceae	Jamun	>>
12.	<i>Toona ciliata</i>	Meliaceae	Tuni	>>

Construction works, furniture and agricultural implements

1.	<i>Bassia butyracea</i>	Sapotaceae	Cheuri	Tree
2.	<i>Dalbergia sissoo</i>	Leguminosae	Sisso	> >
3.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltoni</i>	Gramineae	Bans	> 5
4.	<i>Engelhardtia spicata</i>	Juglandaceae	Mauwa	>>
5.	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	Amp))
6.	<i>Morus alba</i>	Moraceae	Kimu	
7.	<i>Pinus roxburghii</i>	Pinaceae	Sallo	> J
8.	<i>Shorea robusta</i>	Dipterocarpaceae	Sal	y y
9.	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Myrtaceae	Jamun	yy
10.	<i>Toona ciliata</i>	Meliaceae	Tuni	yy

Edible fruits

1.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Rutaceae	Bel	Tree
2.	<i>Bassia butyracea</i>	Sapotaceae	Cheuri	Tree
3.	<i>Bauhinia vahlia</i>	Leguminosae	Malu	Climber
4.	<i>Berberis asiatica</i>	Berberidaceae	Chutro	Shurb
5.	<i>F. palmata</i>	Moraceae	Bedu	Tree
6.	<i>F. semicordata</i>	Moraceae	Khanyu	Tree
7.	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>	Moraceae	Nibao	Tree
8.	<i>Grevia oppositifolia</i>	Tiliaceae	Bhimal	Tree
9.	<i>Morus alba</i>	Moraceae	Kimu	Tree
10.	<i>Myrica esculenta</i>	Myricaceae	Kaphal	Tree
11.	<i>Phyllanthus emblica</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Amala	Tree
12.	<i>Prunus persica</i>	Rosaceae	Aru	Tree
13.	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Rosaceae	Darim	Tree
14.	<i>Rubus ellipticus</i>	Rosaceae	Ainselu	Shrub
15.	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>	Anacardiaceae	Bhala	Tree
16.	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Myrtaceae	Jamun	Tree
17.	<i>Zizyphus mauritiana</i>	Rhamnaceae	Bayar	Shurb

Plants for miscellaneous uses

1.	<i>Abrus precatorius</i>	Leguminosae	Ratgedi	Climber
2.	<i>Arundinaria falcata</i>	Gramineae	Nigalo	Shrub
3.	<i>Bauhinia vahlia</i>	Leguminosae	Malu	Climber
4.	<i>Colebrookea oppositifolia</i>	Labiatae	Dhuesd	Shrub
5.	<i>F. religiosa</i>	Moraceae	Pipal	Tree
6.	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>	Moraceae	Bar	Tree
7.	<i>Grevillea robusta</i>	Proteaceae	Kangio Sallo	Tree
8.	<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i>	Gramineae	Amriso	Shrub

^Plants used for basketry, fibre yielding religious and cultural purposes, fish poisoning, ornamental etc.

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