DISTILLATION OF GHENGTI

Interested to share their secrets.

The authors made the exhaustive collection of plant species. During this process, the tribal people collect the different plant species during rainy season. The plant species used for preparing the keem are called Jaadai. Fruit pulps result in local fermented plant beverage Ghengti.

Ghengti is prepared by a complex process by the use of many different plant parts, but mainly root are used to make local wine. Locally Ghengti is called 'Soor'.

Jaunsar-Bawar is a vast tribal area is one of few remaining citadels of biodiversity in Western Himalaya. The natural resources of the area are under great stress due to ever increasing pressure by the tribals, developmental projects taken up by the local and state administration.

STUDY AREA

This study is a part of taxonomic explorations in Chakrata forests that are integrated parts of Jaunsar-Bawar. The study area is situated between the 30° 26’ N and 31° 2’ N and longitude 77° 38’ E and 78° 4’ E. The area lies in lesser Himalayan ranges Western Himalaya. The whole terrain is mountainous and is broken by numerous streams and Nalas, presenting a very rugged configuration. The entire area is declared as scheduled tribe and the tribals are locally called Jaunsar.

The raw material for the Ghengti consists of either fruits rich in sugar such as Pyrus sativus (Pears), Pyrus malus (apple) or finger millet (Eleusine corocana). About 15 kg of fruit pulp or cooked rice, barley (Hordeum vulgare) and roasted cakes made from flour of the finger millet are kept in a big closed air tight container.

Now about 3 kg of jaggery and one-fourth of keem is added to it. This air tight vessel (locally called Bhatti) is closed appropriately and allow to warm. This mixture is left for fermentation. After 7-10 days fermentation is complete. This mixture is transferred to a metallic container. This wooden lid of a pitch has a pipe and also contains a metallic pot for cold water (Plate 2:A,B and plate 3). Now this pot is put on fire, after few hours this is distilled. Ghengti is collected and allow to cold, and cold Ghengti is ready to use.

CONSUMPTION OF GHENGTI:

Ghengti is consumed by the tribals in many occasions, in the month of January, they eat mutton throughout the whole month, at festivals and gatherings and enjoy local alcoholic beverage known as 'Ghengti' served by the lady of the host family. 'Keem is the starter in the form of cakes made up of 16,9,8,2 and 1 roots, whole plants, leaves, bulbil and fruit respectively of the 36 plant species collected by the Jadai. Fruit pulps result in local fermented plant beverage Ghengti.

PREPARATION OF KEEM:
The starter of the Ghengti is known as 'Keem'. The different plant species are made in cake form. In this process, the tribals collect the different plant species during rainy season. The plant species used for preparing the keem are called Jadai and the people involved in this process are called Jadai.

About 8 kg of chopped fresh twigs of Cannabis sativa, approx. 5 kg of Sapindus mukorossi and about 10-15 kg of different plant species (as listed in the table 1) are dried in shade and powdered. This powder is mixed with barley (Hordeum vulgare).

The mixture of above plant species is added to a sufficient quantity of Jarayas (infusion of finely chopped leaves and tender parts of Melia azadirachta, Zanthoxylum armatum, Luecas lanata and Diclerpta bupleuroides) in a big container for whole night and doughed into a cake of about 2-4 kg. Plate (A,B).

Many cakes are prepared by repeating this process round the year. Now these cakes are processed by placing them on plant bed made up of tender shoot of Cannabis sativa and Pinus roxburghii, alternatively between cakes in a closed room. This set up is allowed to remain for 24 days. On 25th day, the room is opened and cakes are put upside down, these cakes are air dried in open sun. Dried cakes are then used for the fermentation of liquor.

Interestingly 50% of the total species are annual and 50% are perennial (fig.3).

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KEYWORDS : Keem, Ghengti, Jaunsar- Bawar, Jadai.
The tribal people assemble and sit in a circle. Then Ghengti is poured in bowls (locally called katora) and then the head lady of the family serve it to all circled people (Plate 4).

Table 1: Plant species used for the preparation of keem

| Botanical Name                 | Family            | Vernacular Name | Part used  |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Achyranthes aspera L.          | Amarantaceae      | Uang, Litchkuri.| Root       |
| Adhatoda zeylanica Medik.      | Acanthaceae       | Banshoi         | Root       |
| Dicenpera bugleoides Nees.     | Acanthaceae       | Kathmul.        | Whole plant|
| Artemisia roxburghiana Wall. ex Bess. | Asteraceae     | Chhamar.        | Root       |
| Arachne cordifolia (Decne.) Hurusawa. | Euphorbiaceae | Bharoi, Bhati. | Leaves     |
| Euphorbia royleana Boiss.      | Euphorbiaceae     | Suruth, Suroi.  | Root       |
| Boerhavia diffusa L.           | Nyctaginaceae     | Patarchatta     | Whole plant|
| Berberis lysium Royle.         | Berberidaceae     | Kashmal, Kashmoi.| Root       |
| Cannabis sativa L.             | Cannabaceae       | Bhang.          | Leaves     |
| Carissa opaca Stapf ex Hanes.  | Apocynaceae       | Karonda.        | Root       |
| Callicarpa macrophylla Vahl.   | Verbenaceae       | Dahiya.         | Whole plant|
| Vitex negundo L.               | Verbenaceae       | Suani, Shuanooi.| Leaves     |
| Cassia tora L.                 | Caesalpinaceae    | Panvar          | Whole plant|
| Indigofera heterantha Wall     | Papilionaceae     | Kathi, Torki.   | Whole plant|
| Cinnamomum tamala (Buch.-Ham.) Nees. ex Eberm. | Lauraceae       | Guladra         | Leaves     |
| Cassapleos pariera L.          | Menispermaceae    | Batao, Parh.    | Root       |
| Colebrookia oppositifolia Sm.  | Lamiaceae         | Bhirmoli.       | Root       |
| Luecas lanata Bent.            | Lamiaceae         | Bish-kopra.     | Whole plant|
| Royalea cinerva (D. Don) Bail. | Lamiaceae         | Karuon.         | Whole plant|
| Cymbopogon martini (Roxb.) Wats. | Poaceae          | Parhu.          | Root       |
| Datura stramonium L.           | Solanaceae        | Dhantra.        | Leaves     |
| Physalis minima L.             | Solanaceae        | Latkanya.       | Whole plant|
| Dioscorea bulbifera L.         | Dioscoreaceae     | Gentihi.        | bulbils    |
| Ficus semicordata Buch.-Ham. ex Sm. | Moraceae      | Khaniu.         | Fruit      |
| Geranium ocellatum Camb.       | Geraniaceae       | Nir-bishi, Laljhari. | Root |
| Parthenocissus semicordata (Wall.) Planch. | Vitaceae      | Dakh.           | Whole plant|
| Melia azadirach L.             | Meliaceae         | Dekreoi, Dekreo.| Root       |
| Punica granatum L.             | Punicaceae        | Dareon, Darmetu.| Root       |
| Pinea roxburghii Sargent       | Pinaceae          | Saral, Chirliata.| Root       |
| Rubus niveus Thunb.            | Rosaceae          | Acheon, Achoi.  | Root       |
| Rhus parviflora Roxb.          | Anacardiacae      | Ninaw.          | Root       |
| Sapindus mukorossi Gaertn.     | Sapindaceae       | Arttu.          | Leaves     |
| Syzygium cumini L.             | Myrtaceae         | Jammoi.         | Bulbils    |

Fig. 1: Growth forms of Plant Species used in preparation of Soor

Fig. 2: Plant parts used in preparation of Soor

Fig. 3: Annual/Perennial species in making of Ghengti

Plate 3: Distillation process of Ghengti

Plate 4: Locals consuming the Ghengti during an occasion
Plate 1: (A, B) : Starter of the Ghengti (keem)

Plate 2: (A, B) : Extraction of Ghengti through furnace (bhatti)

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