

## WILD FOOD PLANT RESOURCES OF *KOMKAR ADI* TRIBE OF UPPER SIANG DISTRICT IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA

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### Abstract

Upper Siang is endowed with a variety of wild edible plants (WEPs) ranging from fruits and leafy vegetables to tubers utilized by the residents. Data were collected during 2016-2017 through unstructured interview and consultation with key informants. Hundred twenty two species were documented that belong to sixty families, amongst them Asteraceae is the dominant family accounting 7 species, next to it is Rosaceae and Urticaceae with six species and is followed by Anacardiaceae, Lauraceae, Lamiaceae and Solanaceae with 4 species each. Ten families like Anacardiaceae, Arecaceae etc. with having three species each, thirteen families with 2 species each, and rest thirty two families with 1 species each. The dominant habit was found to be herbs, and the most widely used part is tender leafy shoot. Most commonly utilized WEPs include *Piper pedicellatum*, *Zanthoxylum oxyphyllum*, *Clerodendrum glandulosum*, *Solanum americanum* and *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*.

**Keywords:** Ethnobotany; Wild edible plants; *Komkar Adi*; Arunachal Pradesh

### INTRODUCTION

Arunachal Pradesh is the largest state of Northeast India covering an area of 83,743 km<sup>2</sup> and is located within one of the richest biodiversity hotspot in the world, the eastern Himalayas. It has 68,757 km<sup>2</sup> under forest cover, with very rich floral and faunal diversity due to its physiographic variation of altitude ranging from 150 to 6500 meters and also varied climatic condition. The original inhabitants of Arunachal Pradesh are tribal people belonging to 26 major tribes and 110 sub tribes. These tribes have the rich repository of local culture and healing tradition acquired through close observation of nature. Only few publications have appeared on ethnobotanical wisdom of some subtribe of *Adi* community of Arunachal Pradesh (Srivastav et al, 2009) where majority dialectical subgroup of *Adi* community including *Komkar Adi* are still remaining undocumented. The consumption of wild plants is one of the strategies adopted by the

local people for sustenance and is intrinsically linked to their cultural system and is inseparable component (Angami et al., 2006). Use of large number of wild species by the tribal to meet their diverse requirement is largely due to the prevalence of diversity of vegetation in the area (Katewa, 2003). The wild edible plants are usually considered as a valuable resource, which can be used for development of new crop species (Chaithanya et al., 2015), and they also contain higher amount of nutrients and bioactive compound than many other cultivated plants (Payum et al., 2013). Food gathering and harvesting of forest product is a common activity of the local communities. Enhanced use of these resources would not only support the food shortage but also will contribute towards the economy of the region. Currently there is renewed global interest in documenting ethnobotanical information on neglected wild edible food sources (Bharucha et al., 2010; Kar et al., 2012). Since traditional knowledge on wild edibles is eroded through acculturation and the

loss of plant biodiversity, promoting research on wild food plants is crucial in order to safeguard this information for future conservation and sustainable utilization (Asfaw, 2009; Kar et al., 2012).

### STUDY AREA

The present study is focused on the documentation of wild edible plants of *Komkar Adi* of Upper Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh (Figure 1). Komkar village is a small hamlet situated in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The village is bounded on the east by Simong, Maryang,

west by Karko, Pangkang, north by Yingkong, south by Geku, Dite-dime. It lies on the foothill of south-eastern part of upper Siang district under Geku circle. The forest type is basically tropical and subtropical. *Komkar Adis* are mostly a forest dwellers and their primary occupation is agriculture, fishing and hunting. The village comprises of about 320 household with a total population of over 3500 souls. Though the population is very less but they possess a strong base of traditional knowledge about forest and ecosystem.

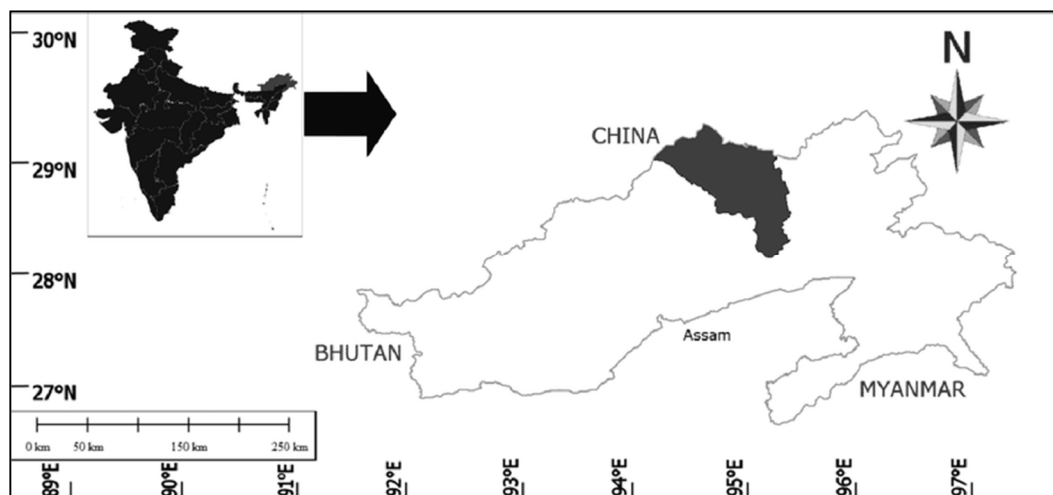


Figure 1: Study area- the Upper Siang District in Arunachal Pradesh

### METHODOLOGY

Ethnobotanical information was collected with the help of local experts and elderly people of the village. The data such as vernacular names, local use and parts used were collected through unstructured interviews among the key informants. Extensive field survey with the help of knowledgeable local resident were conducted and voucher specimens and photographs were collected for

each ethnobotanical species encountered. Voucher specimens collected were identified with the help of relevant floras such as Kanjilal et al. (1934 – 1940), Hooker (1885) as well as e-floras of China. The identification was further confirmed by consultation of herbarium deposited in Herbaria of Botanical survey of India, Arunachal Pradesh Field station (ARUN). The herbarium specimens were deposited in the Herbarium of Arunachal University (HAU), Department of Botany,

RGU, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh for future reference.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study have recorded 122 taxa of wild edible plants which belonging to 60 families (Table 1). Asteraceae is the largest family with 7 taxa followed by Rosaceae and Urticaceae with 6 taxa, Anacardiaceae, Lauraceae and Solanaceae with 4 taxa each, Arecaceae, Brassicaceae, Bigoniaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Dioscoreaceae, Moraceae, Polygonaceae, Polygraceae, Rubiaceae, Rutaceae with 3 taxa each and Araliaceae, Caryophyllaceae, Gesneriaceae, Lamiaceae, Ophioglossaceae, Oxalidaceae, Primulaceae,

Phyllanthaceae, Verbenaceae, Violaceae, Zingiberaceae with 2 taxa each. The rest 33 taxa are belonging to different plant families with one species in each.

Of the total 122 edible plant reported, 50 species are harvested from tender shoots, 37 species are fruits, 7 species are whole plant part origin, another 7 species are of seed origin, 5 species are inflorescence parts origin, 3 species are petiole, another 3 species comprises of bark and roots, and 5 edible mushrooms. It is also found, herbs dominates with 53 species, followed by tree- 30 species, shrubs- 23 species, climbers- 7 species and lianas-2 species.

Table 1: Checklist of ethnobotanically significant wild food plant resources of *Komkar Adi*

Sl.	Botanical name [Family]; Vernacular name	Habit	Part used and its uses
1.	<i>Agapetes macrantha</i> var. <i>grandiflora</i> (Hook.f.) D. Banik and Sanjappa [Ericaceae]; Asi Giri	Climber	Young flowers are sweet in taste
2.	<i>Amomum pterocarpum</i> Thwaites [Zingiberaceae]; Taje	Herb	Flower is eaten as vegetable
3.	<i>Amonum subulatum</i> Roxb. [Zingiberaceae]; Taling	Herb	Tender shoot and ripe fruits are eaten raw
4.	<i>Aralia armata</i> (Wall ex. Don) Seem. [Araliaceae]; Tataterang	Tree	Tender shoots are boiled and served as vegetable
5.	<i>Ardisia solanacea</i> (Poir) Roxb. [Primulaceae]; Goyakpin	Shrub	Tender shoot are cooked as vegetable
6.	<i>Artocarpus lacucha</i> Buch.Ham. [Artocarpaceae]; Lirang	Tree	Fruit is sour in taste
7.	<i>Asystasia neesiana</i> (Wall.) Lindau [Acanthaceae]; Obul	Herb	Leaves served as vegetable
8.	<i>Auricularia auricularia-judae</i> [Auriculariaceae]; Koko Nyorong	Fungus	Edible
9.	<i>Baccauria ramiflora</i> Lour. [Phyllanthaceae]; Bureng	Tree	Ripe fruit is edible
10.	<i>Bambusa balcooa</i> Roxb.; [Poaceae] Dibang	Herb	Young shoot is eaten as vegetable
11.	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> L. [Fabaceae] Okjok	Tree	Tender shoot are eaten as vegetable
12.	<i>Begonia aborensis</i> Dunn [Begoniaceae]; Sisibaying	Herb	Petiole eaten raw

13.	<i>Begonia palmata</i> D.Don [Bignoniaceae]; Sisibaying	Herb	Long petiole are eaten raw
14.	<i>Begonia roxburghii</i> A.DC. [Bignoniaceae]; Sisibaying	Herb	Long petiole is eaten raw
15.	<i>Biden pilosa</i> L. [Asteraceae]; Tanggom oying	Herb	Tender shoot served as vegetable
16.	<i>Boeica fulva</i> C.B. Clarke [Gesneriaceae]; Jongku	Under shrub	Leaves serve as vegetable
17.	<i>Bohmeria pendulifolia</i> Wedd. ex D.G.Long [Urticaceae]; Nyot-kyang	Shrub	Tender shoot boiled as vegetable
18.	<i>Brachystemma calycinum</i> D.Don [Caryophyllaceae]	Herb	Leaves are eaten as vegetable
19.	<i>Calamus erectus</i> Roxb. [Arecaceae]; Tara	Liana	Roasted tender shoot eaten as chutney and unripe fruit is used as substitute of beetle nut
20.	<i>Calamus flagellum</i> Griff. Ex Mart [Arecaceae]; Yoyi	Liana	Roasted shoot are served as chutney and ripe fruit is also edible
21.	<i>Callicarpa arborea</i> Roxb. [Lamiaceae]; Lalu	Tree	Bark of the tree is eaten along with <i>Rubus paniculatus</i> Sm
22.	<i>Canarium strictum</i> Roxb. [Bursaceae]; Hilum	Tree	Fruit cover and cotyledon are eaten.
23.	<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i> L. [Brassicaceae]; Oram-petsik	Herb	Whole plant boiled as vegetable
24.	<i>Castanopsis indica</i> (Roxb. ex Lindl.) A.DC. [Fagaceae]; Sirang	Tree	Seed cotyledon is eaten
25.	<i>Chenopodium album</i> L. [Amarantaceae]; Jilimili	Herb	Tender shoot serve as vegetable
26.	<i>Cinnamomum bejolghota</i> (Buch.-Ham.) Sweet [Lauraceae]; Hipir Ayin	Tree	Young fruit is eaten as chutney
27.	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> Blume [Lauraceae]; Siri Pori	Tree	Bark used as spices
28.	<i>Citrus medica</i> L. [Rutaceae]; Hingkom	Tree	Ripe fruit is eaten
29.	<i>Clerodendron glandulosam</i> Lindl. [Lamiaceae]; Ongin	Shrub	Leaves used as vegetable
30.	<i>Crassocephalum crepidioides</i> Benth. [Asteraceae]; Ibel	Herb	Tender shoot is boiled and eaten
31.	<i>Dendrocalamus hamiltonii</i> Nees and Arn. ex Munro [Poaceae]; Eemo	Herb	Young shoot is eaten as vegetable and also preserve in fermented form. Fermented shoot is use for inflammation, burns and insect bites
32.	<i>Dicranopteris linearis</i> (Burm.f.) Underw. [Gleicheniaceae]; Lirang	Herb	Tender frond taken as vegetable
33.	<i>Dioscorea alata</i> L. [Dioscoreaceae]; Ramet	Climber	Rhizome is edible
34.	<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> L. [Dioscoreaceae]; Engin	Climber	Rhizome is roasted or cook as vegetable

35.	<i>Dioscorea pentaphylla</i> L. [Dioscoreaceae]; Uli	Climber	Aerial rhizome is edible
36.	<i>Diplazium esculentum</i> (Retz) [Athyriaceae]; Takang	Herb	Fronde is eaten as vegetable
37.	<i>Duschesnia indica</i> (Andrews) Focke [Rosaceae]; Eki Tangkin	Herb	Fruits are eaten by children
38.	<i>Embelia ribes</i> Burm.f. [Primulaceae]; Hidum pongkung	Shrub	Tender shoot used as vegetable
39.	<i>Erigeron cannadensis</i> (L.) Cronquist [Asteraceae]; Ingkobodong	Herb	Leaves are used as vegetable
40.	<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i> Moench [Polygonaceae]; Lompuk	Herb	Leaves are cooked as vegetable
41.	<i>Ficus auriculata</i> Lour. [Moraceae]; Tapang	Tree	Ripe fruit are eaten
42.	<i>Ficus hirta</i> Vah. [Moraceae]; Takpi	Tree	Leaves are used in fermenting soya bean
43.	<i>Ficus semicordata</i> Buch-Ham ex Sm. [Moraceae]; Takuk	Tree	Ripe fruit are eaten
44.	<i>Fissistigma polyanthum</i> (Hook.f. & Thomson ) Merr. [Annonaceae]; Rika Riya	Liana	Ripe fruit is eaten
45.	<i>Gnaphalium affine</i> D.Don [Asteraceae]; Paaput	Herb	Leaves are eaten raw or as vegetable
46.	<i>Gnaphalium polycaulon</i> Pers. [Asteraceae]; Paaput	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetable
47.	<i>Gynura cosimbua</i> D. (Don) S.More [Asteraceae]; Paaput	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetables
48.	<i>Hedyotis scandens</i> Roxb. [Rubiaceae]	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetable
49.	<i>Helminthostachys zeylinica</i> (L.) Hook [Ophioglossaceae]; Asi Bisi	Herb	Young frond are eaten as vegetable
50.	<i>Hodgsonia macrocarpa</i> (Blume) Cong. [Cucurbitaceae]; Tatar Api	Climber	Big cotyledons are eaten after roasting.
51.	<i>Houttuynia cordata</i> Thumb. [Sauraceae]; Roram	Herb	Whole plant is eat as chutney and also use for stomachache.
52.	<i>Impatiens bracteolata</i> Hook. f. [Balsaminaceae]; Nanor tangkor	Herb	Tender shoot serve as vegetable
53.	<i>Lentinula edeodes</i> [Marasmiaceae]; Lolum	Fungus	Edible
54.	<i>Leucosceptrum canam</i> Sm. [Lamiaceae]; Toti	Shrub	Young inflorescence is sweet in taste
55.	<i>Lindenbergia hookeri</i> C.B.Clarke ex. Hook.f. [Orobanchaceae]	Shrub	Flowers sour in taste
56.	<i>Litsea cubeba</i> (Lours.) Pers. [Lauraceae]; Rayil, Tayir	Tree	Fruit used as spices
57.	<i>Livistonia jenkinsiana</i> Griffith [Arecaceae]; Taek	Tree	Ripe fruit is eat as chutney
58.	<i>Maesa indica</i> (Roxb.) A.DC. [Myrsinaceae]; Etjun Jayun	Shrub	Ripe fruit are juicy and tender shoot are boiled as vegetable
59.	<i>Mangifera sylvatica</i> Roxb. [Anacardiaceae]; Tagung	Tree	Ripe fruit is eaten
60.	<i>Melastoma malabathricum</i> L. [Melastomataceae]; Kajirai	Shrub	Ripe fruit are edible
61.	<i>Melothiria heterophylla</i> (Lour.) Cong. [Cucurbitaceae]; Yongkoyomi	Climber	Ripe fruit is sweet in taste

62.	<i>Musa aurantiaca</i> G.Mann ex Baker [Musaceae]; Dumji	Herb	Ripe fruit is eaten
63.	<i>Musa balbisiana</i> Colla [Musaceae]; Paksum	Herb	Young inflorescence is used as vegetable
64.	<i>Mussaenda glabra</i> Vahl [Rubiaceae]; Takdeng	Climber	Tender shoot served as vegetable
65.	<i>Mussaenda roxburghii</i> Hook.f. [Rubiaceae]; Akshap	Shrub	Tender shoot is eaten as vegetable
66.	<i>Myrica esculenta</i> Buch.-Ham Ex. D.Don [Myricaceae]; Tatir	Tree	Ripe fruit are sweet in taste
67.	<i>Nasturtium microphyllum</i> (Boenn. ex. Rchb) Rchb. [Brassicaceae]; Sitong pettu	Herb	Leaves boiled as vegetable
68.	<i>Nephelium ramboutan-ake</i> (Lahil) Leenh [Spindaceae]; Tadar	Tree	Ripe fruit are sweet in taste
69.	<i>Neprolepsis cordifolia</i> (L.) C.Presl [Neproleptidaceae]; Hidum Uli	Herb	Rhizome is eaten for urinal tract infection
70.	<i>Opphioglossum reticulatum</i> L. [Opphioglosaceae]; Ayoborkok	Herb	Whole plant is eaten as vegetable
71.	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L. [Oxalidaceae]; Piyag Miu	Herb	Plant is used as vegetable
72.	<i>Oxalis corymbosa</i> DC. [Oxalidaceae]; Piyag Miu	Herb	Children eat the flower and rhizome
73.	<i>Paederia foetida</i> L. [Rubiaceae]	Climber	Leaves are eaten to cured gastritis
74.	<i>Pandanus furcatus</i> Roxb. [Pandanaceae]; Tako	Tree	Seeds are eaten raw
75.	<i>Paris polyphylla</i> Sm. [Melanthiaceae]; Nyomrang Takeng	Herb	Rhizome eaten on stomachache
76.	<i>Perilla frutescens</i> (L.) Britt. [Lamiaceae]; Namdung	Shrub	Seed is edible
77.	<i>Persicaria capitata</i> (Buch-Ham ex D. Don) H. Gross [Polygonaceae]; Babing Kaling	Herb	Ripe fruit are eaten by children
78.	<i>Phoebe cooperiana</i> P.C. Kanjilal & Das [Lauraceae]; Tapir	Tree	Fruit is eaten raw
79.	<i>Phrynium pubinerve</i> Blume [Marantaceae]; Ekkam	Herb	Seeds are edible and leaves are used for packing purposes
80.	<i>Physalis minima</i> L. [Solanaceae]; Jojing NBelang	Herb	Ripe fruits are eaten
81.	<i>Pilea insolens</i> Wedd. in Candolle. [Urticaceae]; Tango Lisak	Herb	Leaves are use in fermenting perilla seed
82.	<i>Pilea umbrosa</i> Blume [Urticaceae]; Oko Robo	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetables
83.	<i>Piper pedicellatum</i> C.DC. [Piperaceae]; Rori	Shrub	Leaves used as vegetable
84.	<i>Plantago asiatica</i> L.[Plantaginaceae]; Donyi Hankeng	Herb	Leave cook as vegetable
85.	<i>Pleurotus eous</i> [Polyporaceae]; Inyik	Fungus	Edible
86.	<i>Pleurotus ostreatus</i> [Polyporaceae]; Inyik	Fungus	Edible
87.	<i>Pleurotus sajorkaju</i> [Polyporaceae]; Lengot	Fungi	Edible
88.	<i>Pouzolzia hirta</i> Blume ex Hassk. [Urticaceae]; Oyik	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetable
89.	<i>Pouzolzia sanguinea</i> (Blume) Merrill. [Urticaceae];Osik	Herb	Tender shoot taken as vegetable

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90.	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> (L.) Hook. [Dennstaedtiaceae]; Losup	Herb	Young frond is eaten as vegetable
91.	<i>Pteris tripartita</i> Sm. [Pteridaceae]; Rukji	Herb	Fronds are use as vegetable
92.	<i>Rhus chinensis</i> Mill. [Anacardiaceae]; Tagmo	Tree	Dried fruit is eaten which is sour in taste
93.	<i>Rhynchotechum ellipticum</i> (Wall. Ex D. Dietr.) A.DC. [Gesneriaceae]; Jongku	Shrub	Leaves served as vegetable
94.	<i>Rorippa dubia</i> (Pers.) H.Hara. [Brassicaceae]; Sitong Pettu	Herb	Leaves boiled as vegetables
95.	<i>Rubus alceifolius</i> Poir [Rosaceae]; Pasi payi	Shrub	Fruit are sweet in taste
96.	<i>Rubus ellipticus</i> Sm. [Rosaceae]; Pakkom Tayin	Shrub	Fruit is sweet in taste
97.	<i>Rubus niveus</i> Thumb [Rosaceae]; Yokpo pongkung	Shrub	Fruit are sweet in taste
98.	<i>Rubus paniculatus</i> Sm. [Rosaceae]; Tapatara	Shrub	Leaves are use as the substitute for piper betel leaves
99.	<i>Rubus sumatranus</i> Miq. [Rosaceae]; Kinbu Beru	Shrub	Ripe fruit are sweet in taste
100.	<i>Rumex meritimus</i> L. [Polygonaceae]; Okung	Herb	Young leaves are serve as vegetable
101.	<i>Saccharum spontaneum</i> L. [Poaceae]; Piko-Pimur	Herb	Young inflorescence is roasted and eaten as chutney
102.	<i>Saurauia punduana</i> Wall. [Actinidaceae]; Taan	Tree	Ripe fruit is eaten and leaves are also used in rituals
103.	<i>Sauropus androgynus</i> (L.) Merr [Phyllanthaceae]; Gam oying	Shrub	Leaves are cook as vegetable
104.	<i>Solanum americanum</i> Mill. [Solanaceae]; Okomamang	Herbs	Leaves eaten as vegetable
105.	<i>Solanum spirale</i> Roxb. [Solanaceae]; Bangko	Shrub	Leaves and dried fruit are eaten
106.	<i>Solanum torvum</i> Sw. [Solanaceae]; Kodu	Shrub	Fruit eaten as chutney
107.	<i>Spondias pinnata</i> (L.f.) Kurz. [Anacardiaceae]; Dorgu dorge	Tree	Ripe fruit is eaten
108.	<i>Spondius axillaris</i> Roxb. [Anacardiaceae]; Belam	Tree	Ripe fruit is eaten
109.	<i>Stellaria media</i> (L.)Vill [Caryophyllaceae]; Osi Neri	Herb	Cooked plant served as vegetable
110.	<i>Sterculia hamiltonii</i> (Kuntze) Adelb [Malvaceae]; Tayam	Tree	Seed are eaten after roasting
111.	<i>Stixis suaveolens</i> (Roxb.) Pierre [Capparaceae]; Rokpo ketumkelum	Liana	Ripe fruit is sweet in taste
112.	<i>Strobilanthes mastersii</i> T. Anderson [Acanthaceae]; Tagam	Herb	Dried leaves used as tobacco
113.	<i>Syzygium fruticosum</i> DC. [Myrtaceae]; Jongkeng	Tree	Ripe fruit is edible
114.	<i>Thladiantha cordifolia</i> (Blume) Cong. [Cucurbitaceae]; Nyomrang payin	Climber	Tender shoot is eaten.
115.	<i>Trevesia palmata</i> (Rox. ex. Lindl.) Vis. [Araliaceae]; Tagor	Tree	Young fruit is eaten as chutney
116.	<i>Trema orientalis</i> (L.) Blume [Cannabaceae] Bumlo	Tree	Tender shoot served as vegetable.

117.	<i>Urtica parviflora</i> Roxb. [Urticaceae]; Jimang	Herb	Leaves eaten as vegetables.
118.	<i>Viola glaucescens</i> Oudem [Violaceae]; Jortung	Herb	Plant is boiled and served as vegetable
119.	<i>Viola pilosa</i> Blume [Violaceae]; Jorsing	Herb	Plant is eaten as vegetable.
120.	<i>Youngia japonica</i> (L.)DC. [Asteraceae]; Rungdum	Herb	Dried leaves are used as tobacco
121.	<i>Zanthoxylum armatum</i> D.C [Rutaceae]; Ombae	Small tree	Fruits and leaves are eaten as chutney. Twig is also use as toothbrush
122.	<i>Zanthoxylum oxyphyllum</i> Edgew. [Rutaceae]; Onger	Tree	Leaves are use as spices

### CONCLUSION

The *Komkar Adi* of Upper Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh is rich in traditional knowledge system related to diverse use of wild edible plant resources of their ethno-ecological landscape. The nutritionally valued, frequently and widely used wild edible plants by the community should be given attention in the light of intercropping and agro-forestry by complementing local knowledge and modern practices for ensuring rural food security. The use of traditional knowledge of wild edible plants can enormously contribute to the ecological balance and economic resilience of people if properly utilized before irreversibly lost. Conservation through the management of community forestry system is the best alternative to maintain the biodiversity of wild edible plants in natural habitat.

The vast diversity of wild edible plant prevalent among the *Adi* community is due to their preference of habitation in such corners where the altitudinal gradient and plant diversity is very high. There is a need for promoting general awareness to local people about nutritional potential and livelihood scope of wild edible plants at grass root level to revitalize and restore some of the lost traditional knowledge. Further scientific study

could unveil nutritional potential of the each species documented.

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