

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

AVAILABILITY OF WILD EDIBLE PLANTS (WEPs) IN URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL MARKET AREAS IN RAINY SEASON

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Abstract: Wild edible plants (WEPs) are widely consumed in the daily diet of the rural people. These plants are normally more common in rural areas. These are generally neglected and not considered as much useful for common people. Recently WEPs have attract the interest, due to their potential of various dimensions in terms of nutritional grade, edibility, medicinal use, potential to generate financial benefit for marginal communities and their availability in large scale in nearby area. Some WEPs are reported to have strong medicinal potential hence great economic value and are linked with the socio-economic development of the rural people. Access to affordable and nutritious food is complex and depends on supply (availability) and consumer demand. Local markets are important for large settlements and cities in terms of making the WEPs, which are usually found in suburbs and rural areas, available for the consumption by urban population. In the present investigation local markets were surveyed for WEPs in an urban area of Kolkata city, suburban market of Sealdah railway station and rural market of Bantala area of southern part of West Bengal, in rainy season, with special emphasis to plants with medicinal value. A total of 20 wild edible plant species belonging to 13 families were enumerated. Based on their potential nutritional and medicinal value, WEPs could contribute in a major way to food security, basic primary health care and balanced diets of rural households and possibly urban households as well. Inventory of wild food resources, ethno-botanical information on their diversity, usage, status, etc. coupled with nutritional evaluation can establish these wild edible species as an alternative to achieve food and nutritional security.

Keywords: Wild edible plants (WEPs), medicinal value, urban, suburban and rural market, West Bengal.

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