Diversity of wild edible minor fruits used by the ethnic communities of Tripura, India

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The present study deals with the identification, documentation and exploration of wild edible fruits consumed by different indigenous inhabitants in four districts of Tripura, viz Khowai (forest of Tablabari, Tulsigarh and Subalsingh), West Tripura (forest of Barmura), Sipahijala and Dhalai (forest of Manu, Ambassa). Wild fruits available in the mentioned area remain one of the major seasonal food intakes and play an important role in well-balanced diet and maintain healthy living of tribal people of Tripura. These fruits have a great socio-economic significance because of their food, nutritional, and medicinal values. Exploration, documentation, preservation and popularization of wild fruits are very important as cheap sources of food for human consumption. Here, a total of 15 wild edible fruits belonging to 13 families were recorded with their botanical, family, and local names in Bengali, Kakborak and Reang, time of availability, taste and use as folk medicines. Most of these fruits are supposed to be extinct, thus, utmost care to be taken for preservation.

Keywords: Debbarma/Reang tribes, Folk medicine, Tripura, Wild minor fruits,

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Wild edible minor fruits play a significant role in rural areas as the poor people not only benefit from their nutrient supplementary diet but also generate side income. It is documented that wild fruits are rich sources of vitamins, macro- and micro-minerals, fibers, polyphenols and antioxidants which provide health benefits. Consumption of these fruits reduces the risk of several diseases like diabetes, cancer, coronary heart disease, and neurodegenerative ailments. In a recent review, it has also been reported that some of the non-edible fruits could be used for making bio-diesel. A scientific investigation of wild edible minor fruits is thus highly demanding and needed to assess their potentiality so that they would be cultivated and utilized as a source of nutritional elements for an ever increasing population. Who could say, “Today’s wild fruits might be the tomorrow’s cultivar fruits?” Tripura is a hilly land locked state located in the South west extreme corner of the North eastern region of India. The state extends from latitude 22°56’ and 24°32’ North to longitude 91°10’ and 92°21’ East with a total geographical area of about 10,491 km² of which 70% is hilly with dense forests and only 27% is under cultivation, 91° 37’ 48″ E, situated in the North eastern corner of Peninsular India with its varied eco-geographical and eco-climatic conditions are noted principally for its rich phytodiversity. Among a wide spectrum of wild species in its natural catchments, the wild fruits and plants constitute the major sources of subsidiary nutrition to the tribal and local communities. Wild fruits provide nutrition for the forest dwellers and many of the marginalized rural communities since the cultivar fruits are less familiar and not accessible to them. On the contrary, the wild fruits, which the tribes use, are not familiar to the urban communities. The tribal population in the state estimated according to 2011 census is 8,53,920 and constitutes 30.95% of total population. There are 19 ethnic groups which largely depend on forest resources for their livelihood. Although they extract from the forests a portion of the excessively available wild fruits for their requirements, huge quantities are usually wasted as uncollected. This is mainly because

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of the fact that their availability and use are non-compensatory, and at the same time, its potential as a subsidiary food source is practically unknown to the other villagers and urban communities. Documentations of indigenous knowledge on therapeutic and nutritional properties of wild fruits through ethnobotanical studies are important for the conservation and utilization of biological resources\textsuperscript{16-19}. Therefore, documentation of local names and applications of wild fruits has significant potential societal benefits\textsuperscript{20-22}. Deb et al.\textsuperscript{23} reported wild edible plants of 36 genera found in Baramura Hill range of Khowai district only and their traditional utilization as diet recipes by different ethnic communities of Tripura. In another report, Chakraborty & Chaturvedi\textsuperscript{15} surveyed some wild edible fruits available in different hill ranges including Baramura, Atharamura, Longtara, Debatamura, Sakan and Jampui range of Tripura. Their study documented the way of consumption of fruits and their uses as folk medicine only. Those studies didn’t specify the name of the diseases for which the folk medicines have been used for treatment. In this paper we report identification, documentation and exploration of wild edible fruits consumed by different regional inhabitants in four districts of Tripura, viz. Khowai (forest of Tablabari, Subal singh), West Tripura (forest of Barmura), Sipahijala and Dhalai (forest of (Manu, Ambassa)). Further the report includes a total of 15 wild edible fruits belonging to 13 families with their botanical, family, and local names in Bengali, K kabarak and Reang, time of availability, taste and uses as folk medicines. Thus the study covers the availability of the mentioned wild fruits in vast tribal areas of Tripura and provides detailed information of them including tribal name (Kokborak and Reang), time of flowering and folk medicinal values which have not been reported earlier. The study is also important, for most of these fruits are supposed to be extinct from the nature of Tripura due to deforestation\textsuperscript{24}, thus, utmost care needs to be taken for preservation. This study thus may help people to recognize wild edible minor fruits easily which may assist the process of preservation of germplasm.

**Methodology**

**Study area**

The study area includes four districts of Tripura, viz. Khowai (forest of Tablabari, Tulasigarh and Subalsingh), West Tripura (forest of Barmura), Sipahijala and Dhalai (forest of (Manu, Ambassa)), as marked with green circle in Fig. 1.

**Interviews with native people**

Oral interviews were conducted among the native people of Tripura, viz. Khowai, Teliamura, Tulsigarh, Tablabari, Subal Singh, Ambassa, Manu, and Sipahijala, as common study area at remote and forest areas, as indicated in Fig. 1. Surveys were made through several rounds of field visits to various parts of villages and forest areas of different district of Tripura (North east India) during different seasons in 2015, February-2016 and July-2016. During survey, live specimens along with photographs (Fig. 2) were collected and interactions with local villagers were held for identification of the fruits and to obtain the traditional knowledge on wild fruits. Questionnaires for collecting information on local name, time of availability, taste and uses as food and medicines were prepared. Interviews were made face to face among selected people who were normally familiar with in folk medicinal values, and also connected with Jhum cultivation as their fundamental occupation. All kinds of information were assembled from the ethnic people in their local language with the assistance of
some office bearers of Forest Department, Govt. of Tripura, who were from same community. These office bearers assisted us in translating local language into Bengali, Hindi and English for better understanding. They arranged meetings with the native experienced people who had knowledge regarding wild fruits and plants, which helped us to make a productive survey. Under their guidance we visited aforementioned areas to collect live specimen as shown in Fig. 2 as well as detailed information regarding the wild fruits and plants.

Fruits collection and identification
Tribal people have abundant knowledge about wild fruits and their traditional uses\textsuperscript{21,25}. Demographic characteristics of the particulars and local name were noted at the time of meetings with them. Consumption methods and applications of wild fruit parts as folk medicine were also documented. Fruits were collected and preserved at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Chebri, West Tripura for further investigation. The plant species were also identified by consulting Taxonomist Prof. BK Datta, Department of Botany, Tripura University, Tripura and Dr. Ashish Kaur, The Energy and Resources Institute, North-Eastern Regional Centre, Gauhati-36 Assam.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents
Sixty respondents above the age of 28 yrs with mean age 56 yrs from four districts of Tripura were interviewed and demographic characteristics were recorded accordingly. Among 60 respondents 25 % (15) were female and 75 % (45) were male users. Of the 75 % male users 55.5 % were unemployed or self-employed and remaining were engaged in various occupations.

Results
The present study in Khowai, West Tripura, Dhalai, and Sipahijala districts has documented a total of 15 species of wild edible fruits as listed in Table 1, belonging to 13 families that are being used by Debbarma/Reang, Tea tribe since several generations. The fruits under study are arranged in alphabetical order in Table 1 with their botanical, family, and local names in Kokbarak (K), Bengali (B) and Reang (R), fruiting time, taste and mode of applications. A total of 15 photographs of 15 plant species are depicted in Fig. 3. The indigenous people preserved their traditional knowledge about the uses of these plant species, i.e., food, medicine, etc., from generation to generation. Majority of the fruits are eaten when ripe; some fruits are taken as vegetables, pickles, and raw chutney. Interactions with them thus result in acquiring traditional knowledge about the uses of wild edible fruits in the study area as food and/or medicine. Results also include the possible threat of existence of the plant species in the nature of the mentioned region of Tripura.

Discussion

Use of wild fruits as folk medicine by the ethnic groups
We have documented some valuable findings of uses of wild fruits as folk medicines in the study area. We interviewed some experienced tribal people and came to know about the utilization of certain wild fruits as local medicines and food supplements for human (Table 1). Fruit applications in different ailments treatment purpose of human are described. Chamal, locally called jram (Artocarpus chama Buch.-Ham.), (Fig. 3a), a wild jack fruit, is highly nutritious according to native people and they use its seeds for curry, consumed by roasting, and for treatment of arthritis. Another fruit locally called thychram (Protium serratum Engl.) (Fig. 3b), a delicious nutritious fruit, people take as raw and prepare chutney. In accordance with aged people, it has been used for anti-inflammatory as well as anti-arthritis agents. Madhumaloti, one of the rarely available wild fruits locally called Majeelota [Stixis suaveolens (Roxb.) Pierre] (Fig. 3c), when matured the fruit appears yellowish in color with dates like seeds inside the hard shell. Its taste is as sweet as local dates. Tribal people use it as folk medicine for chest pain and asthmatic problem. It adds natural beauty when ripen in a bunch while attached to creeper. The wild fruit which is called Thaibai by local community and named as
Table 1 — List of wild edible minor fruits in the study area of Tripura state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Botanical name *(IPNI) &amp; family name</th>
<th>Voucher specimen number</th>
<th>Local name</th>
<th>Time of availability</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Uses: Folk Medicines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Artocarpus chama Buch.-Ham.; Moraceae</td>
<td>SB-20, 07.07.2015, Tablabari, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Chamal K-Jram R-Jarm</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>Sweet but little sour</td>
<td>Ripen pod taken as raw, seeds are consumed in roasted form. Seeds having medicinal properties, used for against inflammation, diabetes and anti-arthritis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Protium serratum Engl.; Burseraceae</td>
<td>SB-21, 12.06.2015, Tablabari, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Niyar K-Thychrm R-Thaichramm</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>Sour in taste</td>
<td>Fruits use for mouth ulcer and they have antioxidant properties as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stixis suaveolens (Roxb.) Pierre.; Capparaceae</td>
<td>SB-22, 04.06.2016, Tablabari, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Madhabi K-Majeelota R-Mooni</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>Taste like ripen date palm</td>
<td>Fruits are used for consumption. Also use folk medicine for heart disease, asthma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hodgsonia-macrocarpa Cogn.; Cucurbitaceae</td>
<td>SB-26, 05.07.2016, Manu, Dhalai</td>
<td>B-Bon kumra K-Thaibai R-Thaibai</td>
<td>Apr-July</td>
<td>Bitter in taste and oily</td>
<td>Fruits kernel taken as alternative use of oil in curry and also taken by roasted the kernel and extracted oil from kernel used as folk medicine; burned leaves are used in wound healing, constipation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Garcinia gummi-gutta (L.) N. Robson; Clusiaceae</td>
<td>SB-28, 23.06.2015, Tablabari, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Kowagota K-Kouk R-Akouk</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>Taste in sour and sweet</td>
<td>Ripe fruits are consumed as peanut, Use for dysentery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gnetum gnemon L.; Gnetaceae</td>
<td>SB-29, 07.05.2016, Manu, Dhalai</td>
<td>B-Lota badam K-Khlow R-Khlow</td>
<td>April-June</td>
<td>Taste like roasted ground nut</td>
<td>Fruits are taken at ripen stage, use for Liver tonic, diabetes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Crescentia cujete L.; Bignoniaceae</td>
<td>SB-33, 09.08.2015, Tulsigarh, Khowai</td>
<td>B- Bon bael K-Beltilok R-Fitokbel</td>
<td>July-Nov</td>
<td>Bitter</td>
<td>Skin disease, laxative, cough, hard shell as utensil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Citrus macroptera Montrouz.; Rutaceae</td>
<td>SB-34, 10.10.2015, Tulsigarh, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Sathkora K-Chattakora R-Saatokkra</td>
<td>Sept-Nov</td>
<td>Sour</td>
<td>Fruits are eaten raw. Fruits peel use for meat tenderization, also gastritis, kidney stone treatment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Syzygium samarangense (Blume) Merr. &amp; L.M. Perry; Myrtaceae</td>
<td>SB-36, 13.08.2015, Champahar, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Panee jamun K-twamjamo R-tui chambou</td>
<td>May-Nov</td>
<td>Tasteless</td>
<td>Fruits are taken at ripen stage, use for Liver tonic, diabetes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Canavalia gladiata (Jacq.) DC.; Leguminosae</td>
<td>SB-39, 05.06.2016, Sipahijala, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Bon shim K-Baikang R-Baik</td>
<td>May-July</td>
<td>Like bean</td>
<td>Matured seed taken as vegetables, health tonic, use folk medicine in hernia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Parkia timoriana Merr.; Leguminosae</td>
<td>SB-42, 08.07.2016, Subalsingh, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Gacher shim K-Yangchak R-waikra</td>
<td>May-Sept</td>
<td>Taste as Broad bean, slightly smell as sulfur</td>
<td>Use as vegetable for gastritis, diabetes, promote urine flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Diospyros peregrina Gürke; Ebenaceae</td>
<td>SB-45, 03.07.2016, Tulsigarh, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Gubgota K-Gubgota R-Gubgota</td>
<td>June-Sept</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Use for colouring material of cast net (fishing net made of parachute thread) to enhance its shelf life and for treating mouth ulcer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(contd.)
Table 1 — List of wild edible minor fruits in the study area of Tripura state (contd.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Botanical name &amp; family name</th>
<th>Voucher specimen number</th>
<th>Local name</th>
<th>Time of availability</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Uses: folk medicines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Physalis minima L.; Solanaceae</td>
<td>SB-48, 20.03.2016, Subalsingh, Khowai</td>
<td>B-Fukta, K-Thaitu, R-Thaitho</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>At ripen stage taken fruits highly. Nutritious, use for laxative, diuretic, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IPNI: International Plant Names Index
Local names: B-Bengali; K- Kakborak; R- Reang

Fig. 3 — Photographs of collected wild edible fruits from the study area: (a) Artocarpus chama Buch.- Ham.; (b) Protium serratum Engl.; (c) Stixis suaveolens (Roxb.) Pierre.; (d) Hodgsonia-macrocarpa Cogn.; (e) Garcinia gummi-gutta (L.) N. Robson; (f) Gnetum gnemon L.; (g) Crescentia cujete L.; (h) Citrus macroptera Montrouz.; (i) Syzygium samarangense (Blume) Merr. & L.M.Perry; (j) Canavalia gladiata (Jacq.) DC; (k) Parkia timoriana Merr.; (l) Melastoma malabathricum L.; (m) Diospyros peregrina Gürke; (n) Syzygium assamicum (Biswas & C.S.Purkay.) Raizada; (o) Physalis minima L.
Chinese lard plant (*Hodgsonia-macrocarpa* Cogn.) (Fig. 3d), is one of the most extinct fruits in Tripura forest\(^\text{24}\). The mature fruit looks like *Jhum* variety of pumpkin. Its pulp is highly bitter in taste; inside it has 6 or 7 kernels that are mango stone shaped covered by outer layer of soft skin. This outer layer of kernel is traditionally used as medicine for fungal and bacterial infections such as wounds by ring worms. People having such type of infection at the base of toe feel itching frequently and get relief by rubbing its soft skin on the infected area. Further the kernels are rich source of fat and they collect it as oil by extraction and use in cooking as substitute of edible oil. In addition, this oil is used during child birth. It is rubbed around naval of pregnant women for smooth delivery of baby as well as to reduce mother’s struggle in consequence. It is also used for skin related diseases. A peculiar type of wild fruit, locally called *Kkok* [*Garcinia gummi-gutta* (L.) N. Robson] (Fig. 3e), looks like a small sized orange while ripe, is traditionally used for culinary purpose. The wild creeper fruit nut locally called *Khlow* (*Gnetum gnemon* L.) (Fig. 3f) is normally consumed while mature by directly roasting in sand. It has abundant fats and tastes like groundnut. It has been observed that this plant is becoming rare due to deforestation and is ignored by new generation because of lack of knowledge about its food value and it may become extinct from the nature of Tripura in future\(^\text{28}\). Among wild fruits of Tripura, a fruit Tribal people call *Beltilok* (*Crescentia cujete* L.) (Fig. 3g) is a wonderful fruit having smooth outer greenish surface with round shape. Indigenous people in Tripura dry out its shell and use it to make bowls for salt container and musical rattles for folk instruments. It has tremendous utilities as folk medicine for anti-inflammatory, anti-hemorrhagic, aperients, laxative, expectorant, analgesic, cough and asthma. In Tripura hillock area, wild orange fruit (greenish/ yellowish), rarely found in market during season, and locally called *chatukora* (*Citrus macroptera* Montroux.) (Fig. 3h), is used fresh in culinary purposes and its sundried peel is used for hard meat tenderization during cooking. In addition, it is believed that the consumption of its orange peel helps to melt stones in kidney and gallbladder and washes them out of the body through urine. The consumption of this fruit is beneficial for diabetic patients as it reduces blood sugar level.

The whitish peer shape fruit, rarely available, called *panee jamun* [*Syzygium samarangense* (Blume) Merr. & L.M.Perry], (Fig. 3i), has no particular taste neither sour nor sweet but the traditional people use its seeds as powder for the treatment of diabetes, analgesic, anti-inflammatory infection, fever, skin disease diuretic, and stomach ache and astringent. One wonderful bean, sometimes observed in Tripura forest, called “*Baikang*” meaning sword by tribal people [*Canavalia gladiata* (Jacq.) DC.] (Fig. 3j), is consumed as vegetables with dry fish called *gudak*. Mature seeds of it are stored and used later. Tribes of Tripura use it as folk medicine for treatment of hernia, colic, etc. Another bean plant, called *yangchak* by *Manipuri* people, (*Parkia timoriana* Merr.) (Fig. 3k), is rarely found in Tripura. The bean is long and greenish in color. Usually it is consumed by *Manipuri*, *Debbarma* and *Reang* tribes of Tripura. Its mature seeds are stored for long term consumption purposes during off season. Tribal people believe that *yangchak* (*wake*) has abundant medicinal value, it is used for treatment of diabetes, gastritis and promotes flow of urine. A wild fruit plant shrub is rarely available in Tripura locally called “*Asom*” (*Melastoma malabathricum* L.) (Fig. 3l) and its fruit has lots of medicinal value according to indigenous people, they use it in folk medicine to treat various types of ailments and diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, leucorrhoea, cuts, wounds, infection during confinement, toothache, stomachache, flatulence, sore legs, etc. Further it is believed that ground water level is high where “*Asom*” plants grow. A rarely almost extinct wild fruit plant\(^\text{24}\) which is round in shape, greenish in tender and yellowish in ripen stage, called *gaubgota* (*Diospyros perergrina* Gürke) (Fig. 3m), is traditionally utilized as colorant material of cast net (a net used for fishing purpose). They use it as medicine against diarrhea, cold, acidity and also in treatment of constipation. A small size black *jamun* fruit locally called *jamuk* [*Syzygium assamicum* (Biswas & C.S.Purkay.) Raizada] (Fig. 3n), is slightly bitter in taste. Birds like to eat this fruit. People use it mainly as medications, for example, its sun dried seeds’ powder is used for diabetic ailment. Lastly, in our survey we found uncommon rare weeds on ground called ground cherry, *Chirpoti* locally called *thaitiu* (*Physalis minima* L.) (Fig. 3o), it is used as diuretic, laxative, anti-inflammatory agent. New generation is unaware about edible weeds which have high nutritional value substances like carotene. It is noteworthy to mention that if necessary measures are
not taken, most of the described rare wild fruits will be extinct from the flora of Tripura forest region due to lack of knowledge about fruits’ food and folk medicinal value as well as deforestation.

**Shelf life of wild fruits at ambient temperature**

Among 15 species, only 11 species of wild fruits were studied for shelf life in research laboratory, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), West Tripura. Shelf life of each wild fruit is normally found more than cultivated fruits like mango (5-7 days), banana (3-5 days), orange (5-7 days), pineapple (3-5 days), etc. Wild fruits like Indian red peer thychrm (*Protium serratum* Engl.), *madhabilota* (*Stixis suaveolens* Roxb.) Pierre, *thaibai* (Chinese lard plant), *beltilok* (*Crescentia cujete* L.), *baikang* (Sword bean), *yangchak* (*Parkia timoriana* (DC.) Merr.) *sathkora* (*Citrus macroptera* Montrouz.), etc. have shelf lives of 7-10 days for which they stay almost fresh, after that they gradually start decomposing. Only small *jamun* (*Syzygium samarangense* (Blume) Merr. & L.M.Perry), *kok* (*Garcinia gummi-gutta* (L.) N. Robson), *thaitu* (*Physalis minima* L.), etc. have 4 to 5 days shelf life as they naturally grow mainly in rainy season. Further high temperature and humidity of the season make life of soft fruits short as they start decomposing soon after ripening. *Chamal* (*Artocarpus chama* Buch.-Ham.) (shelf life 5-8 days when ripen) can be stored for more days than normal jackfruits (3-4 days). One rare case for *Beltilok* (*Crescentia cujete* L.), it looks fresh even after 20 days, due to its hard shell. Mature Chinese lard plant fruit locally called *thaibai* (*Hodgsonia macrocarpa* Cogn.) can be stored for more than 15 days. It is observed that *madhabilota* (*Stixis suaveolens* (Roxb.) Pierre) having hard pulp has shelf life of more than 12 days. Moreover, in all cases, 2-3 factors which we considered during this study are; all the fruits should be mature and disease free and should not be over ripen and damaged while monitoring their shelf lives.

**Traditional significance of study to the society**

There is a huge communication gap in exchanging knowledge of food habits and life-style between urban and ethnic people. New generation of these rural people is less interested to hold traditional knowledge because of some sort of inbreeding modern culture among them. It is only the elder people who have been nurturing the knowledge of applications of wild fruits/plants for food and folk medicine and are still accustomed to gathering and processing wild fruits. A total of 15 species wild edible minor fruit plants have been identified which are used for human consumption as well as for folk medicines, belonging in four districts of Tripura, viz. Khowai (Subal Singh, Tablabari, Tulsigarh forest), West Tripura (Barmura forest), Sipahijala forest, and Dhalai (Manu and Amabassa forest). According to the views of ethnic people some wild fruits are now rarely available and are about to extinct from the nature of Tripura. Further we have collected wild fruit pictures as well as their names in different local languages like Debbarma, Reang, Bengali, for recognizing the plants, which may escalate people interest to conserve them for their future generation. The most significant part of this study is thus to report an invaluable piece of traditional knowledge on few wild edible fruits and their folk medicinal value collected from the studied area and to pass the information to scientific community/institution for further study and preservation. These minor fruits have a great socio-economic significance because of their food and medicinal values. Mass attention is needed to preserve them by germplasm bank for propagation and to popularize them among the people and further research is thus needed for analysis of nutritional and medicinal value for the benefit of society.

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24 Ethnic people of the studied area revealed their concerned that most of the wild fruit plants cited in this study may extinct from the nature of Tripura due to deforestation and lack of proper knowledge/interest of modern people, even of themselves.