

Traditional recipes of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh

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Received 25 July 2008; revised 16 March 2009

Himachal Pradesh, a hilly state, has lot of variation in recipes prepared by local people. The communication deals with traditional recipes of district Kangra as per seasonal availability of plant material. Although food habits of local people have changed these days, still they relish the local preparations. Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques were used for documentation of required information. The plant material used by the people for recipes included its leaves, flowers, stem, fruits and root. The period of availability of raw material ranged from 1-3 months approximately. Various traditional recipes prepared especially from leaves of plants, viz. *Colocasia*, fig, basil, pigweed, buck wheat, and water cress are very good source of calcium, phosphorous and iron. These recipes are loosing its sheen in the fast-food culture. So, there is a need to conserve our traditional food recipes as the plant material used for these is completely organic thus nutritious and healthy /safe to eat.

Keywords: Traditional recipes, Traditional food, Himachal Pradesh

IPC Int. Cl.⁸: A61K36/00, A01G1/00, A01G17/00, A47G19/00, A23L1/00, A23L1/06

Diversity can be found in India's culture, geography as well as its climate and same is true with its food also. Fermented recipes, *bhaturu*, *marchu*, *siddu*, *babru*, *seera*, and others like *ambua*, *khatti bhujji*, *khoru*, *redu* are some of the famous traditional dishes of Himachal Pradesh. Besides source of nutrition, the fermented food, *bhaturu* constitute staple food in larger part of rural areas of Kangra Kullu, Mandi and Lahaul & Spiti districts of the state, while others are consumed during local festivals, marriages and special occasions¹. The everyday meal in Himachal Pradesh is usually rice, lentil broth, dish of vegetables and *chapati*, and special dishes are cooked during festive occasions. In areas with a pastoral tradition, milk and its products are liberally used in cooking. It is rightly said that each cook stirs the cook pot in his/her manner. The traditional cook was and is mother and her knowledge and capabilities are handed down to the next female generation. Earlier, when hilly state did not have well developed communication and transport means, people were more or less dependent on food materials grown/available locally as well as seasonally thus preparing traditional recipes. However, during last 2-3 decades, fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs have been available all year round either grown locally or

imported from outside districts or states. But these traditional recipes are still in vogue among local people and can be seen prepared in all the homes during that particular period of availability of plant material. The preferred taste in Himachal varies from region to region, but food with a generous dose of spices like cardamom, cinnamon, cloves and chillies, is very much in the norm. Although food habits of the people have been changed these days but those who have their roots in the villages, still relish the traditional recipes prepared from seasonal plant materials. In the paper, an effort has been made to elaborate some of the traditional recipes of the study area.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Participatory Rural Appraisal Techniques were used for collection of information which consisted of discussion with key informants and focused group discussion with the groups chosen randomly from different communities of the study areas². Personal experiences were also helpful in compiling the required information.

Results and discussion

A number of selected food materials (leaves, flowers, stem, fruits and root) available seasonally

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were identified and the traditional methods of preparing them were documented. The traditional recipes prepared by the local people are generally associated either with festivals or with the season. And in the paper, popular seasonal recipes have been explained. Besides method of cooking nutritive value of the main ingredients used in the recipes are also reported. Names of traditional recipes along with part of the plant used as well as time of availability of the plant/part of the plant are given (Table 1). The preparation of traditional recipes include not only fruit or leaves of the plant but buds, flowers, stem and roots also. The availability of raw material for maximum traditional recipes is for one to one and a half months and for few ones it is for 3-4 months. Plant names and families of the ingredients used in various recipes are also given (Table 2). Common terms used for cooking operations and local preparations include *dhuni*, *bhujju*, *sag*, *pakode* and *chutney*.

Dhuni

It is a cooking practice whereby few drops of mustard oil are pored over burning coal which is immediately put in the preparation and container covered with lid, so that the fumes are absorbed properly. Burnt coal is taken out at the time of serving. *Dhuni* is a very common practice in traditional cooking.

Bhujju

It is a type of preparation in which mainly leaves are used which are chopped before cooking.

Sag

It is a type of preparation in which leaves are ground to paste after boiling and then cooked.

Chutney

It is a paste type preparation.

Pakode

It is a type of snacks. *Pakode* are served as snacks whereas *bhujju*, *sabji* and *sag* are served as main dish

Table 1 — Distribution of recipes according to seasonal availability of raw material

Local name of the recipe	Raw material used/Common name/Plant name/Family	Parts used	Time of availability
<i>Kalan ke pakode</i>	<i>Kesari dal</i> Grass pea <i>Lathyrus sativus</i> Linn. Leguminosae	Whole grain	January- March
<i>Bhruni</i>	<i>Dhura</i> /Fig <i>Ficus carica</i> Linn. Moraceae	Tender leaves	Feb-March
<i>Karalen</i>	<i>Karalen</i> /Kachnar <i>Bauhinia variegata</i> Linn. Leguminosae	Buds, flowers	March-April
<i>Barah ki chatni</i>	<i>Barah</i> /Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron arboretum</i> Sm. Ericaceae	Flowers	March-May
<i>Seera</i>	<i>Kanak</i> /Wheat <i>Triticum aestivum</i> Linn. Poaceae	Whole grain	April-May
<i>Chhachha</i>	<i>Aam</i> /Raw mangoes <i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn. Anacardiaceae	Fruit	May-June
<i>Tremble ki sabji</i>	<i>Tremble</i> /Java fig <i>Ficus benjamina</i> Linn. Moraceae	Fruit	May-June
<i>Phafru ka sag</i>	<i>Phafru</i> /Buckwheat <i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i> Moench Polygonaceae	Leaves	May-June
<i>Lungru</i>	<i>Lungru</i> /Vegetable fern/ Paco fern <i>Diplazium esculentum</i> (Retz.) Sw Athyriaceae	Stems	May-June
<i>Lasiade ki sabji</i>	<i>Lasiade</i> /Sebesten plum <i>Cordia dichotoma</i> Forst. Boraginaceae	Fruits	May- June
<i>Ambua</i>	<i>Amb</i> /Raw mangoes <i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn. Anacardiaceae	Raw or ripened fruits	May-mid July

Contd.

Table 1 — Distribution of recipes according to seasonal availability of raw material— *Contd.*

Local name of the recipe	Raw material used/Common name/Plant name/Family	Parts used	Time of availability
<i>Nashpati ki sabji</i>	<i>Nashpati/ Nakh/ Pear</i> <i>Pyrus communis</i> Bartlett Rosaceae	Fruits	July-August
<i>Aaddu Ki Sabji</i>	<i>Addu/ Peach</i> <i>Prunus persica</i> Rosaceae	Fruits	July-August
<i>Khatti bhujji</i>	<i>Kachalu/ Colocassia/ Elephant ear</i> <i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> Schott Araceae	Leaves	July- October
<i>Patrodu</i>	<i>Kachalu/ Colocassia/ Elephant ear</i> <i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> Schott. Araceae	Leaves	July- October
<i>Khandole</i>	<i>Kachalu/ Colocassia/ Elephant ear</i> <i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> Schott. Araceae	Stem	August-September
<i>Bhavri ka namak</i>	<i>Bhavri/ Basil</i> <i>Ocimum basilus</i> Linn. Lamiaceae	Leaves	June- October
<i>Kulfa ka sag</i>	<i>Kulfa/ Pigweed</i> <i>Portulaca oleracea</i> Linn. Portulacaceae	Leaves	August-September
<i>Chhu nali ki bhujji</i>	<i>Chhunali/ Water cress</i> <i>Nasturtium officinale</i> Brassicaceae	Whole plant	November-February

Table 2 — Names of some other ingredients used in traditional recipes

Plant name	Family	Common name	Local name
<i>Allium cepa</i>	Alliaceae	Onion	Payaj
<i>Allium sativum</i> Linn.	Alliaceae	Garlic	Lahsun
<i>Coriandum sativum</i> Linn.	Umbelliferae	Coriander	Dhania
<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	Lamiaceae	Mint	Pudina
<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Fabaceae	Tamarind	Inli
<i>Brassica compestris</i>	Brassicaceae	Mustard	Sarson
<i>Cuminum cyminum</i>	Umbelliferae	Cumin	Jeera
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Zingiberaceae	Turmeric	Haldi
<i>Ferula asafoetida</i>	Apiaceae	Asafoetida	Heeng
<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Solanaceae	Red chillies	Lal Mirch
<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i>	Umbelliferae	Omum	Ajwain
<i>Trigonella foenumgraecum</i>	Fabaceae	Fenugreek	Methi
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Zingiberaceae	Ginger	Adrak

during meal, and *chutney* can be served either with main meal or with snacks.

Traditional recipes according to seasonal availability of raw material

Kalan ke pakode

Kalan is a local name for grass pea (*Lathyrus sativus* Linn.). To prepare, break the grains of grass pea coarsely and remove the outer covering by

winning. Soak overnight and ground well. Add finely chopped onion and paste of garlic, basil leaves, coriander leaves and mint leaves to paste of pulse, along with spices and salt and mix properly. Now, heat oil in an open pan and shallow fry in the form of flat, small, round shape. Serve these snacks with curd or tamarind *chutney*.

Bhruni

Bhruni is the dish made from tender leaves of fig (*Ficus carica* Linn.). For its preparation, tender leaves are boiled in an earthen pot for 10-15 minutes till soft and then ground well. Add salt and green chillies according to taste. Take a burning coal and pour few drops of mustard oil over it then put burning coal into ground leaves and cover the pot immediately for some time till all the fumes are absorbed in the preparation. This process is called *dhuni* and it is practiced in many local preparations including pickles.

Karalen

Boil the buds of *kachnar/Karalen* (*Bauhinia variegata* Linn.) for 10-15 minutes till they become soft. Heat mustard oil in a pan. Add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chillies, asafoetida and turmeric powder, heat till brown and put boiled buds to it. Add salt and spices according to taste. Cook it on slow fire for 5 minutes and serve along with *chapati*.

Barah ki chutney

Rhododendron (*Rhododendron arboretum* Sm.) locally known as *brah* is a flower present in the hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh. It is red to maroon in colour and slightly sour to taste. For making *chutney*, paste of fresh flowers of *barah*, onion, mint leaves, basil leaves, green chillies, salt and spices is prepared. It can accompany the main meal which is appetizing in nature.

Seera

Seera is the preparation of wheat (*Triticum aestivum* Linn.) grains (Fig. 8). Wheat grains are soaked in water for one week, and care is taken to change the water of soaked grains regularly to avoid off-flavour. Soaked grains are ground properly; water is added to it and then strained to leave white colored fluid. The fluid is put in a muslin cloth and tied in hanging position so that water is removed and white semi-solid is left which is made to dry in open under sunlight in small pieces till dries completely and becomes solid. This is known as *seera*. Store *seera* in an air tight container for better shelf life. Whenever needed, dissolve required amount of *seera* and equal amount of sugar in water and prepare batter of flowing consistency. Heat good amount of ghee in a pan, add batter to it and whisk it properly so that it does not stick to the base of the container. It is cooked till turned light brown in colour and leaves sides of the pan. It can be served at breakfast or supper time as sweet dish. It is especially taken during winters or when there is heavy work in the fields. It is not only considered nutritious but a very good source of calories also.

Chhachha

Raw mangoes (*Mangifera indica* Linn.) are used for making *chhachha*. Onion and raw mangoes are taken in equal amount, peeled and grind together coarsely. Chillies, salt and sugar are added to taste.

Tremble ki sabji

Raw fruits of Java fig (*Ficus benjamina* Linn.) are washed, cut into slices and boiled for 10-15 minutes. Heat oil in a pan, add cumin seeds, coriander seeds and red chillies to taste, heat till browning, add turmeric powder, onion and garlic paste to it. Heat for some time, then add boiled slices of Java fig to the pan, cook for 5 minutes and add small amount of mango powder to this preparation (Fig. 3).

Phafru ka sag

Buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* Moench.) leaves locally known as *Phafru* are available in the

hilly areas. For making *sag*, buckwheat leaves are washed, cut into fine shreds and then boiled by adding salt till soft. After boiling make its paste. Mustard oil is heated in a pan; coriander seeds and red chillies are added to the heated oil and then paste of buckwheat leaves is added. Cook for some time and serve hot with rice or *chapattis*; it tastes a bit sour.

Lungru ki sabji

Vegetable fern/*paco* fern [*Diplazium esculentum* (Retz.) Sw.] available in hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh look like stems with curled top and with hairy growth over it (Fig. 4). For its preparation, remove hair of *lungru* stems with the help of cotton cloth and then cut into small pieces after washing. It is fried in an open pan with slightly more amount of mustard oil. Add a pinch of asafetida also along with other spices. Curd can also be added at the time of frying.

Lasiade ki sabji

Sebesten plum (*Cordia dichotoma* Forst.) are green in colour and contain gum like sticky material in it. For its preparation, first of all break the fruit in to two pieces and remove its stone. Now, boil the fruit for 5-10 minutes. While boiling, slices of one medium sized raw mango are also added to reduce the sticky effect. Fry the boiled fruits along with spices till soft, add mango powder or paste of tamarind and cook for few minutes more and serve hot.

Ambua

It is a dish prepared from ripened or half ripened mangoes (*Mangifera indica* Linn.). Mash and peel the mangoes. Heat mustard oil in a pan and add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chillies, *omum* seeds, fenugreek seeds, turmeric powder, sliced onion, ginger paste and garlic paste in a sequence. Now put peeled mangoes, cook for some time till soft, add sugar and salt according to taste. It accompanies the main dish.

Nashpati ki sabji

Peel and cut pears/*nashpati* (*Pyrus communis* Bartlett) into small slices. Make the paste of garlic and ginger. Heat mustard oil in a pan. Add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, red chillies, *omum* seeds, black pepper, turmeric powder, garlic paste and ginger paste and heat till brown. Now add slices of pear fruit and salt to taste. Cook it on slow fire for 20-25 minutes and add a little sugar to it.

Aaddu ki sabji

Put required number of peaches/*aaddu* (*Prunus persica*) in boiling water for some time after tying in

muslin cloth. Let it cool, then take out its peels and stones. Heat mustard oil in a pan add all spices as mentioned in *nashpati ki sabji* to it and heat till brown. Now add paste of peach and salt to taste. Cook it on slow fire for some time.

Khatti bhujji

Khatti bhujji is also known as *Garyali bhujji*. For preparing *Khatti bhujji*, take whole plant of colocasia (*Colocasia antiquorum* Schott.) along with its leaves, stem and bulb and cut it into pieces after washing properly. Heat mustard oil in a pan, put red chillies and coriander seeds salt and then add pieces of colocasia and cook till soft. Now, add dried mango slices and cook on a slow fire for 15-20 minutes. Generally, *Khatti bhujji* is taken during *Dipawali* festival. Another method for preparing *Khatti bhujji* is put pieces of colocasia along with all the spices in an earthen pot (Fig. 1). Add a little of water and keep it on a slow fire. When it is half cooked, pour mustard oil and dried mango slices to it. After cooking completely put off the pot. Give *dhuni* to the preparation before serving.

Patrodu

Patrodu are prepared from healthy leaves of colocasia (*Colocasia antiquorum* Schott.). Make the paste of black gram flour of pouring consistency. Now take few leaves of *bhavri* (*Ocimum basilus* Linn.), 2-3 medium sized onion, one piece of garlic, green chillies and salt according to taste. Ground all the ingredients and add these to the dough of Bengal gram flour. Take one leaf of colocasia keeping its lower side upwards; apply the dough over it properly. Cover the leaf with another leaf in reverse manner and again put paste over it and repeat this process for 4-6 leaves. Fold sides of the leaves inside and then roll like bedding. Apply paste on all sides of bed while folding. For making it one piece, wrap it in a leaf of turmeric and tie with thread. Take a big pan and add small amount of water to it. Put small sticks inside the pan to make rack over water. Place the folded leaves on the rack and let it steam cook. It will take about 20-25 minutes to cook. Take out the leaves, let it cool and cut it into small pieces. Before serving, these pieces can be shallow fried or can be deep fried depending upon the requirement, occasion and availability of time. *Patrodu* are specifically prepared during rainy season.

Khandole

Khandole are prepared from healthy stems of colocasia (*Colocasia antiquorum* Schott.). Soak black

gram pulse overnight to remove covering of the grains, ground to make fine paste and add salt and spices to it. Take stems of colocasia and cover them with paste one by one. Put it in sun to half dry. Now, cut the stems along with paste into small pieces carefully and again put the pieces called *khandole* in sun to dry completely and store in an air tight container (Fig. 7). For preparing the dish, heat oil in a pan and add coriander seeds, cumin seeds, chillies in the oil, add *khandole* along with some water to it. Potatoes may also be added for variation and serve with *chapatis*.

Bhavri ka namak

It is a type of fruit salt used along with fruits or salad. Take few leaves of basil, locally known as *bhavri* (*Ocimum basilus* Linn.), mustard leaves and green chillies. Mint leaves (*Mentha arvensis*) may also be added to it and grind well. Add good amount of salt to this paste and mix well. The shelf life of this preparation is approximately one week. To increase its shelf life, mixture of salt and paste of *Bhavri* is dried by keeping it on fire for some time and allowing it cool before storing (Fig. 2).

Kulfa ka sag

Pigweed plant locally called, *kulfa* (*Portulaca oleracea* Linn.) is wildy grown near water channels. It is bit spongy and contains gum like substance. Pigweed leaves are washed, cut into fine shreds, boiled by adding salt till soft and ground into paste (Fig. 5). Mustard oil is heated in a pan; coriander seeds and red chillies are added to the heated oil and then add paste of pigweed leaves, cook for some time and serve hot. *Kulfa ka sag* tastes bit sour and is served with rice or *chapati*.

Chhunali ki bhujji

Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale* W.T. Aiton) is also found near water channels. It is harvested along with roots. Sort water cress thoroughly, wash and then cut into fine shreds (Fig. 6). Heat oil in a pan; add coriander seeds and red chillies heat till brown. Add a pinch of asafoetida and salt to taste. Put shreds of the leaves and cook on slow fire till it is soft. It is also taken with *chapati*. Rice water is added to *bhujji* as gravy if it is to be consumed with rice.

Nutritive value of recipes

The nutritive value of selected plants/parts of plants per 100 gm of fresh material used in various traditional recipes has been discussed³⁻⁶. It was

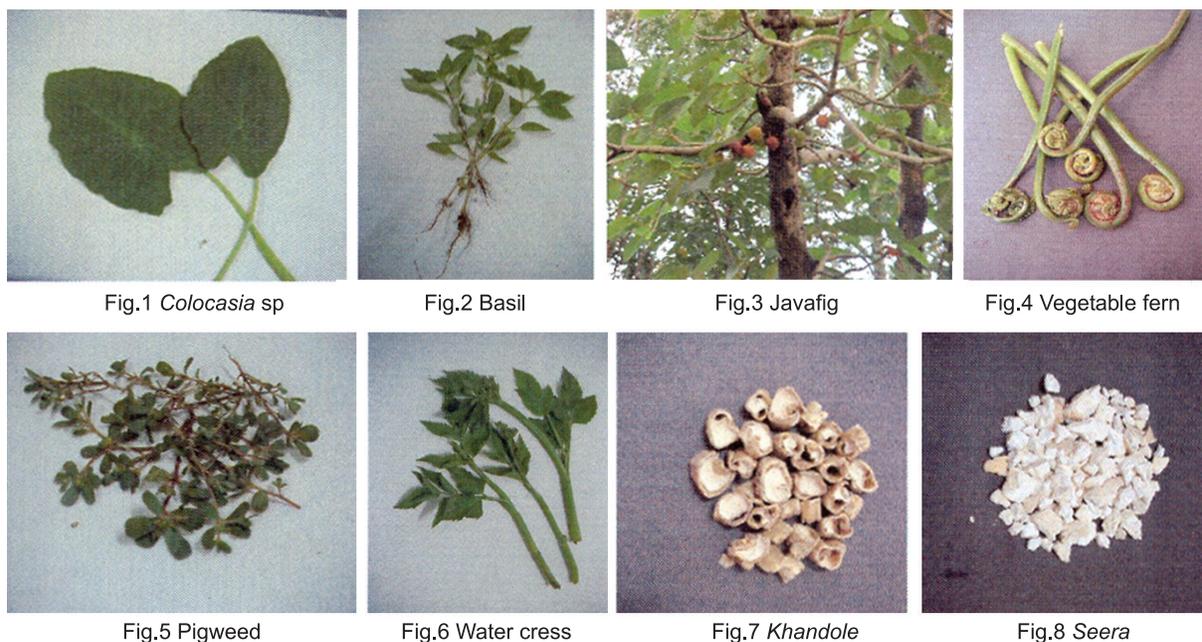


Table3— Nutritive value of parts of plants used in different traditional recipes per hundred gm of fresh material

Food items	Moisture (%)	Protein (%)	Fat (%)	Minerals (%)	Fiber (%)	Carbohydrates (%)	Energy (Kcal)	Calcium (mg)	Phosphorous (mg)	Iron (mg)
Mango (<i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn.)	81.0	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.7	16.9	74	14	16	1.3
Fig (<i>Ficus carica</i> Linn.)	88.1	1.3	0.2	0.6	2.2	7.6	37	80	30	1.6
Wheat (<i>Triticum aestivum</i> Linn.)	12.8	11.8	1.5	1.5	1.2	71.2	346	41	306	5.3
Peach (<i>Prunus persica</i>)	86.0	1.2	0.3	0.8	1.2	10.5	50	15	41	2.4
Colocasia leaf (<i>Colocasia antiquorum</i> Schott.)	82.7	3.9	1.5	2.2	2.9	6.8	56	227	82	10
Pear (<i>Pyrus communis</i> 'Bartlett')	86.0	0.6	0.2	0.3	1.0	11.9	52	8	15	0.5
Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron arboretum</i> Sm.)	88.2	1.6	0.6	1.3	1.3	7.0	40	-	2.5	-
Grass pea (<i>Lathyrus sativus</i> Linn.)	10.0	28.2	0.6	2.3	2.3	56.6	345	90	317	6.3
Kachnar (<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> Linn.)	78.3	4.8	1.3	2.4	6.8	6.4	58	56	54	5.3
Sebesten plum (<i>Cordia dichotoma</i> Forst)	82.5	1.8	1.0	2.2	0.3	12.2	65	40	60	-
Basil (<i>Ocimum basilus</i> Linn.)	77.1	5.5	1.4	2.1	1.9	11.8	82	487	-	5.2
Pigweed (<i>Portulaca oleracea</i> Linn.)	92	1.7	0.3	1.5	0.7	3.4	23	109	35	5.0
Buckwheat (<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i> Moench)	11.3	10.3	2.4	2.3	8.6	65.1	323	64	355	15.5
Java fig (<i>Ficus benzamina</i> Exotica)	70.4	2.5	1.7	3.6	7.5	14.3	83	218	80	17.5
Watercress (<i>Nasturtium officinale</i> W.T. Aiton)	89.2	2.9	0.2	2.2	0.6	4.9	33	290	140	4.6
Paco fern (<i>Diplazium esculentum</i> (Retz.) s5w)	90.09	1.29	0.16	1.17	4.68	2.61	18	0.08	0.06	8.40

observed from the table that in general Java fig and leaves of plants, viz. colocasia, fig, basil, pigweed, buckwheat and watercress used for preparing various

traditional recipes are very good source of calcium, phosphorous and iron (Table 3). Further, buckwheat contains good amount (10.3%) of proteins also. Grass

pea is an excellent source of protein (28.2%), minerals (2.3%), iron (6.3mg) and phosphorus (317mg.). As it is associated with the disease lathyrus, so it must be processed properly to reduce the antioxidant factors present in it. *Seera*, which is prepared from whole wheat is considered to be very nutritious. Hundred gram of fresh wheat contains 11.8%, 1.5%, 71.2% and 306mg of proteins, minerals, carbohydrates and phosphorous, respectively.

Conclusion

The food habits of the people have changed these days but those who have their roots in the villages, still relish the traditional recipes prepared from seasonal plant materials. These recipes are losing its sheen in the fast food culture. So there is a need to conserve our traditional food habits and recipes. The plant material used for preparing these recipes is seasonal and completely organic. It is both nutritious and safe to eat thus healthy. The tapping of Traditional knowledge in cooking and the preparation of food in combination with modern techniques may also very well be utilized to prevent the junk food

habits. It is hoped that the information will be of use to plan future research in this direction.

Acknowledgement

Authors acknowledge with thanks the TK holders for sharing useful and relevant information. Special thanks are due to Mrs Sukindra Sood, Mrs Durga Devi, Mrs Lalita, Mrs Subidha Devi, Mrs Nirmala Devi, and Mrs Aruna Vyas for sparing their valuable time for contributing effectively.

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