

Dictionary of Local-Botanical Names in Indian Folk Life

(Guide to over 26000 tribal and rural plant names
documented in sixty years ethnobotanical field work)



Vartika Jain
S.K. Jain

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documented in sixty years ethnobotanical field work)**

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Cover legend:

Rough outline of India showing some local and botanical names.

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PREFACE

Names are given for referring to living or non-living objects. All plant species so far known to man have been given scientific names according to International rules on the subject. These rules state that one species can have only one internationally accepted valid name and no two species can have same name. Local names of plants however, have no such rules.

About a hundred books have been published in Indian ethnobotany in last three or four decades, most of them are descriptive, dealing with concept, definition, scientific and economic importance of subject. Many field workers often do not attach much importance to local names and sometimes even don't record them. Usually National and Regional Floras don't have index of local names. Few books having local names of some plants provide a few page alphabetical indexes of local names and rarely give the botanical names against them.

Rural folk, forest dwellers and other people living in remote areas often give names to plants relevant to their daily material/cultural needs. Such names are usually spoken by small number of people and restricted to limited regions. Such remote areas are rich locations for documenting traditional and indigenous knowledge and a very favorite spot for ethnobotanical field work. Ethnobotanists record such names during their field studies. These names are specific to small ethnic groups and vary from region to region. Several research workers in field such as anthropologists, foresters, botanists, gatherers of herbs record such names relevant to their work. Many such scholars want to relate these names for purpose of precise identification of such plants. There is no handy volume depicting such names for entire country. The present book is intended to fill this need. The book has over 26000 local names and relevant botanical names given against them.

Most popularly spoken languages have their own names of plants. Some of these names have become popular also in commerce and trade. Indexes for names of plants in various national and indigenous languages which are largely spoken, popular in urban areas and generally among literate people are sometimes available in books on economic plants but names given to plants by local people are prevalent in remote areas among rather illiterate people. This book is largely different in this aspect as local/rural folk names hardly little overlap with such indexes.

The present book is a collection of local names from first hand reports collected from over 1200 research papers and books published in last six decades. It is a compilation of large number of tribal and rural local names of plants in a single volume and will be beneficial for both botanists as well as non-botanist field workers.

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Co-operation of family members are one of the significant contribution towards any successful endeavor hence, authors are indebted to their families for their constant support, patience and encouragement during this entire work.

— Vartika Jain

— S. K. Jain

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