The Indigenous foods of *Ho* community: An ethnic group of Jharkhand, India

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BACKGROUND

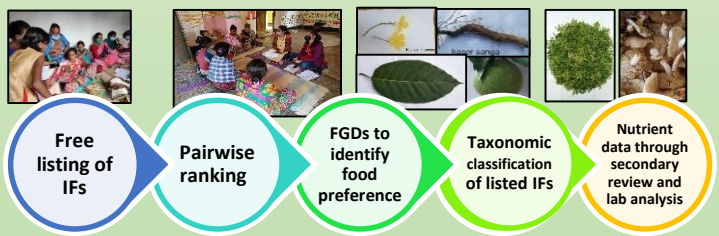
- Jharkhand, a central eastern state of India, is home to several indigenous communities[1]
- ***"Ho"*** is the fourth most predominant community in Jharkhand, surrounded by rich diverse ecosystems, yet have high malnutrition [1,2,3,4]
- The food environment of this community may provide rich indigenous food (IF) sources that may potentially promote food security, nutrition and health[5].

OBJECTIVES

- To **systematically document the indigenous foods** (IFs) of *Ho* community
- To **identify the IFs** through their taxonomic classification
- To **examine the nutritive potential** of identified IFs
- To explore the **factors that influence the consumption of IFs**

METHODS

- **Study design:** Mixed methods study
- **Study settings:** Randomly selected 7 villages in purposively selected blocks of Sonua, Khuntpani and Chakradharpur in West Singhbhum district, Jharkhand
- **Study population:** Adult men, women and elderly
- **Methods:** Qualitative and quantitative methods



RESULTS

- A total of **242 IFs**, mostly accessed from wild (**forests, lakes, rivers, open spaces**) and cultivated (**farm, kitchen garden, livestock rearing**) food environments
- **Taxonomic classification** completed in **179 IFs (74%)**
- **Nutritive values** documented for **119 identified IFs (66%)**: 17 foods analyzed in lab and the rest (n=102) searched through secondary literature
- Total **73 (61%) micronutrient rich IFs** reported in community

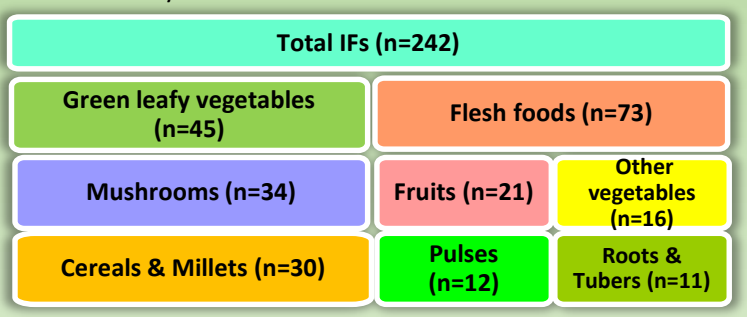


Table1: Some micronutrient rich foods of *Ho* community

Foods	Vit A (µg/ 100g)	Vit C (mg/ 100g)	Iron (mg/ 100g)	Ca (mg/ 100g)	Zinc (mg/ 100g)
Bojna Dhan (*Oryza sativa* L.)	<200	ND	**7.8**	6.2	0.8
Baturi Dal (*Vicia hirsute* (L.) Gray)	178	**12.5**	**17.1**	77.5	**3.8**
Dah Janum aa (*Hygrophila auriculata* (Schumach.) Heine)	<200	3.7	**4.5**	**428.7**	**2.3**
Sokoi sing (*Crotalaria juncea* L.)	**1112**	1.8	**7.6**	**320.2**	0.2
Hutarba (*Indigofera cassioides* D.C.)	<200	ND	**3.5**	**255**	0.8
Kusum (*Schleichera oleosa* (Lour.) Merr.)	**6238**	3.1	**44.2**	**134.8**	0.8
Potkeh (*Geastrum*)	ND	ND	**6.8**	**193.4**	**3.1**

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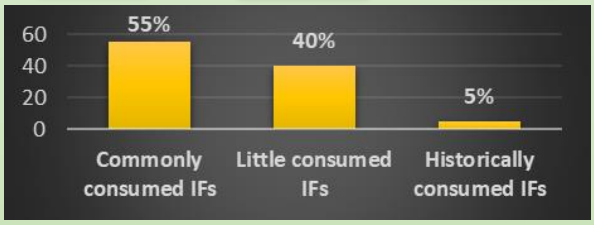

Facilitators of IF consumption

1. **Desirable taste & satiety**
2. **Perceived nutritional benefits**
3. **Sociocultural importance**

Barriers of IF consumption

1. **High opportunity cost** of accessing from wild habitats
2. **Diminished IF availability** due to climate variability
3. **Lack of awareness** about IFs found in wild habitats

CONCLUSION

- The *Ho* community has access to many micronutrient rich IFs, that can potentially address malnutrition
- Strategies that address the barriers to IF consumption, could be crucial, such as **facilitating IF production, creating awareness and increasing availability through food security schemes.**

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