



## SOME INTERESTING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AMONG THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN CHHATTISGARH, INDIA

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### Abstract

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Chhattisgarh is the 10th-largest state in India with an area of 52,199 sq mi (135,190 km<sup>2</sup>). By population it ranks as the 16th largest state of the nation (Census 2001). It is an important electrical power and steel producing state of India. Chhattisgarh produces 15 per cent of the steel made in the country. Chhattisgarh borders the states of Madhya Pradesh on the northwest, Maharashtra on the west, Andhra Pradesh on the south, Orissa on the east, Jharkhand on the northeast and Uttar Pradesh on the north. Chhattisgarh is rich in ethnic as well as floristic diversity. The tribal group of this region mainly depends on the forests for food, medicine and shelter. Beverages play an important role in the life of these tribals socially & financially. The paper presents the detailed account of two important beverages, Handia and Mahua daru consumed by the tribals of Chhattisgarh.

## INTRODUCTION

The State of Chhattisgarh is known as the rice bowl of Central India and has a rich tradition of food culture. Most of the traditional and tribe foods are made of rice and rice flour, curd (number of veg kadis) and a variety of green leaves. The tribal and village population enjoys delicacy brew made of small, creamy white fruit of a local tree called Mahua. Forests occupy 41.33% of the area (as per the latest report by the Indian Forest Service) and there are rich forest resources including wood, tandu leaves, honey and lac. Many type forest based product

Fermented food and beverages have been used worldwide since time immemorial. Various cultures have traditionally been using various fermented products. Beer was brewed by Babylonians and also exported to Egypt around 3000 BC. *Borde* and *tej* from Ethiopia, *boza* from Turkey, *suusac* from Kenya, Fermented milk product from Fulani (a tribe) of *Burkina Faso*, *pulque* a traditional Mexican alcoholic beverage, *Sobia* from Saudi Arabia, *Bhaati Jaanr* from Eastern India, *Hamei* and *Marcha* from

Sikkim and Manipur are just few fermented food products and beverages. Many others, which are also used, may not have found themselves in the literature. Among the non-alcoholic beverages, which they consume as cooling or refreshing drinks generally in summer are prepared from various plant species such as *Aegle marmelos* (L) Corr. fruit pulp, *Asparagus racemosus* Wild. Root powder, *Curculigo orchioides* Gaertn. Roots, *Chlorophytem tuberosum* Bak. Roots, *Curcuma augustifolia* Roxb. Rhizomes, *Mangifera indica* L. fruit pulp, and *Sacchraum officinarum* L. juice, etc. The common alcoholic beverages are *Paise* prepared from *Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn., *Tadi* from *Borassus flabellifer* L., *Salphi* from *Caryota urens* L., *Chind* from *Phoenix sylvestris* Roxb., *Handia* from *Oryza sativa* L., and *Mahua* from *Madhuca longifolia* var. *latifolia* (Koen.) Macbr. *Handia* and *Mahua* are most commonly and popularly consumed drinks among the tribals of central India.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

The study was carried out in Jashpur, Raigarh, Baster and Surguja districts of central India. The total 41 % area is covered by Sal and mixed forests.(Shrivastava & Rao 2003)Gond , Kanwars, Nagesia , Oraon, Pandos, Korwas, Khairwars, Agarias, Majhwars, and Baigas, etc.are the main tribes of state. Most common beverages in the state are *Handia* and *Mahua daru*. *Handia* is prepared from grains of *Oryza sativa*, grains of *Kodo* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum* L.) & *Gundli* (*Panicum sumatrense* Roth ex R.&S.) . *Mahua daru* from dried corollas of *Madhuca longifolia* var. *latifolia* (Koen.) Macbr. and some tribes are also used Ripe *mango* (*Mangifera indica* L.), Ripe pulp of *Kathal* (*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lamk.), and *Jamun* (*Syzygium cuminii*(L.)Skells ) fruit. The paper highlights the detailed methods of preparation of these beverages.

### Preparation of *Ranu* Tablet (Figure 1)

In the preparation of *Handia* and *Mahua*, *Ranu* tablets play a important role , act as yeast starter or fermentor, and help in fermentation of both beverages . *Ranu* tablets or *Ranu goti* are the mixture of roots, barks, rhizomes, leaves of about 20-25 plant species (table 1) and mixed with the rice flour. For preparation of tablets, rice is soaked in water, pounded, and kept in shady place for drying. The plant species used in preparation of *Ranu goti* are collected mostly from forests, and sometimes grown in the kitchen garden. The roots, leaves, bark, seeds of the plants are sun dried and pounded, powdered and dried in sun. The powder is mixed with flour thoroughly in the ratio of 1:2, and rolled in small pieces in the form of small cakes. These tablets are kept in closed room for drying. After drying, these *Ranu* tablets or *Ranu goti* are used for preparing local beverages.

Table 1:- Plants used in the preparation of *Ranu* tablets

| Plant name                                      | Local name             | Parts Used       |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Argyreia bella</i> (C.B.Clerk) Raizada       | <i>Chhit</i>           | Root             |
| <i>Bombax ceiba</i> L.                          | <i>Semar</i>           | Root             |
| <i>Buchanania lanzan</i> Spreng                 | <i>Char</i>            | Leaves           |
| <i>Casearia graveolens</i> Dalz.                | <i>Chithi</i>          | Root             |
| <i>Cassine glauca</i> (Rottb.) O.Ktze           | <i>Jamrasi</i>         | Stem bark        |
| <i>Catunaregam spinosa</i> (Thunb.) Tirvengadam | <i>Mainhar</i>         | Root             |
| <i>Cissampelos pareira</i> L.                   | <i>Parhi</i>           | Root             |
| <i>Crotalaria albida</i> Heyne ex. Roth         | <i>Choate ghurguli</i> | Root             |
| <i>Cryptolepis buchanani</i> Roem.& Schult.     | <i>Kali dudhi</i>      | Root             |
| <i>Datura metal</i> L.                          | <i>Dhatura</i>         | Seed             |
| <i>Elephantopus scaber</i> L.                   | <i>Manjur choti</i>    | Root             |
| <i>Euphorbia prolifera</i> Buch.-Ham.ex D.Don   | <i>Tisi</i>            | Root             |
| <i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (L.) R.Br.            | <i>Dudhiya</i>         | Root             |
| <i>Holarrhena pubescens</i> Wall.ex Don         | <i>Korya</i>           | Root/stem bark   |
| <i>Knoxia sumatrensis</i> (Retz.) DC.           | <i>Khudi kanda</i>     | Whole plant      |
| <i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> (Willd.) DC.           | <i>Patal kumhra</i>    | Root             |
| <i>Scoparia dulcis</i> L.                       | <i>Bhui dhania</i>     | Root/whole plant |
| <i>Senecio nudicaulis</i> Buch.-Ham.ex D.Don    | <i>Ban sarson</i>      | Root             |
| <i>Symplocos racemosa</i> Roxb.                 | <i>Lodh</i>            | Stem bark        |
| <i>Tylophora rotundifolia</i> Buch.-Ham.ex Wt., | <i>Bhuli</i>           | Root             |
| <i>Wattakaka volubilis</i> (L.f.) Stapf         | <i>Gai lakhan</i>      | Leaves           |

### Preparation of *Handia* (Rice bear)

*Handia* is prepared from grains of *Oryza sativa* L. For this, firstly rice is sun dried and boiled well then spread on mat for Cooling. *Ranu* tablets or medicinal cake is crushed and added to this boiled rice in appropriate proportion. In one k.g. rice generally four tablets are added. After that, the rice and *Ranu* tablets are placed in earthen pots and the mouth of vessel is covered by cloth and

kept in suitable placed for 4-5 days for fermentation. After fermentation pot is open and mixes the cold water, and the extract is drunk as beverage.

Some part of this region, some tribes are used the grains of *Kodo* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum* L.) & *Gundli* (*Panicum sumatrense* Roth ex R. &S.) in the place of *Oryza sativa*, but the preparation process is same.

### Preparation of *Mahua daru*

*Mahua* is prepared from dried corollas of *Madhuca longifolia* var. *latifolia* (Koen.) Macbr. For the Preparation of *Mahua* two methods – Closed process (Figure 2.) and Tube process are used by tribal people. In closed process. The liquour is collected in the pot, while in tube (*nala*) method, a tube is connected to the pot in which liquour comes out by the help of tube and stored in pot or cane. The dried corollas are kept in pot and some water is added. In the pot, *ranu* tablets and juice of *Buchanania lanzan* Spreng. Leaves are added to help the fermentation. The pot is closed by the cloth and kept for 3-5 days or till it start smelling, then the pot is kept on stove for distillation. On this pot, another pot is placed and above this another pot is placed in which the cold water is filled. The junctions of

these pots are tied tightly by cloth. The vapour passed through the middle pot strikes the bottom of the upper pot in which the cold water is kept. The vapour cools and the droplets collect in the middle pot. In closed system, in middle pot (*paina*), a small pot called *dokli* is placed in which the liquour is collected. In tube (*nala*) process, the vapour is passed through the tube, which is connected to middle pot and collects in cane or in another pot. The water of upper pot is regularly changed to keep it cool. The collected mahua is drunk as beverage, but the pure collected *mahua daru* is so concentrated it cannot drunk directly, it can drunk after 50% dilution by normal water. The pure *mahua daru* is known as *fully daru*, it is used directly as medicinal purpose the strength of mahua depends on chages of water of upper pot.



Figure 1. *Ranu* Tablets



Figure 2. Preparation of mahua daru by close Process

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preparation of these two beverages is very common among the tribals of central India and is prepared in almost every second house. Both these beverages have great importance in the social life of tribals. These beverages act as binding agent among the tribal communities. In every function, they join together and drink beverages and enjoy. *Handia* (Rice beer) is generally prepared during festivals or ceremonies. In marriages, the number of *Handia* to be given to girl side is decided well in advance. *Mahua* is daily consumed by these tribals. Women and children are also fond of these beverages but consume in small quantity and preferably during festivals or ceremonies. Tribals not only consume these beverages for intoxication but also meet 5-10% of the daily requirements of the nutrients, playing supplementary role in the nutrition of the people<sup>2</sup>. In small quantity, these beverages are also used as medicine for treating different ailments or diseases. *Handia* is taken as light tranquillizer by Maria tribe of Baster<sup>1</sup>. It is also given to treat fever, dysentery, diarrhea and gynecological complaints<sup>2</sup>. *Mahua* is given

to treat dysentery by *Baiga*, *Gond* and *Kol* tribes of Surguja district<sup>3</sup>. *Ranu* tablets are used in treating cholera by Gond tribes of Surguja district<sup>4</sup>. *Ranu* tablets are also used in treating cough & Cold and Dysentery by Oraon tribes of Jashpur and Raigarh district. *Fully daru* is used in stomachache and dysentery.

These beverages are also gave a strong financially support for some poor tribal people, They sold the *Mahua daru* in local bajar and cost is 50-60 Rs./ liter , the *ranu* tablet cost is 25-30 Rs/Kg., and *Handia* is 20-25 Rs/liter. It gives financially supporting a significant number of families that depend on it.

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