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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Tadi: a country liquor of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India

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ABSTRACT

Tadi (stem juice of Phoenix sylvestris) is a major country liquor of Bonai Forest Division, Odisha. The tribal communities of the division collect the stem juice of Phoenix sylvestris, locally known as Khajuri and use as local beverage. During the survey and work on forest fire in the year 2022, authors observed and documented it here. The study highlights the importance of local beverage in the healthcare and economical prospects.

India is the home of different types of tribal communities. They have unique food systems including traditional beverages (Kumar et al. 2017). The indigenous beverages have socio-cultural, mythological, food, medicinal and economic values. They use locally available plants to make sweet and fermented beverages through traditional ways. Sweet beverage comes under seasonal juices or welcome drinks. However, in some communities, the traditional liquor is mostly used as a welcome drink. In Odisha state, there are numbers of tribal communities and they use different plant parts to make country liquor like flowers of *Madhuca longifolia*, boiled rice, stem juice of *Caryota urens*, stem juice of *Phoenix sylvestris* etc (Kumar et al. 2017). During the forest fire works in Bonai Forest Division, Odisha,

authors observed a man climbing on a palm and extracting its stem juice. The man belonged to the Bhuian Tribe. Keeping all the importance of country liquor, authors documented the traditional methods of harvesting juice from the stem of *Phoenix sylvestris* for making wine which is also locally known as Tadi along with its economic and medicinal values.

Harvesting of stem juice: In Bonai Forest Division, Bhuian and Munda tribe collect the stem juice of Khajuri and use it to make Tadi. First they select a palm of more than not less than 5 years old. After selection of the palm, stem is shredded or tapped at the top of the stem of the palm. A sharp iron made cutting instrument known as *Daa* was used to scratch the top phloem portion from where the sap was oozed out. During evening, people from the community tap the stem and fix an earthen pot around the palm with the help of a rope. The sap is collected early morning and is stored for fermentation. The fresh sap is sweet but if left in sunlight, it gets fermented. Sometimes they also use a locally available fermenting agent (Ranu pills) to ferment the fresh juice for making country liquor (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Harvesting of stem juice and tadi at Pithachura village in Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, India, a) Palm of *Phoenix Sylvestris*, b-c) Man removing sap, d-e) Tadi in an earthen pot, f) Tadi served in a bowl

Socio-cultural values: The fresh juice and fermented Tadi is consumed during festivals, cultural events and family functions. The drink is also offered by the locals to their deities. Tadi is also served as a welcome drink in some communities belonging to these ranges.

Medicinal values: The fresh collected stem juice of Khujuri is used as a cooling beverage. They consume them in morning as well as in particular festivals. The drink is also consumed by children on several occasions. The local communities of Bonai Forest Division claim it as a curative juice in jaundice.

Economic values: The local communities sell them in their local markets. The average cost of one bowl (about 300 ml) is approximately Rs. 10- Rs. 15. according to our sources.

Future recommendations:

Conservation of traditional beverages is needed with value addition for the sustainability of practices and conservation of palm species. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The scientific validation is needed on its medicinal claims.
2. The value additions can be done for industrial purposes.
3. Proper documentation and scientific evaluation is needed to explore its food and medicinal values.
4. The cultivation of *Phoenix sylvestris* can be initiated in degraded lands and fringe of forests for economic purposes.
5. NGOs can take initiatives with Forest Department to develop a local drink with local brand for women empowerment and livelihood development.

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