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## Nutrition profile of underutilized *Lahsua (Digera arvensis)* and *Pakar (Ficus infectoria)* leaves incorporated traditional recipes

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### ABSTRACT

Micronutrient malnutrition poses a serious threat to the health of vulnerable groups of population. Among the plant foods green leafy vegetables are the cheapest and locally available food, rich in micronutrients. *Lahsua (Digera arvensis)* and *Pakar (Ficus infectoria)* are found to be underutilized leafy vegetables in Northern India. In the present study was observed that underutilized green leafy vegetables which are equally nutritious to any other traditional green leafy vegetables can be incorporated in daily dietaries.

**Key words :** Green leafy vegetables, Product development, Nutrition content

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### INTRODUCTION

Development of nutritious and organoleptically acceptable recipes with locally available foods is a challenge for the food scientist. However, the benefits of such food-based strategies to prevent micronutrient malnutrition are manifold. They: (a) are preventive, (b) are cost-effective, (c) are sustainable, (d) are income-generating, (e) are culturally acceptable and feasible to implement, (f) promote self-reliance and community participation, and (g) foster the development of environmentally sound food production systems (Nambiar *et al.*, 2005). Use of green leafy vegetables to eradicate underlying micronutrient deficiencies has been advocated for a long time. Several studies have indicated green leafy vegetables as a group to be important sources of nutrients required for growth and maintenance. *Lahsua (Digera arvensis)* herbs are distributed throughout India and is commonly seen after rains especially in the eastern and northern provinces of India. It has an impressive range of medicinal uses with high nutritional value. Different parts of this plant contain a profile of important minerals, and are a good source of protein, vitamins, beta-carotene, amino acids and various phenolics (Seshadri and Nambiar, 2003). Fodder plants, long an integral part of farming

systems, provide a source of green fodder during the dry season when the decreased forage far exceeds the sustainable supply for livestock (Amatya, 1992, Lekhak, 1998). Underutilized *Pakar (Ficus infectoria)* is an evergreen tree hugely growing in Northern parts of India. Foliage buds are eaten as vegetable and pickle (Siwakoti and Varma, 1996). It is an important leafy vegetable, high in nutritional value and rich in vitamin A, iron and protein. In view of this, the present investigation was undertaken to evaluate the nutritional composition of traditional recipes incorporated underutilized leafy vegetables.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted at College of Home Science and Women's Development, Allahabad Agricultural Institute-Deemed University, Allahabad.

#### Sample used:

Underutilized *Lahsua (Digera arvensis)* leaves and *Pakar (Ficus infectoria)* leaves was procured directly from field and used in the product preparation. Totally six products out of which three each of *Lahsua* and *Pakar* were incorporated products were prepared.