

A Review :

Use of indigenous dyes for economic upliftment and sustainable livelihood

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Colouring yarn is a creative and lucrative art nurtured and patronized through centuries. Until the turn of 19th century fabric were coloured using dyestuff obtained from nature as they were the only colouring substances available at that time. The muted earth colours yielded by these indigenous dyestuffs were considered as harmonious as they go together giving pleasing results.

Indigenous dyeing on textiles is now being popularized globally by the continuous effort of the nature lovers. The problems caused by the synthetic dyes to the human lives and environments have come to an alarming level today. Hence, there is an urgent need to have an alternative for the hazardous synthetic dyes. One such immediate solution is to explore the use of natural dyes. In recent years, a growing interest in the revival of natural dyes has been manifested. This interest is a result of worldwide movement to protect the environment for indiscriminate exploitation and pollution by industries. Natural dyes are being reborn but they lack colourfastness to various agencies like washing, sunlight, crocking etc. Mordents are used to improve colorfastness to dyes. To some extent adding selected mordant in the natural dyeing both is accepted provided the character of the natural dye is unaltered and the eco-system is not deteriorated. Hence, the coloration of textiles with natural dyes and with natural mordant is advantageous and appreciable towards the health and environment point of view.

Ethnic communities throughout the NE region of India, with long standing dye traditions around which revolved a way of life with socio-cultural implications was not left untouched. By the early part of the last century, the global phenomena

of synthetic dyestuff had rapidly permeated into the indigenous craft. It all but destroyed the knowledge skills acquired over centuries to perfect and inevitably eroded, because a cheaper alternative requiring little or no skill was readily available. Today, throughout the multiethnic communities of the northeast the craft is either lost or in the status of a languishing craft.

Moreover, the North East region is a veritable treasure house of vibrant traditions of weaving worked upon by a large work force of women who have kept the craft alive. The weavers incorporate intricate and unique motifs through indigenous dyed yarn that reflect socio-cultural significance giving it regional identity and specialty not found anywhere in the country.

Appropriating the use of natural dyes as value addition in the handloom products represent, a niche marketing direction. Such initiatives have gender implications since weaving and dyeing is the domain of women. Increase income benefits will ensure women weavers' sustainable security. By this value addition, a revival on the use of natural dyes will conserve an intangible heritage.

In general, population growth, poverty and the search for short-term economic gains among local populations are at the root of the threat to biological diversity, or biodiversity. So far, no concrete initiative has been taken to promote the sustainable use of biological diversity at the global level. This would require specific action and a certain amount of planning by Governments, local communities and the private sector.

NGOs have played a major part in the revival of indigenous dye practices in world communities having a vibrant past, where the craft is slowly languishing or

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Table : Dye/colour yielding plants used as dye material

Botanical name	Common name	Family	Dye yielding part	Colour
<i>Aegele marmelos</i> Linn.	Bel tree	Rutaceae	Fruit	Yellow
<i>Aleurite moluccana</i> Willd.	Jangli Akhrot	Euphorbiaceae	Root	Brown
<i>Allium cepa</i> Linn.	Onion	Liliaceae	Dry skin	Red
<i>Artocarpus integrifolia</i> Linn	Jackfruit	Moraceae	Wood and root	Yellow
<i>Artocarpus lakoocha</i> Roxb	Lakoocha	Moraceae	Root	Yellow
<i>Bauhinia purpurea</i> Linn	Pink Bauhinia	Leguminosae	Bark	Yellow
<i>Berberis aristata</i> DC.	India Berberry	Berberidaceae	Root and Stem	Yellow
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> Linn.	Sugar beet	Chenopodiaceae	Root stock	Red
<i>Biscafia javanica</i> Blume	Red Cedar	Euphorbiaceae	Wood	Red
<i>Bixa orellana</i> Linn	Annatto	Bixaceae	Seeds	Orange
<i>Bougainvillea spectabilis</i> Willd.	Bougainvillea	Nyctaginaceae	Flower	Red
<i>Butea monosperma</i> Lam.	Palash	Leguminosae	Flower	Yellow
<i>Butea superba</i> Roxb.	Climbing palash	Leguminosae	Bark and root	Red
<i>Caesalpinia sappan</i> Linn.	Sappan wood	Leguminosae	Heartwood	Red
<i>Capsicum annum</i> Linn.	Red chillies	Solanaceae	Fruit	Red
<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i> Linn.	Safflower	Compositae	Flower	Red
<i>Cassia fistula</i> Linn.	India laburnum	Leguminosae	Bark	Red
<i>Cedrela toona</i> Roxb.	Red Cedar	Meliaceae	Flower	Red
<i>Ceriops tagal</i> (Perr.) C.B. Robins.	Goran	Rhizophoraceae	Bark	Red, Brown
<i>Chloroxylon swietenia</i> DC.	Bhirra	Rutaceae	Bark	Yellow
<i>Crocus sativus</i> Linn.	Saffron Crocus	Iridaceae	Flower	Yellow
<i>Curcuma longa</i> Linn.	Turmeric	Zingiberaceae	Root	Yellow
<i>Datisca cannabina</i> Linn.	Akalbir	Daticaceae	Root	Yellow
<i>Diospyros pergrina</i> (Geartn.) Gurk.	Indian Persimon	Ebenaceae	Fruit	Brown
<i>Eclipta alba</i> Hassak.	Bhringaraja, Mochkand	Compositae	Leaves	Black
<i>Embilica officinales</i> Gaertn.	Amla	Euphorbiaceae	Bark	Brownish yellow
<i>Ervatamia coronaria</i> Stapf.	Crape Jasmine	Umbelliferae	Seed pulp	Yellow
<i>Eugenia jambolana</i> Lam.	Black plum	Myrtaceae	Bark	Brown
<i>Ficus religiosa</i> Linn.	Pipal	Moraceae	Bark	Brown
<i>Garcinia xanthochymus</i> Hook.f.	Cochin goroka	Guttiferae	Bark	Golden yellow
<i>Garuga pinnata</i> Roxb.	Kharpat	Burseraceae	Leaves	Red
<i>Gossypium herbaceum</i> Linn.	Kapas	Malvaceae	Flower	Yellow
<i>Haematoxylon campechianum</i> Linn.	Patang; Logwood	Leguminosae	Heartwood	Grey
<i>Indigofera tinctoria</i> Linn.	Indigo	Leguminosae	Leaves	Blue
<i>Jasminum humile</i> Linn.	Yellow jasmine	Oleaceae	Root	Yellow
<i>Juglans regia</i> Linn.	Walnut	Juglandaceae	Bark and leaves	Brown
<i>Lanea coromandelica</i> (Houtt.) Merrill.	Jingan	Anacardiaceae	Bark	Brown
<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> Linn.	Henna	Lythraceae	Leaves	Red
<i>Mallotus phillippensis</i> Muell. Arg.	Kamala tree	Euphorbiaceae	Fruit	Yellow
<i>Mangifera indica</i> Linn.	Mango	Anacardiaceae	Bark	Yellow
<i>Melastoma malabathrium</i> Linn.	Phutuka	Melastomataceae	Fruit	Black/Purple
<i>Memecylon umbellatum</i> Burm. f.	Iron wood	Melastomataceae	Leaves	Yellow
<i>Michelia champaca</i> Linn.	Champaka	Magnoliaceae	Flower	Yellow
<i>Mimusops elengi</i> Linn	Indian Madlar	Sapotaceae	Bark	Brown
<i>Morinda angustifolia</i> Roxb.	Achu	Rubiaceae	Root and Wood	Yellow
<i>Morinda citrifolia</i> Linn.	Al	Rubiaceae	Bark and Root	Red and yellow
<i>Myrica esculanta</i> Buch-Ham.	Bay berry	Myriaceae	Bark	Yellow
Syn. <i>Myrica nagi</i> Thunb.				
<i>Nyctanthesis arbortritis</i> Linn.	Coral Jasmine	Oleaceae	Flower	Yellow
<i>Onsoma echioides</i> C.B. Clarke, non Linn.	Ratanjot	Boraginaceae	Root	Red
<i>Petrocarpus santalinus</i> Linn.	Red Sandal	Leguminosae	Wood	Red
<i>Pterospermum lanceafolium</i> Roxb.	Muskund	Sterculiaceae	Leaves and Bark	Orange
<i>Punica granatum</i> Linn.	Pomegranate	Lythraceae	Fruits	Yellow
<i>Reseda luteola</i> Linn.	Dyer's Weld	Resedaceae	Whole plant	Yellow
<i>Rubia cordifolia</i> Linn.	Indian Madder	Rubiaceae	Root	Pink red
<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i> Linn.f.	Cachewnut tree	Anacardiaceae	Fruit	Black
<i>Syzygium cuminii</i> (Linn) Skeels.	Black Plum	Myrtaceae	Bark	Red
<i>Tagettes erecta</i> Linn.	Marygold	Composite	Leaves	Brown
Syn <i>Tagettes patula</i> Linn.				
<i>Tectona garndis</i> Linn.	Teak	Verbenaceae	Bark and leaves	Brown
<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Roxb.) Wight & Arn.	Arjuna tree	Combretaceae	Bark	Brown
<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Chebulic myrobalans	Combretaceae	Fruit	Brown

lost. NGOs play the catalyst in development initiatives between recipient/ producer/ consumer.

State institutions and other agencies can play a vital role in community initiatives, information sharing and protection of community knowledge by vested commercial interests. Instruments like IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) must be put in place, to ensure the traditional and indigenous knowledge that craft- practitioners have is respected, protected and its commercialization by others is done with mutual consent and with equitable sharing of benefits.

There is a global rebirth for the use of indigenous dyes with worldwide interest and attention given to the use of natural dyes for its eco-friendly processes and the contribution of its use in future economies. These issues hold relevance to be considered locally and in a global perspective as peoples of the world community search for alternatives to sustain our planet. To concern for environment considerations in developed countries, has pushed for ecological consumptions which also influence the textile industry e.g., eco labeling, Eco Mark, alongside indicators to certify the product process within ecological

parameters, is embracing greater acceptance in world commerce.

There is resurgence in the demand for indigenous dyed products in the textiles and craft industries, with this sector emerging as a strong economy in the 21st century – an economy that must be considered with rational management of renewable natural resources. While promoting natural dyes measures must be in place to protect it. Excessive and wanton collection of the dye plants can rapidly deplete the environment. The cultivation of dye yielding plants can be part of alternative farming. Hence, here are some common dyes yielding plant available in north east of India

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