

'TENFA'

Wild edible and medicinal plants of Kinnaur

Community values and indigenous knowledge
from the Himalayas





A Kinnauri Woman picking *Choyag Kan* or stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) at Lambar

ABOUT PROJECT *TENFA*

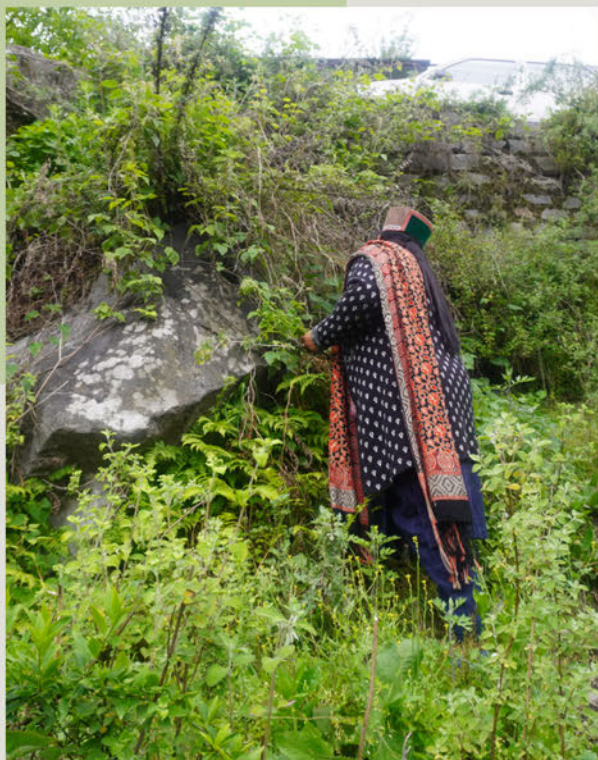
Tenfa in Kinnauri Language refers to the practice of sending food items and medicinal plants as gifts to friends, family and relatives. These gifts often contain Chilgoza, Black Cumin, Apricot Kernel oil, Morel mushrooms and more. Many of these plant resources are uncultivated or grow in the wild. Uncultivated food practices and wild medicinal plants are a consistent component of the region's way of life due to ecological and environmental factors. The process of collection, distribution and consumption are rooted in community's value of coexistence with nature, and sharing of resources/collective ownership.

OUR MISSION

- Documentation of indigenous knowledge around the wild edible and medicinal plants of Kinnaur including their identification, storage and drying process, usage and related information.
- Interview local people and community elders to make sense of how climate change and range shift of native flora and fauna, community values and changing perspectives around food and lifestyle can impact the availability, accessibility and usage of such wild plants.

OVERVIEW

- Documenting traditional knowledge around food practices.
- Focus on wild or uncultivated plant resources.
- Discussing Plant ecology and Biodiversity of the Himalayas through food.
- Reflection on community values and shared living.



Collecting *Lemkut* (*Pteridium aquilinum*)
at Kangosh

FOOD SECURITY IN RURAL HIMALAYAS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Due to the extreme weather conditions and the lifestyle of the indigenous people being codependent and interconnected with nature, wild or uncultivated plant resources have become a stable part of the food palette of Kinnaur. These plant resources play an essential role in the daily food requirements and dietary needs of the people and also provide a stable source of income to many. Erratic weather patterns and range shift due to global warming among other reasons has resulted in decreased accessibility and availability of these food items.



collected *Lemkut*



Lemkut Habitat

Efforts to bridge the gap between indigenous and scientific knowledge.

Local Knowledge of biodiversity stems from a long history of intergenerational observation and interaction with nature. Local knowledge of wild plants, especially medicinal and edible species, is valuable to not only local population but the scientific community as well. .

However, due to multiple factors, the traditional Knowledge around wild plants is slowly fading away in the region. This is particularly the case for non-commercial plants.

Plant Blindness:
Human inability to see or notice plants in one's everyday life is a phenomenon known as plant blindness.

Our focus is to create an interactive space based on community participation and learning, and to creatively assert value of diverse lifeforms and different ways of living.

"The herb growth has declined in recent years. The plants that used to grow near villages, now grow at higher altitudes, so finding them has become more difficult than before. The heat has impacted their production."

Excerpt from the interview of Mr Sushil Kumar
Gram Pradhan, Rakcham Village, 2023.



OF PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

Zed.tells is an autonomous collective of people from Kinnaur. Our processes and practices are deeply embedded in co-learning and participation. We are a network of community elders, scientists, farmers, local medicine practitioners, young enthusiasts and more. All the information shared via Project *Tenfa* is first discussed with many people. Our discussion take place via direct communication and online spaces.

(Zedtells *Samvad* is an ever growing Whatsapp community where people from diverse backgrounds actively share knowledge pertaining language and artistic traditions of Kinnaur, Himalayan biodiversity, and discuss social and environmental issues pertaining to the region.)



Holding *Mako Zeera* (*Carum Carvi*)

Co-creating an ecosystem based on participation and learning.

A growing Community space.

The team carrying out basic operations for Project Tenfa:



Dr Preeti Saryan
Project Lead



Kamaljeet Tharangzag
Communications and operations



Tanisha Negi
Photography and editing



Pramiti Negi
Communications and Operations



Tanzin Yondan
Research and Information
(Student at Sikkim Namgyal institute
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and many more...