

# मगर अध्ययन

## (Magar Studies)

A Peer Reviewed Journal from the Magar Indigenous Peoples of Nepal

वर्ष ४, अङ्क ३, पौष २०८० (Volume 4, Number 3, Jan 2024)

### सम्पादन सल्लाहकार

डा. नरमाया थापामगर

डा. छविलाल चिदिमगर

डा. लाल बहादुर थापामगर

डा. लाल बहादुर पुनमगर

### सम्पादक

डा. विष्णु कुमार सिङ्जाली

दिल प्रसाद मगर

जग बहादुर बुढामगर

मन कुमारी ठाडामगर

जिवन प्रवेश रोकामगर

### प्रकाशक

मगर प्रकाशन समिति

नेपाल मगर लेखक संघ, केन्द्रीय समिति, काठमाडौं

## खण्ड-ग

### संस्कृति, लोकवाता र विविध

९. पुनमगरको पुर्खा संस्मरण कुलपूजा : करवाकेली  
- मेजन पुन ९८
१०. तनहुँसुरको चण्डीमाई थान र मगर पुजारी  
- डा. तिलु थापा १११
११. मगर समुदायसँग सम्बन्धित जातीय कथ्यहरू र यसको प्रभाव  
- डा. नारायणबहादुर मगर १२०
१२. मगर गर्भवती महिला र हेरस्याहार  
- डा. नरमाया थापा मगर १३१
१३. मगर समुदायमा प्रचलित सेराला र भैराला लोकगीतहरू  
- बल बहादुर घर्ती मगर १४०
१४. Globalization Impact in Magar Cultures: An Ethnographic Inquiry of in Bhalebas Bheja Territory  
- Dhan Bahadur Reshmi १५३
१५. Role of Indigenous Magars in Promotion of Green Economy  
- Dil Prasad Magar १६९
१६. सिक्किम तथा दार्जिलिङ क्षेत्रका मगरहरूको चिन्तनमूलक लोकवाता  
- डा वासुदेव पुलामी मगर १८९

## खण्ड-घ

अनुसूची -१

मगर प्रकाशन समितिको गतिविधिहरू २११

अनुसूची -२

आदिवासी मगर प्राज्ञिक सम्मेलन-२०८० को संक्षिप्त जानकारी २२४

सर्वाधिकार ©	: सम्पादक/प्रकाशक
ISSN	: 2822-1680
आवरण फोटो	: रुकुम जिल्लाको मैनाम (मैकोट) मगर गाउँ र भूगोल, पछाडिको आवरण फोटो हुनाम (हुकाम) मगर गाउँ (फोटो: डा. विष्णु कुमार सिङ्जाली)
आर्थिक सहयोग	: मगर संघ अमेरिका
संयोजन/कम्पाइलेशन	: डा. विष्णु कुमार सिङ्जाली (सिंजापतीमगर)
कम्प्युटर सेटिङ	: सुरेन्द्र महर्जन
मुद्रण	: कानुङ प्रिन्टिङ प्रेस, बागवजार, काठमाडौं, ९८५१०५१४१६
सम्पर्क ठेगाना	: नेपाल मगर लेखक संघ, केन्द्रीय समिति, काठमाडौं । bishnusinjali@hotmail.com, nmagarwa@gmail.com
मूल्य	: रु. ४५०/-, भा.रु. ४५०/-, विदेशमा US \$ १५

---

जर्नल सम्बन्धी सर्वाधिकार प्रकाशक/सम्पादकमा सुरक्षित राखिएको छ तर लेखहरूको प्रतिलिपि अधिकार सम्बन्धित लेखकहरूसँग रहेको छ । प्रकाशक/सम्पादकको अनुमतिबिना पुस्तकको कुनै पनि भागको वा अंश इलेक्ट्रोनिक तथा अन्य किसिमले पुनः प्रकाशन गर्न निषेध गरिएको छ ।

---

Magar Addhyayan (Magar Studies)

**Published by**

Magar Publication Committee

Nepal Magar Writer's Association, Central Committee, Kathmandu

## विषय सूची

### खण्ड-क

#### आदिवासी ज्ञान र सीप भाषा

१. Polygonatum Mill (रुकन): A Potential Alternative Source of Income for the Magar Kham community in Western Nepal  
- Dr. Shanta Budha-Magar, Kiran Thapa Magar १
२. "Zhim Pup, Jyan, Khadar Zhim" ("Home is Cave, Forest and Burial is Home") Wild Food Systems of Magar Indigenous Peoples of the Ta Sehro ("Taksera") Village in Rukum  
- Dr. Krishna B. Bhattachan १४
३. मगर हुटमा सर्वनामिक चरित्र र सामाजिक आत्मीयता  
- विष्णु कुमार सिङ्गाली, पिप्लडी २९

### खण्ड-ख

#### विकास तथा मगर इतिहास

४. नेपालको विकासे क्षेत्रमा मगरहरूको उपस्थिति  
- मन कुमारी ठाडा मगर (मनु) ३९
५. बुङ्कोट विद्रोह सम्बन्धी केही ऐतिहासिक तथ्यहरू  
- उमेश राना "गोर्खाली" ५१
६. राष्ट्रिय विभूतिका हकदार प्रथम शहीद लखन थापामगर  
- जीवन आले मगर ६८
७. सिक्किमका मगर जातिको लोक ऐतिहासिक अध्ययन  
- सबिना राणा मगर ७८
८. The Origin Myths of Tarali Magars of Dolpa  
- Jag Bahadur Budha Magar ९०

**“Zhim Pup, Jyan, Khadar Zhim”  
 (“Home is Cave, Forest and Burial is Home”)  
 Wild Food Systems of Magar Indigenous Peoples of the  
 Ta Sehro ("Taksera") Village in Rukum**

✉ Dr. Krishna B. Bhattachan<sup>1</sup>  
bhattachan.k@gmail.com

**Abstract**

*Magar indigenous people is the third largest among all caste and ethnic groups and the first indigenous community of Nepal in term of its population size. It has own communal identity including their custodian lands, territories, and resources by exercising self-determination, autonomy, and customary government systems, and transfer the collective way of life, including custodianship of ancestral lands and indigenous knowledge to a new generation. The concern of continuation of the custom and tradition of protection, collection, and consumption of wild foods by Magar Kham are the transfer of knowledge of Gaula to a new generation. Based on a weeklong fieldwork in the village, this paper focuses on plant and animal-based wild foods collected and consumed by Magar Indigenous Peoples in Ta Sehro ("Taksera") village. The paper discusses some practical and strategic contributions and analyzes relevant national and international food laws and policies. Critical factors for decreasing collection and consumption, issues, challenges, and the way forward facing Magar Indigenous Peoples are also identified.*

**Introduction**

Wild foods are not wild, instead it is natural, organic homely foods to Indigenous Peoples as implied in a saying by Magar Indigenous Peoples of 'Ta Sehro' village in Rukum, “Zhim Pup, Jyan, Khadar Zhim” (“Home is Cave Forest & Burial is Home”). It is resonated in the following views and a food systems wheel for Indigenous Peoples' food systems stated in The White/Wiphala Paper of Indigenous Peoples' food system by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2021, p.7):

*"Indigenous Peoples portray their food systems with a wide-angle holistic view that encompasses spirituality, life and culture, with biotic and abiotic components in the ecosystem, as well as the*

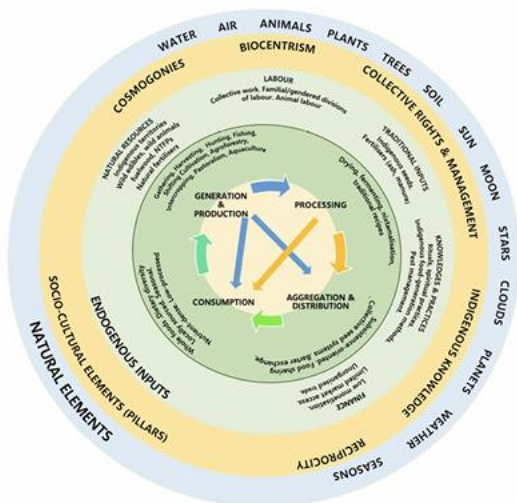
---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Krishna Bahadur Bhattachan is a renowned anthropologist, professor and indigenous right activist in Nepal.

interconnections between them. Indigenous Peoples' food systems involve the totality of human agencies (knowledge, strategies, techniques, values, sharing) for the production, generation, utilisation, access, availability, stability and management of food that are nutritious, culturally and spiritually fulfilling, and sustainable for future generations.

There are as many Indigenous Peoples' food systems as the ecosystems in which Indigenous Peoples live across the planet. Their food systems are heterogeneous, comprising different ways of obtaining, preparing, storing and sharing food. These diverse ways of obtaining food are built on diversified means and techniques based on interactions with nature that respect the biogeochemical cycles, limits and seasons."

Figure 1: A food systems wheel for Indigenous Peoples' food systems.



Source: FAO, 2021

A food systems wheel for Indigenous Peoples' food systems provides a picture of the forest in which a food tree is being located. Land is not owned by anyone. Some of the core values of Indigenous Peoples, including Magar, are that, Mother Earth should be fully respected, that everything is, or all living and nonliving beings are, interconnected and interdependent, and that everyday wellbeing should be at the center demands complete investigation of food system cycle of Magar, but given limited resources and time inventory of wild foods is the first step to move in this direction. This wheel is an ideal model that used to be everyday practice before the colonization of Indigenous Peoples. What is missing in this wheel is the conditions and factors that either damage partially or totally the smooth functioning of the wheel. Such factors include colonization, racism, *Brahmanism*, patriarchy, militarization, liberalization and neo-liberalization, modernization, Westernization, dependency, Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, globalization, and the fortress model. What is missing in the wheel under collective rights & management is customary self-governing institutions, customary social government systems, and customary laws.

Shrestha and Dhillon (2015) have done a research on diversity and traditional knowledge concerning wild food species in a locally managed forest in Nepal based on a case study in Dolakha; Shrestha (2012) has published his findings on Indigenous vegetables for diversity and food security in Nepal based on a review of findings available in the books, reports and research papers. Jyoti Prakash Tamang from Sikkim has done many studies on fermented foods in Asia and the Himalayan region, including Nepal and India, with a focus on fermented foods, including fermented vegetables, legumes, milk, cereals, ethnic fish, meat, and alcoholic beverages (Tamang 2010).

IFAD (2011) and Kuhnle, Harriet V., Smitasiri, S., Yesudas, S., Bhattacharjee, L., and Ahmed, S. (2006) provide a beneficial perspective and framework from Indigenous Peoples' standpoint. Till now, there has been no research on Indigenous food systems or wild foods done in such a comprehensive way because of a lack of resources.

This paper focuses on a part but is interconnected and interdependent to the whole parts identified in the wheel.

## Methodology

A weeklong fieldwork was done in the Bacchhu of Ta Sehro village during the last week of December 2020 and the first week of January 2021. Primary qualitative and quantitative data were generated using Indigenous and colonizer social science methodologies. Indigenous methodology includes Indigenization, decolonization, deBrahmanization, talking circles, storytelling, community meetings, and validation from the customary self-government. Colonizer's social science methodology includes fieldwork, individual interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and caste studies. The names of all the wild foods, names of forests and rivers, and their distance from the settlement were validated, with some additions, corrections, and changes in the prepared initial draft by their customary self-governing institution, Kachahari. It should be mentioned here that the AIPP study I carried out is ongoing research on wild foods with ownership of the Magar of 'Ta Sehro' in partnership with the AIPP.

## Findings And Analysis

The findings of the study are presented and discussed in this section.

### 1. Plant and Animal-based Wild Foods Collected and Consumed by Magar Indigenous Peoples

#### Wild Foods

Magar of Ta Sehro village is a unique Indigenous community that has a continuing traditions from time immemorial. The title Oldest House of Nepal Ta Sehro Rukum (Its Khas Nepali title is हजार वर्ष पुरानो घर रूकुम टकसेरा यात्रा ("Travel to Thousand years old house Taksera") of a video uploaded in YouTube by PURVI Blues on 7 July 2022 speaks volume about its continuing tradition (the video is available at [https://youtu.be/Xb\\_Agj24ckA?t=427](https://youtu.be/Xb_Agj24ckA?t=427)).

Magars of Ta Sehro are knowledgeable about many varieties of wild foods. They collect and consume plant and animal-based wild foods (Table 1). The total 65 plants-based wild foods include 22 JyanMu/Rmu (Wild mushrooms), 13 JyanJora (Wild root), Woy (Tuber), Hangya (Stem), Kharda (Shoot), Bark and Leaf, 15 JyanMhantaNgahantaNghatntu (Wild vegetables), 14 JyanSyo (Wild fruits) and 1 JyanWoye (Wild flowers). The total animal-based wild foods include 13 JyanGosyonra (Wild insects), 7 JyanNgha (Wild



Fishes), 9 Jyan Bwa (Wild birds), and 9 JyanBankar (Wild animals). 6 types of JyanRaap (Wild Honey) and Ghos Ra (Steep rock honey) is the only animals and plant-based wild foods.

Gaula ("Gothalo"), mostly men and some women, are the most knowledgeable of all these wild foods. They collect almost all wild foods. It is because, Gaulas live in Bhedi Goth about 8 of the 12 months, except winter in the pasture and the forest. They carry some foods such as rice, lentils, spices, and oil from home but rely on wild foods for daily subsistence. JyanMu/Rmu (Wild mushrooms), *JyanJora* (Wild root), *Woy* (Tuber), *Hangya* (Stem), *Kharda* (Shoot), Bark and Leaf, JyanMhantaNgahntaNghatntu (Wild vegetables), JyanGosyonra (Wild insects), 7 JyanNgha (Wild Fishes), 9 Jyan Bwa (Wild birds), and 9 JyanBankar (Wild animals) are consumed during lunch and dinner. They carry this wild food to share with their family members at home in the village, or family members who visit them in the pasture and forest carry back these foods. JyanSyo (Wild fruits) are generally consumed to quench thirst or lessen appetite when busy working in the forest and pasture.

Community members of the village collect a few wild foods available nearby their village settlement.

What is good is that the community members know most of the wild foods, i.e. JyanMu/Rmu (Wild mushrooms), *JyanJora* (Wild root), *Woy* (Tuber), *Hangya* (Stem), *Kharda* (Shoot), Bark and Leaf, JyanMhantaNgahntaNghatntu (Wild vegetables), JyanGosyonra (Wild insects), and JyanNgha (Wild Fishes) in their own Kham language. "The *Gaula* and community members provided names of three wild mushrooms in Khas Nepali language; all other wild mushrooms were called *Chyau*(Mushroom) in Khas Nepali." The main reasons for maintaining their original names are because of a continuing solid custom and traditions, including the customary self-government system of Kachahari and customary laws, the absence of the dominant caste groups, especially Bahun and Chetri (the nearby presence of Bahun Chetri is at least at a distance of 30 km from the village, lack of "modern" or colonizer's education, and Some wild foods are consumed by the Gaula only, and some are shared with the family, neighbors, and community members. But what is worrisome is ? According to the AIPP (2021), the Mgar Kham differentiates into two types of forest,

"(a) Wama ban is a female forest which often is dense, but there are not many direct sun rays in the forest. Most of the forest parts are characterized by chisyan (shaded cool place), and (b) Wapama ban is a male forest with plenty of sun rays, but trees are sparse."<sup>2</sup> "Mushrooms found in Wama ban are not found in Waapama ban, and vice versa," "Varieties of species of mushrooms are found in Wama ban and less in Wapama ban," and "It is difficult to differentiate these two types of forest during the rainy season."

What is worrisome is that the market has already penetrated the Magar community of Ta Sehro. Multinational company DXN has begun buying *Khutemmo* mushrooms from the villagers, and as a result, Gaula and other community members have stopped consuming them for their nutritional purposes. The danger looming large is that many wild foods may be reached out by market and ultimately destroy not only the forest and pasture but also the Magar's distinct collective way of life.

**Table 1: Wild foods used by Kham Magar of Ta Sehro**

S.N.	Types of Wild Foods	Names of Wild Foods
<b>(1) Plants based wild foods</b>		
1.1.	JyanMu/Rmu mushrooms) (Wild	(1) Ghyamo/Mu/Rmu, (2) GhopaMu/Rmu, (3) Highnomo (4) Cirjimo, (5) Nilyamo, (6) BagaleKeduWarmo, (7) Syabunema, (8) Damo, (9) Khutemmo, (10) BhosyaMu/Rmu, (11) Rhilamo, (12) Bakrimo, (13) Guchul, (14) Purkauni, (15) Highkimo, (16) Khamaimu, (17) Tokamu, (18) Bajurimo, (19) Syanjarimo, (20) Faremo, (21) Syalkota, and (22) Rueemu
1.2.	JyanJora (Wild root), Woy (Tuber), Hangya (Stem), Kharda (Shoot), Bark and Leaf	(1) Chyugumpuri, (2) Kapu, (3) Kheralu, (4) Funti/Fanti, (5) Sarki, (6) Kafuti, (7) Sorno, (8) Galfunti, (9) Gan, (10) Gujarigantha, (11) Banyo, (12) Raktamool, (13) Rheela
1.3.	JyanMhantaNgahntaNgahatntu (Wild vegetables)	(1) Lhiwanehe, (2) Dhokaya, (3) Vinung/Binu, (4) Bolino, (5) Rhingoli, (6) Chongai, (7) Khargae, (8) Patongae, (9) Khagaria, (10) Almalya, (11) Shyamngai, (12) Palo gaap, (13) Ngaeeti, (14) Timchyo, and (15) Binu

2 The respondents could not provide information about why less fertile forest was considered to be a male and more fertile forest as female.

to indicate or separate different territories but the forest, pasture, and rivers that they have been using from generation to generation from time immemorial, all community members know their territories very well. Hence, the Magar of Ta Sehro have been custodians of 30 forests in the north, 15 in the East and 7 in the west, and two rivers in the South and 10 in the West of their settlement. Table 2 indicates the physical territory of the Magar of Ta Sehro.

**Table 2: Names of the forests, pastures, and rivers collectively owned and controlled by the community**

S.N.	Direction from the settlement	Names of Forests and Pastures	Name of the Rivers
1	North	Harbuja, CharbaiLungra, Ban Kheel, Jangarga, Sanchoba, Saniya, Lamchi, Kheenai, Chuawabaan, Dahile, Bandhbir, Andheri Kuwa, Pukibas, Pukibas, Bhogatguee, Syarsa, Majhkharka, SirgandaGeppya Bang, Andheri, Highkharka, Ngaiya, Luja, Teen Baine Si, Khurung, Bande Kharka, BhandeKharka (ThuloChaur), Geppa (Thulo) Kharka, Teen JainiJalakhe, Teela, Pyanla, and Khurung (Total 30)	
2	East	Rani Kharka, Khodola, Palpato, Pithyan, Burkuti Phila Danda, Ramajima, Khursung, Haniraulo, Shyamkharka, Tarabang, Tarabang, Majhkhagar, Ghordandw (Halo), Korka, BhujelLutu, and Fagune (Border to Dhorpatan at Baglung) (Total 15)	

1.4.	JyanSyao (Wild fruits)	(1) Bargula, (2) Kale Bargha, (3) GhyamuFalsai, (4) Mo Falsai, (5) Khasai, (6) Dakari Rato, (7) GangasRato, (8) Bhidu, (9) Chimsaya, (10) Koeins, (11) Ainselu, (12) Ainsu, (13) Jhusai, and (14) Jhomprasai
1.5.	JyanWoye (Wild flowers)	(1) Sungara
<b>(2)</b>		
2.1.	JyanGosyonra (Wild insects)	(1) Marquoom, (2) Nam Marquoom, (3) Sinja, (4) Bacchium, (5) Kukalkosyo, (6) Rodekosyo, (7) Ghamakosyo, (8) Kodompa, (9) Chaugool, (10) Sulu, (11) Sieririkosyo, (12) Gamkosyo, and (13) Gungi
2.2.	JyanNgha (Wild Fishes)	(1) NhaAsala, (2) Te, (3) KelchaPadhiya, (4) Kabra, (5) Pyutha, (6) Talchakne, and (7) Laranga
2.3.	Jyan Bwa (Wild birds)	Rhoong [Himalayan Monal], (2) Kaiya, (3) Banbaja [Pheasant], (4) Chykhuryae [Chukar partridge], (5) Rholba, (6) Jyanka, (7) Kwitam [Dove], (8) Titra, and (9) Tisra
2.4.	JyanBankar (Wild animals)	(1) Voom [Himalayan Tahr], (2) Rya [Thar], (3) Sar [Ghoral], (5) JyanBheda [Blue sheep], (6) Bagal [Boer], (7) La [Tiger], (8) Bghima [Bear], (9) Syal [Fox], and (9) Risram
<b>(3)</b>		
3.1.	JyanRaap (Wild Honey) and Ghos Ra (Steep rock honey)	(1) MholoGhos, (2) Jhyamo Ghosh, (3) Marquoom, (4) Nam, (5) Sinja, and (6) Bacchium

Source: Adapted from Tables 3 to12 (AIPP, 2021)

## Practical and Strategic contributions of Wild Foods of Magar

There are many valuable and strategic contributions to protecting, collecting, and consuming wild foods by Magar. Any foods, including wild foods, have significance in fulfilling nutritional and medicinal needs and providing food security (AIPP 2021); the most significant contributions are discussed below.

### Indication of Indigenous Territory

The folk saying among Magar living in various communities is "If we trespass other community's forests, pasture and rivers to forge wild foods, they will behead us; and if outsiders' trespass our forests, pasture and rivers to forge wild foods we behead them". Such a saying is a code of conduct that all community members are strictly following. As there has been no "Jange pillar" (border post")

3	West	GhamtapneKharka, Rhunpya, Bhirbang, Sipalbang, Byansi, Lupembe, and Kutebans	Khali Bang Khola, TenbartuKhola, KherchaiKhola, GandariKhola, ChupiKhola, JhankriKhola, LuchhumKhola, TribandiKhola, NaarbangKhola, and MahabhirKhola (Total 10)
4	South		RankheriKhola, and PihilyaKhola (Total 2)

Source: Adapted from Tables 1 and 2 (AIPP, 2021)

Note: (i) Due to limited time for fieldwork, specific names for forest and pasture, respectively, and collective names for both were not identified.

(ii) *Kharka/Khorya/Ejar/Khor* and *Chaur* are pasture lands, and others are forests

*Continuation of customary practices of custodianship, collective ownership, management and use*

Custodianship of forests and rivers, full collective ownership and control over wild foods, and the customary self-governing institution called Kachahari indicate that Magar are still practicing their autonomy and self-government unabated. However, some Gaula said that the security personnel of the Dhorpatan Hunting Ground have started suggesting not to cut fodders for their lamb herds. Though he belongs to Tamu Indigenous Peoples, the elected Chairperson of Ward no. ... of the Uttarganga Rural Municipality said they do not interfere with the community members' customary practices of custodianship of forests, pasture, and water.

*Continuity in exercising a collective way of life with self-determination, autonomy and customary self-government with customary laws*

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Magar of Ta Sehro continues to collectively own, control, manage, and use forests, pastures, and water and its resources, especially wild foods. They are practicing self-determination and are guided by the customary laws and customary self-governing institutions called Kachahri. It clearly

shows that they are the rightful owners of all these territories and resources, and inclusion of these territories within the Dhorpatan Wildlife Hunting Ground without ever obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent by the government is nothing but a development aggression.

*Interconnected and interdependent with social, cultural, economic, and spiritual life*

During a short period of field visit, wild foods appeared to be interconnected with forest and river conservation, biodiversity, subsistence livelihood, food security, quenching thirst, medicinal use, spiritual use, social exchange, community wellbeing, and many more.

*Least influence of Bahunbad*

Recalling names mostly in Kham language, continuation of village settlement, house design, settlement pattern, and way of life suggest that Magar of Ta Sehro are almost untouched by Hinduization, Brahmanization and Khas Nepali languages as far as custodianship of wild foods is concerned.

## **2. Brief Review of National and International Laws and Policies on Foods**

The AIPP report states,

The Ministry of Forest and Land-Conservation Ministry has issued a notice about the four boundaries of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve by using the authority granted by Article 3 Sub-Article 1 of the National Park and Wild Animal Protection Act, 2029. The notice was published in the Nepal Gazette, Part 3, Section 37, Number 2, on 27 April 1987. It declares lands located up to Uttragnaga river in the south, including Bachhyanun and other parts of Ta Sehro village. The study village settlement and its collectively owned and controlled lands, including forest, pasture and rivers are under the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve. However, in practice, they have not made any significant intervention to limit, restrict, or criminalize it. The main reason for keeping it untouched by the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve is due to the Maoist insurgency of 1996 to 2006, in which Rolpa and Rukum were the base areas of the Maoist insurgents. So, the government security forces had a low profile with no significant offense or other activities.

The Himalayan National Park Rules, 2036 (1979)<sup>3</sup> that applies to the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve that has yet to be implemented in Ta Sehro, the ongoing movement to stop development aggression by the Hunting Reserve, and to stop the declaration of its buffer zone, clearly shows that Mgara Kham Indigenous Peoples are fully aware that these Rules are nothing but predatory to their collective custodianship and collective way of life. For example, Articles 4 & 5 restrict customary practices of freedom to enter their forest, and Article 7 building or possessing huts, houses, residences or other structures occupy (capture) any land, to clear or destroy (damage) plants to cultivate, to farm or to grow or harvest any crops, grazing (pasture) domestic animals, cut, fell, remove, obstruct or trim the trees, plants, bushes or any other plants, and to halt (stay) for a night or to camp or to set fire in any places. AIPP report has aptly stated, "These provisions criminalize their customary practices of *Lu Gotha* and collection of wild foods from their ancestral lands owned and controlled from time immemorial."

These Rules were neither drafted, enacted, and implemented by obtaining free, prior, and informed consent from concerned Indigenous Peoples nor these Rules are entirely in line with international laws, especially ILO Convention n/o. 169, UNDRIP, CEDAW GR No. 39. Application of these Rules violates Magar Indigenous Peoples' human rights and fundamental freedom.

### **3. Intervening Factors, Issues, Challenges, and The Way Forward**

#### **Intervening factors**

Modern school education/boarding school, outside traders and money, damage to custom and tradition, including customary self-governing institutions by the Maoists during the People's War of 1996 to 2006, land grabbing in the name of Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve and subsequent criminalization of traditional practices, such as Bhedi goth, death of experienced elder Gaula and new generation's lack of interest to continue Guala and Bhedi goth, climate change, changing food habits due to increasing consumption of non-Indigenous foods supplied by the market. In the coming days, the increasing clout of the government bodies, including the local government dominated by the Bahun Chetri, growing connection with outsiders by highways and communication, and increasing interest of business companies would

3 <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/himalayan-national-park-rules-2036-1979.pdf>

severely affect the use of wild foods in Ta Sehro. The following fact, as stated in the AIPP report, shows how the use of shoes also has an adverse effect on the use of wild foods,

*"Among the informants, the community leaders said that wearing shoes, instead of walking barefoot, also have adverse effects in wild foods and other collective way of life, including customary self-government system. They noted that when their elder used to walk barefoot, they enjoyed full and meaningful collective ownership and control over their lands, territories, and resources, and their customary self-governing institutions and customary laws were running robust. But now many community members learned to wear shoes, and with it, they became careless of their traditional practices, including knowledge transfer of wild foods." (AIPP, 2021, p. 47)*

## Key Issues

The key issues concerning the continuation of the custom and tradition of protection, collection, and consumption of wild foods by Magar Kham are the transfer of knowledge of Gaula to a new generation, respect and continuation of Bhedi Goth, Pasture, and collection of wild foods by the community, stop militarization, awareness raising of Magar about their rights enshrined in international laws, especially the UNDRIP, ILO Convention no. 169, CEDAW GR No. 309, CERD that Nepali has ratified or adopted, drive away Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve or take its custodianship by the concerned Indigenous Peoples and ultimately get back their lands, territories, and resources, meaningfully exercise self-determination, autonomy, customary laws, customary self-government systems and free, prior and informed consent.

## Challenges

Decolonization, deBrahmanization, dePatriarchalization, and delinking with the political parties led and dominated by Bahun Chettri, indigenization, and public shaming of Bansa Gaddar (Clan traitor") are the main challenges facing the Indigenous Peoples, including Magar, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations that directly or indirectly affects the Magar of Ta Sehro. Keeping lands intact among Magars by not selling land to any Bahun Chetri and other outsiders is a challenge.



## Way Forward

To continue custodianship of wild foods, it is necessary to continue custodianship of Magar's lands, territories, and resources by exercising self-determination, autonomy, and customary government systems, and transfer the collective way of life, including custodianship of ancestral lands and indigenous knowledge to a new generation. As the lands, territories, and resources grabbed and occupied by the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve must be returned to its legitimate custodians, i.e. the Indigenous Peoples, including Magar, there is a need for unity among the survivors and launch a powerful movement. Magar of Ta Sehro and other communities affected by the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve must begin to prepare or document community protocol, including the Mul Bndej ("Main Restrictions") of the code of ethics and rules and FPIC protocol to be followed by outsiders, including the state, government, civil society, NGOs, international financial institutions and development partners and business companies.

## Conclusion

Regarding custodianship, including protection, collection, and consumption of wild foods by Indigenous Kham Magar of Ta Sehro, it is so good, with a bit of erosion. However, with ever-flexing muscle by the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve and local governments, penetration of highways and modern communication systems, and the colonized mind of many leaders of the Indigenous People's movement, the loyalty of political leaders and followers from Magar and other Indigenous Peoples to the ideology and Bahun-Chetri leaders of political parties raise serious doubt about continuation of self-determination, custodianship of land territories and resources, and the tradition of wild foods and others, including autonomy and self-rule in communities like Ta Sehro, and regain such fundamental rights in other places where it is either already lost or damaged badly.

## References

- Bhattachan, K.(2012). *Country Technical Notes on Indigenous Peoples' Issues the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal*.IFAD, and AIPP. Accessed from <[https://ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/nepal\\_ctn.pdf/63df5831-28f8-4d0c-8338-ac2062c7fa24](https://ifad.org/documents/38714170/40224860/nepal_ctn.pdf/63df5831-28f8-4d0c-8338-ac2062c7fa24)>
- Bhattarai, S., Chaudhary, R. P. and Taylor, R. S. L. (2009). 'Wild Edible Plants Used by the People of Manang District, Central Nepal'. *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 48:1, 1- 20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03670240802034996>.
- Dahal, D. R. (2014). Chapter 1 Social Composition of the Population: Caste/Ethnicity

- and Religion in Nepal, pages 1-49. In: Central Bureau of Statistics (2014). *Population Monograph of Nepal. Volume II (Social Demography)*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Government of Nepal National Planning Commission Secretariat Central Bureau of Statistics. Accessed from <<https://mohp.gov.np/downloads/Population%20Monograph%20V02.pdf>>
- Dhakal, S.(1996).Bheja as a Strategic Cultural Convention.Community Resource Management in the BarhaMagarat, *Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology*, 5, *Emerging Ethnicity and Aspects of Community Adaptation*. 5, 39–51.Kathmandu: Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University. Accessed from <<https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/OPSA/article/view/1094>>
- Dangol, D. R., Maharjan, K. L., Maharjan S. K. & Acharya, A. K. (2017). Wild Edible Plants in Nepal. pp. 390-407. In Bal Krishna Joshi Hari Bahadur KC Anil Kumar Acharya (eds.). *Plant Genetic Resources in Nepal*. Proceedings of 2<sup>nd</sup> National Workshop held on 22-23 May 2017, Dhulikhel. Kathmandu: NAGRC. Accessed from <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320504843\\_Wild\\_edible\\_plants\\_of\\_Nepal/link/59e8c146aca272bc4245d370/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320504843_Wild_edible_plants_of_Nepal/link/59e8c146aca272bc4245d370/download)>
- FAO. 2021. *The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>
- Kuhnlei, Harriet V., Smitasiri, S., Yesudas, S., Bhattacharjee, L., and Ahmed, S. 2006. Documenting Traditional Food Systems of Indigenous Peoples: International Case Studies. Guidelines for Procedures. Canada: Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment, McGill University.
- Pratap, Uma & Aryal, Kamal (2019).Stepping up to the plate: Rediscovering wild edible plants for food, nutrition, and resilience in Nepal.Kathmandu: ICIMOD. Accessed from <https://www.icimod.org/stepping-up-to-the-plate-rediscovering-wild-edible-plants-for-food-nutrition-and-resilience-in-nepal/>
- Shrestha, Debendra 2012. Indigenous vegetables of Nepal for biodiversity and food security. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation* Vol. 5(3), pp.98-108, March 2013. Available online at <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJBC> DOI: 10.5897/IJBC11.124
- Shrestha, Prasanna M., and Dhillion, Shivcharn S. 2005. Diversity and traditional knowledge concerning wild food species in a locally managed forest in Nepal. *Agroforestry Systems* (2006) 66:55–63. DOI 10.1007/s10457-005-6642-4
- Tamang, Jyoti Prakah 2010. *Himalayan Fermented Foods. Microbiology, Nutrition, and Ethnic Values*. New York: CRC Press.
- Tamang, Jyoti Prakah (Editor) 2016. *Ethnic Fermented Foods and Alcoholic Beverages of Asia*. India: Springer.
- United Nations (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. New York: United Nations. Accessed from <[https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)>

## Acknowledgement

I had presented this paper in an Academic Magar Conference organized by the Nepal Magar Association in Kathmandu on 24-25 November 2023. My thanks to Dr. Bishnu Singjali, Dr. Lal Bahadur Pun and Jag Bahadur Budha for providing me an opportunity to present my paper in the conference. This article, a slightly revised version of the paper presented, and the research report on which it is based, would not have been possible without help and support from Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, Coordinator, Environment of the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact for giving me an opportunity to carry out an important research work on Indigenous wild foods that are interconnected and interdependent to Indigenous Peoples' collective ways of life, and Magar Indigenous Peoples' leaders and my field research assistants Surendra Pun Magar and Purna Bahadur Gharti Magar, and community leader Sheer Bahadur Budha Magar, and many others including Heera Bahadur Pun Magar, Bhagi Bahadur Budha Magar ("Pachhaute"), Jiba Raj Budha Magar, Dil Prasad Gharti Magar, and Hira Bahadur Magar, who provided help and support in many ways for a successful completion of the field work. The field work in the community was carried out from 10 December to 14 December, 2021. I have used selected information from my report **Wild Food Systems of Magar Indigenous Peoples of Taksera Village in PuthaUttarganga Rural Municipality in Rukum District of Lumbini Province in Nepal** submitted to the AIPP on 11 July 2022. This study is a collaborative partnership between the community and AIPP and the report is owned by the community as a part of their community protocol. The community members are in the process of working taking pictures of all the wild foods mentioned in this report. My special thanks to Surendra Pun Magar, Purna Bahadur Gharti Magar and Yasso Kanti Bhattachan for providing comments, suggestions and feed back in the paper.