The present work mainly represents identification clues of seed of forest trees of Kashmir on their morphology. Literature does not have description or illustration of most of the Indian forest seed especially Kashmir forest seeds and the remaining forest tree species in India. The available description are not enough exhaustive to help in the positive identification of the seed. In fact no efforts have been made to study the forest seed morphology with specific aim to help their identification. Now with increasing emphasis on conservation of natural resources, including forests all over the world, intensive efforts are being made to afforest denuded areas and to also grow faster growing species. As a result numerous trials with exotic species are being conducted all over the world. Thus forestry seeds are now being traded on international level, it is on this background the work should prove to be helpful to foresters, botanists, seed analysts and seed traders. Most of the species in the work are found in the Kashmir valley forests and also other parts of the country. The seeds of tree species in this work are compressed or flattish, with circular, elliptic-oval or oblong outline. Seed coat is usually thin smooth and tough. Each face is marked by an oval, elliptic, usually more or less concentric with the outline of the seed.

The keys developed are based on the seed morphology and may or may not be applicable to other seeds of the same families included in this work. However, in keys to species besides the clues to distinguish one species from other, detailed description are also given.

It is hoped that the detailed description will be helpful in identifying these seeds from those not included in the plan. The keys are accompanied by photographs and these are supplementary to description. These will help in better understandings of the clues to their identification.
Seed of some kinds of plants e.g *Juglans*, *Corylus* are sufficiently distinctive that they are not easily confused with those of other kinds and their identification poses no problem. There are many groups of plants, however in which seeds of one species may closely resemble of another species e.g *salix*, *ulmus*. The seed analyst analyzes and evaluates the seed structure of such seeds in relation to those of other similar species.

Some times one clue, if extreme and unique as in case of *Corylus*, serves alone to identify a seed. But more commonly, several different features in combination are required for positive identification. Frequently a seed can be determined to the species as a reliable as can the whole plant from which it was obtained. More often however this is not possible, and in many genera the determination of identify should be left to the genus or species level to avoid unjustifiable danger of error.

The most useful clues for recognition of seeds are usually the shape, size, colour and peculiarities of the seed surface. Seed surface may vary from smooth and glossy to dull or rough. Also the presences of any noticeable external feature such as pappus, spines, or hairs are likely to be helpful in placing the seed correctly.

The length of seed has been measured along helium/ cotyledon axies while width has been measured perpendicular to the length. Many seeds have oval outline and has been referred to as ovate or obovate depending upon whether hilar end is narrow or broader than cotyledon end. Colour descriptions given in the work are based on Munsil soil colour chart.

The basic seed shape in the present seeds are ovoid, linear, oblong, triangular, smooth-rough, elliptic-ellipsoid, rugose to hairy, thin compressed and dark brown- brown shining, yellow- yellowish brown. However the shapes of some seeds are spoon shaped,
cylindric, linear, lanceolate, obpyramidal with long jointed hairs at the base. The size ranges from 1mm-10 mm in small seeds and 10-40 mm in large seeds. The overall shape and size of the seed and seed surface and colour of the seed may vary from species to species. The characters described are stable in the group of the species.

Forest plant seed/fruit is utilized not only for regeneration of forest but also serves as a variety of purpose, such as provision of edible products, oil for commercial and industrial use and medicines. The ancient saint and sages of India derived a large part of their subsistence solely from seed which the forests provided. A large variety of seed/fruit is utilized by our tribal communities, not only as food and medicine, but also some income through its sale. Proper identification of seed to its species name is of utmost importance for many decisions including seed conditioning (clean), seed lots for sale, labeling, satisfying seed quality for planting. Seed identification is also useful for many researches in agronomy, horticulture, forestry, botany and ecology.

Quick and easy identification of a seed of a species is aided by the usage of botanical “Keys” specific for this purpose, the vast diversity of seed species makes the process of a species to its proper identity a monumental task. Each species in the work has been given a dichotomous key by which a plant or seed can be identified properly.

ETHNOBOTANY

Ethnobotanical knowledge is very ancient in India. Even recorded ethnobotany of India might well be among the earliest in the world and all traditional system of medicine had their roots in ethnobotany. Yet organized studies in ethnobotany are very recent. During last 30 years, studies have proceeded along various lines, such as the ethnobotany of specific tribes, of certain regions, of a particular
plant group or disease along various other miscellaneous sub or interdisciplinary approaches.

The present work gives a detailed account of forest ethnobotany of Kashmir. The relevance of ethnobotany to problems of health care, food, agriculture improvements, conservation of genetic resources and to economic welfare of the tribals is emphasized.

The work should rightly be applied to natural and direct relationship of people with plants, at any level of antiquity, primitiveness or acculturation and even the most sophisticated of the men and women. The work will direct to study and description articles of domestic or professional use, including the huts or houses. Researchers have found much ingenuity in design, choice of timber or other materials and in art of marking and decorating these articles. Some of the articles of common usage like tobacco pouches, combs and toys have found potential of trade as souvenir among tourists.

Due to its interdisciplinary and socio-economic impacts, the linkages of ethnobotany have proliferated and relevance has been established with problems of nutrition, life support species, rural health, drug use and social customs. Positive lines of work are available for improving tribal economic through some organized collection of plant products, on the conversion into transportable products and small cottage industries like a basketry and toy making.

The World Health Organization has recognized the role of traditional system of strategy to receive attention of scientists from chemical, pharmacological and clinical angles in India and abroad. The studies of folk medicines through ethnobotanical surveys are gaining importance.

The accomplishment of forest dwellers in understanding plants and properties of their roots, stems, leaves, flowers and fruits is simply a result of long and intimate association with their flora and
their dependence on them since their knowledge is based on experimentation on human beings, though highly empirical, it warrants careful consideration. It behoves us to take advantage of their extensive knowledge that still exists in many parts of the world, for scientific scrutiny, lest it be lost under the debris of modernism.

According to Rao (1996) there is an urgent need to inventories and record all ethnobotanical information among the diverse ethnic communities before the traditional cultures are completely lost, who should make use of this knowledge and what part of knowledge should be used are certainly within the purview of tribals.

The betterment of rural livelihood is a complex task and it is not suggested that ethnobotany is a universal panacea. Natural resource issues are only part of wider livelihood issue. There will be uncertainties about how people will perceive their future options and the livelihood strategies that they will adopt. However, what is certain is that most rural people in developing countries will continue to be heavily reliant on local wild plants. Further it is the poorest people, in particular, who will remain most dependent on resources of wild plants and who managed in sustainable way.

The study can lead to strengthening of cultural diversity and conservation, greater sustainability in exploration of plant resource, and the development of new plant products. It has helped in Latin America (and elsewhere) to change the image of local people so that organization that make decisions about development have more respect for the cultures and authority of rural communities, resulting in a search for ways to collaborate under conditions of respect and equality (Robineau, 1996).

The study will help in recording and documentation of traditional knowledge about the empirical uses of plant-knowledge which is widely disappearing. The rescue and documentation of
traditional knowledge can contribute to the strengthening of indigenous cultures. It can result in the demonstration of the value of cultural diversity with in the context of the processes of globalization, modernization and integration of indigenous peoples into the national societies.

The study has also revealed some interesting folk medicinal uses of plants employed by the natives of Kashmir. From the study area species of forest trees are reported to be used commonly by the tribals and villagers of state, indicating that these plants may cure various human and cattle disease. Although they do not have high value as medicines, however, these folk drugs are easily available to local at their doorsteps. It may be concluded that through such investigation many more new plant drugs can be revealed from the unique folklore lying hidden among the forests and traditional communities of other ethnobotanical, unexplored areas of India and elsewhere, which may be utilized to the well being of human. However experimental and clinical evidences are needed to demonstrate the effectiveness and safety of these forests before they can finish. The study also reveals that a large number of plants find use in folk medicines that these plants produce satisfactory effects on the certain human and cattle diseases and hence repeatedly employed by indigenous people.

In discussing the role of ethnobotany in our research for new drug plants, we must constantly bear in mind the widespread exaggeration of the usefulness of ethnobotanical data. We can not afford to prejudge reports of aboriginal uses of plants simply because they seem to fall beyond our limits of credence. The primitive societies possesses anything more than a limited institution about the properties of plant. It therefore, behoves us to push forward, along with ethnobotanical investigations, studies on the flora in general.