"यदि मुझसे पूरे संसार में से उस देश को चुनने को कहा जाय तो जहाँ प्रकृति ने सबसे अधिक संयुक्त, शक्ति और सौन्दर्य विखंडित है जिसके कुछ भाग तो ऐसे हैं मानो धरती पर ही स्वर्ग उत्तर आया हो— तो मैं निस्संदेह भारत को चुनूंगा।"
—एफ. मैकस्मूलर
Chapter- 1

Introduction

During the course of evolution man has developed relationship with surrounding plants and animals in order to facilitate his requirements such as food, shelter, fibre and medicines. Man has never hesitated in utilizing the natural plants and animal resources around him. Man and plant relationship gradually strengthened in course of time and now the relationship has been established in such a way that all aspects of human life is more or less linked with the surrounding plants. Plants are included in mythologies and legends according to their characteristics and their cultural importance. Long term changes in vegetation affect culture and language. The science that pertains to the study of man and plant relationship is called ethnobotany. Harshberger first used the term ethnobotany in 1895 and defined ethnobotany as all aspects of direct relationship of plants with man, therefore its scope is very wide (Jain, 1989).

The man plant relationship can be seen in good and bad powers of plants, religious plants, folklores, taboos, beliefs, and sacred groves. Man has been using plants or their parts since early age, for food, fibres, medicines, agricultural implements, art and cultural activities like carving, paintings, etc. There are several harmful & beneficial influences of primitive culture on vegetation (Jain, 1989).

In the past four decades, mostly works on many subdisciplines have been done e.g. Ethnomycology, Ethnotaxonomy, Ethnecology, Ethnolichenology, Ethnopteridology, Ethnobotany, Ethnomedicobotany, Ethnoarchaeology, Paleoethnobotany, Ethnopharmacology, Ethnotoxicology, Ethnomusicology, Ethnogynaecology, Ethnonarcotics.

One category of scientist (social scientist) studied data on plants related with sociocultural aspects of life i.e. folktales, songs, worship, mythology, taboos, and magicoreligious and social ceremonies. Other categories of scientist were interested in knowing the specific characters of the plants because of which they
become much more useful to the tribes. They want to know the selective uses of plants. Phytochemists try to analyse the chemical compound with active principles. Special uses of plants among primitive societies attracted researchers e.g. hallucinogens and narcotics (Schultes, 1963; Ghillean, 1970).

There is worldwide resurgence of interest in ethnobotanical studies among botanists, anthropologists, pharmacognosists, phytochemists, pharmacologists, foresters, archaeologists, palaeobotanists, linguists, folklorists, ayurvedists, hakims etc. (Maheshwari 1987). The interest is developing mainly to meet the ever-increasing needs of agro-industries, agriculture and to the need for conservation and development of plant genetic resources. There is practically no human activity in which plants do not play a direct or indirect role. Therefore ethnobotany has a linkage with almost every other science and field of knowledge. Some of the important disciplines with which the linkages of ethnobotany can be studied in one country are:

(1) Food and nutrition (2) Defence and survival
(3) Sociology and culture (4) Religion and social customs
(5) Medicine (6) Art and literature
(7) Mythology (8) Archaeology
(9) Anthropology (10) Forestry and Agriculture
(11) Economics (12) Food Science
(13) Language and Linguistics (14) History and politics

Ethnobotany also contributes in our war against hunger through:

(a) improvement of edible plants.
(b) discovery of new uses of known plants or new economic plants.
(c) conservation of diversity in germ plasm (Jain, 1987).

The basic concept of ethnobotany has not changed much till today. But the scope of the subject ethnobotany has enhanced greatly. In 1895, Harshberger of University of Pennsylvania in his address to the Association of Archaeologists suggested "ethnobotany" to describe the study of plants used by primitive and aboriginal people.
The full text of the address is given in *Harshberger* (1895). The term "Ethnobotany" was immediately become popular and accepted widely. He defined the purpose of ethnobotany as

1. an aid to elucidating the cultural position of tribes according to their use of plants.
2. evidence of past distribution.
3. evidence of trade routes.
4. useful in suggestions "the valuable properties they have utilized in there wild life may fill some vacant niche in our own.

Prior to the coining of the term "ethnobotany", usage of plants by human beings found place in Sanskrit, Greek and Arabic literature; ethnographics, travelogues, herbas etc (Mudgal, 1987). Schultes (1962) pointed out that ethnobotany is a science that requires an interdisciplinary approach and may be pursued through several avenues, like an examination of the literature of missionaries and travelers, by a systematic survey of the notes on herbarium labels, through analyses of fossilized plants remains and or by investigating the uses of plants in the field in archaeological sites or in tribal areas. These definitions and concepts that have evolved during this century give a very broad dimension to the field of ethnobotany (Maheshwari 1983).

According to Schultes (1962), ethnobotany is "the study of the relationship which exists between people of primitive societies and their plant environment". In more simple words, it is an anthropological approach to botany. In recent years much work in this science has been done in the USA, England, Brazil, France, Mexico and India. Faulks (1958) has discussed all the aspects of human life and plants used by the ethnic or tribal people. "An introduction to Ethnobotany" is the first book on ethnobotany, written by Faulks in 1958 which deals with:

1. the good and services obtained from vegetation for food, drink, inhalants, fumitories, masticatories, shelter, fuel, equipments, medicine, consumables.

2. physical and psychological troubles caused by vegetation i.e. food and drinks, Spoilage, disease and pests of plants and animals, irritants.

3. influence of man on vegetation by way of destruction, conservation etc.

4. relationship of vegetation with human civilization i.e. selection of economic species organised production.
But Faulks has enlarged the scope of his book to almost entire economic botany. However this view is not generally accepted now (Jain, 1987).

In last decades ethnobotany science has considerably expanded both in its concept and scope. In India, organised study of this science is relatively new and it is only during the last three decades that numerous publications on uses of the plants among the folk have come out. So far these studies have been limited to listing of ethnobotanical data, comparative ethnobotanical study between different ethnic groups and analysis of and evaluation of such data, have not received the desired attention (Saklani & Jain, 1994).

In the past four decades, ethnobotanical research works were confined to the following categories. Various researchers have adopted different methods, approaches and priorities in their work (Maheshwari, 1987).

1. Researchers studied aboriginal & primitive societies and recorded there prevailing folklores about plants. Inventories of plants used for food, medicine, housing crafts, religious ceremonies, crop festivals, rituals and other maternal culture and beliefs were prepared. During last two decades, over 3000 plants have been screened in India for their biological activities (Maheshwari, 1987).

2. Available literature on ethnobiology, primitive medicines, old administrative reports and data of ethnobotanical interest were scrutinized, screening of ethnobotanical references, herbal materia medica etc. were done.

3. Collection in musea and herbaria were scrutinized and informations were gathered. Phytochemical screening of plants was done.

4. Traditional relationship of man with plants and archaeological evidence were also studied, plant representation on temples, Stupas, folk taxonomies, sacred groves were studied (Maheshwari, 1987).

Ethnobotany, to most people means lists of plants found in foreign environment peopled with "primitive natives". The most complete modern definition of -

"Ethnobotany" is "the study of direct interrelations between human and plants" a study concerned with the totality of the place of plants in a culture (Ford, 1978). The ancient Hindus should be given the credit for cultivating what is now
called ethnombotany (Kirtikar & Basu, 1981). Ethnobotanical research is concerned with several important questions:

(a) what are primitive ideas and conceptions of plant life?

(b) what are the efforts of a given plant environment on the lives, customs, religion, thoughts and every day practical affairs of the people studied?

(c) what use do they make of the plants about them for food for medicine, for material culture, for ceremonial purpose?

(d) what is the extent of their knowledge of the parts, function and activities of plants?

(e) in what categories are plant names and words that deal with plants grouped in the language of the people studied, and what can be learned concerning the working of the folk mind by the study of these names?

Ethnobotany will become more important subject as its study has progressed to a point where result can be studied comparatively. A prime necessity is a good native informant; it is better to have several informants, preferably older men and women (Kirtikar & Basu, 1981).

The transformation of ethnobotany has taken place when ethnobotany as a subject of folk interest shifted to the mode of acquiring raw materials for industries and material essential for population survival. It has become the profession of interdisciplinary scientist studying a biological, economical, sociological, environmental, phenomenon. The organised and systematic study of ethnobotany is rather a new subject, and most workers have been able to cover only part of the intricate man plant relationship in any region or among a certain tribe in the world (Jain, 1989).

The present study is aimed to present the past work in such a way that we can know what aspects of ethnobotany were given much concentration earlier & what were other aspects remained unnoticed in India & abroad. The present work is also aimed to study the resurgence of ethnobotany with emphasis on Indian work and assessment of some novel medicinal plants of MP.

To work on the present topic I have referred the library of 1. H. S. Gour University. Sagar. 2. NBRI Lucknow 3. Ravishankar University. Raipur. 4. SFRI
Jabalpur 5. Library of office of Conservator of Forest Jabalpur, Sagar, Raipur and Jagdalpur. 7. Hill Library North Carolina State University, Raleigh, USA.

Data were also collected from many ethnobotany workers and research scholars of India & abroad and tried to present them in comprehensive manner. The way in which we use the plants in our every day life for survival, reflect our cultural history. With the advent of modern medicine and easy access to professional medical help came a decline in the use of the age old traditional door yard medicinal plants.

Several Botany departments of Universities like Mysore, Kashmir, Bhubaneshwar, Jabalpur, Calicut, Garhwal, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Shillong have not only included ethnobotany in their syllabus but also raised its status as special paper. Several doctoral theses have been prepared in the universities of Gauhati, Rajasthan, Sagar, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Calcutta, Bombay etc. In addition, Indian folklore society, Calcutta, Kerala folklore Academy, Trichur and department of folklore research, Gauhati University have done noteworthy contribution in the field of Ethnobotany. An all India coordinated research project on ethnobiology was conceived in 1974. This project came into operation from 1982 at NBRI Lucknow and four centres of BSI (Shillong, Howrah, Coimbatore and Portblair).

The present study is focussed on the presentation of data on ethnobotanical research done in the past four decade in an organised form so that it can become a source of reference for research scholars. It will also be a source to know the resurgence of ethnobotanical works in the past four decades in India and the world.

There is so much ethnobotanical material available all round that our senses are too weak to appreciate them. Many tribal societies depended on those plant products for their livelihood. Ethnobotany was then a way of life. Now it has become merely a subject.