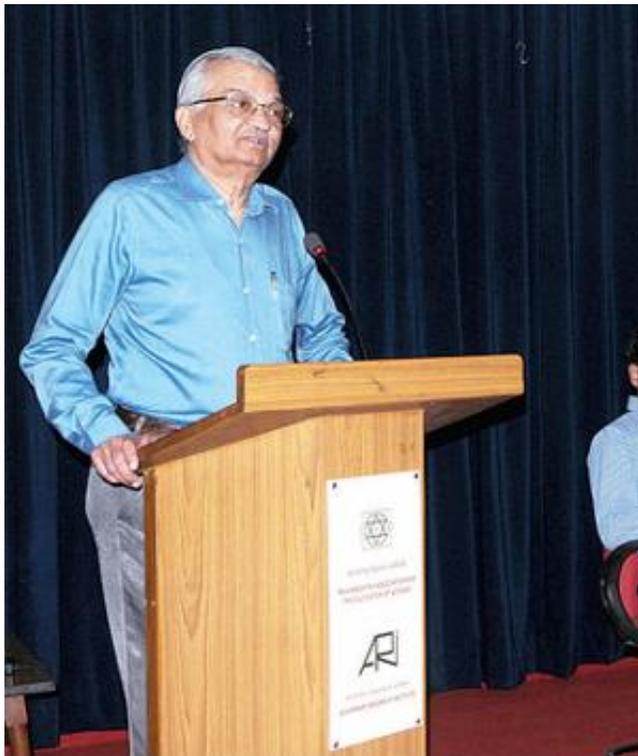


## ON A WILD FOOD TRAIL THROUGH THE GHATS

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Dr Anil Kakodkar, speaking at the release of *Forest Foods of Northern Region of Western Ghats*. (PIC: MAHENDRA KOLHE)

***A book on the edible species of fruits and vegetables in the Western Ghats has been released after thorough research in the region***

Traditional cuisine has always been the best source of nutrition but more people have modified their diets according to the changing tides. A section of the population, residing in urban areas, is even unaware of the traditional recipes that have been handed down over the generations. While this may be true in the cities, many in the rural areas remain true to their roots. In a bid to document traditional cuisine, a thoroughly researched book named *Forest Foods of Northern Region of Western Ghats* was released in the city on Wednesday.

"We had conducted this survey mainly in the Western Ghats and have documented around 142 species of wild fruits and vegetables. Along with documenting edible species, we have also provided the map with

their distribution after extensive field work," informed Dr Mandar Datar, co-author of the book and researcher at Agharkar Research Institute, who was also involved in its compilation along with his colleague Dr Anuradha Upadhye.

The research for the book started with collecting information since 2013 and a report was formed following which the book was conceptualised in order to raise public awareness.

"Our survey has revealed that most of the vegetables are actually bitter but mellow down with preparation. Our data has been mainly sourced from locals residing in the ghat areas. Many vegetables must be kept continuously under running water for hours to reduce the toxicity. We also found that they have medicinal properties and some fruits and vegetables must be consumed in certain seasons to develop immunity," informed Upadhye.

The authors, however, suggest caution while consuming these food substances since they might be easily mixed up with other inedible toxic items. On the other hand, most people would be unaware of the style of

preparation of these items, which is familiar only to the locals.

Commenting on this, Dr Anil Kakodkar, who released the book, said, "Such documentation can also help in developing trade as more people will be aware of their preparations. They may even become exotic commodities pursued by a larger audience."

■ Our data has been mainly sourced from locals, residing in the ghat areas

- **DR ANURADHA UPADHYE, RESEARCHER, AGHARKAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

### GALLERIES



Angelina Jolie

Demi Lovato

Emilia Clarke

Selena Gomez