

THE INDIGENOUS TECHNIQUES OF NATURAL DYEING IN JORHAT DISTRICT, ASSAM

LIZAMONI CHUNGKRANG¹, AVA RANI PHUKAN² & SUNDAR BARMAN³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Textiles & Apparel Designing, Faculty of
Home Science, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam, India

²Professor and Head, Department of Textiles and Apparel Designing, Faculty of
Home Science, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam, India

³Sundar Barman, Assistant Professor, Department of Agriculture Extension, Faculty of
Agriculture, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, Assam, India

ABSTRACT

Assam is one of the richest states in natural resources of Northeast India. The art and craft of producing natural dyed textile has been practiced since ages in many villages by traditional expert crafts-persons in Assam. The tribal folks of this region locally use different colours obtained from plant parts like leaves, roots, barks, flowers, stems, fruits etc. Even they use animal excretes as colouring purposes. The present study was undertaken to assess the dye material sources, the common indigenous techniques of dye extraction and dyeing methods. This will be a step towards the ethnic conservation of dye materials and it will also highlight the economic factors involved in the marginalization of the indigenous practices.

KEY WORDS: Dye-Yielding Plants, Indigenous Dyeing Techniques, Tribal

INTRODUCTION

From ages natural dyes have been in use to colour textiles and thereby have always been a part of human life and culture. The discovery of natural dye and its uses has contributed to the continuation of the age old bond between human kind and nature. The name natural dye applies to all colouring matter derived from natural sources, such as plants, animals and minerals, which are largely available in rural areas. This organic origin makes them readily susceptible to climatic changes and other natural variations. People are more attracted to natural dyes because these are more eco-friendly and 100% safer than the synthetic dyes. And they are use full for human health because they have antibacterial, insecticidal and healthy properties, which are due to their natural origin. Natural dyes serves dual purpose of catering fashion trends as well as being environmental friendly. The natural dyes can make textile industries more competitive, by reducing production costs and eliminating the huge expenses of chemical imports. These natural dyes are used traditionally by combining them with each other for extraction and preparation of dyeing utilizing indigenous techniques. Because of the beauty of its results, those who used them claimed that no chemical dyes has that lustre and soft light and shadow that gives so much pleasure to the eyes.

Any fabric would appear very dull if it is not ornamented. Various ornamentations are done in textile designing, among these dyeing and printings are important. Dyeing is the art of imparting particular hues and tints to thread, fabric

and other materials employing colouring matters whereas in printing designs and colours form an artistic expression to embellish the fabric. In this context, the present work was carried out to study about different indigenous techniques of dyeing in Jorhat District, Assam.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To study the different sources of indigenous dye materials
- To study the techniques of dyeing

RESEARCH METHOD

Selection of area

Extensive study was carried out in three namely Chenaichuk, Neul and Bakul guri of Jorhat District mainly dominated by Mishing tribal community.

Collection of Information

Information was gathered through participatory field research methods.

Yarn Used

Mulberry silk yarn and cotton yarn purchased from local market

COMMON SOURCES OF NATURAL DYE MATERIALS

Table 1: Common Sources of Natural dye Materials

Sl. No.	Scientific Name	English Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used
1.	<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Turmeric	Halodi	Zingiberaceae	Rhizomes
2.	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Chebula	Hilikha	Combretaceae	Fruit
3.	<i>Areca catechu</i> Linn	Areca nut/Betel nut	Tamul	Palmaceae	Areca nut husk
4.	<i>Ziziphus jujube</i> Mill	Ber	Bogari	Rhamnaceae	Bark
5.	<i>Cordia myxa</i>	Large sebesten	Buwal	Boraginaceae	Bark
6.	<i>Camellia sinensis</i>	Tea	Shapaat	Theaceae	Leaves
7.	<i>Bos Taurus</i>	Cow dung	Gubar	Bovidae	Excretes

THE INDIGENOUS TECHNIQUES OF NATURAL DYEING

For Golden Yellow Colour

Yarn used: Mulberry silk

Ingredients:

- Turmeric
- Chebula
- Areca nut husk (green/tender)
- Tea
- Cow dung

Dye Extraction and Dyeing Techniques

- Collect the whole ingredients
- Cut the turmeric, chebula and green areca nut husk into small pieces and crushed to paste form with the help of the grinder
- Add required amount of tea powder and cow dung into the paste
- Soak the paste overnight
- Next day strain the dye liquor and soak the yarn for at least three hours
- Air dry the yarn and it is ready for use



Figure 1: Dyed Golden Yellow Silk Chadar



Figure 2: Bright Yellow Fabric during Weaving Time

For Bright Yellow Colour

Yarn Used: Mulberry silk

Ingredients

- Turmeric (double the amount of other ingredients)
- Chebula

- Tea
- Cow dung (little bit)

Dye Extraction and Dyeing Techniques

To obtain the bright yellow colour of natural mulberry silk, the techniques of dye material extraction and dyeing of yarn are same as the Technique No.1. But in this process turmeric is added in double the other ingredients.

For Light Brown Colour

Yarn Used: Cotton yarn

Ingredients

- Chebula (green)
- Bark of Ber
- Tea

Dye Extraction and Dyeing Techniques

- Cut the fresh chebula and bark of ber into small pieces and crushed with the help of the grinder
- Add required amount of tea powder and into the paste
- Soak the paste at least 8-10 hours
- Strain the dye liquor and soak the yarn for two hours
- Air dry the yarn and it is ready for use

For Dark Brown Colour

Yarn Used: Both cotton and mulberry silk yarn

Ingredients

- Chebula
- Areca nut husk
- Large sebesten
- Tea

Dye Extraction and Dyeing Techniques

- Grind the whole ingredients except tea to make a paste
- Add required amount of tea powder and into the paste
- Soak the paste overnight

- Strain the dye liquor and soak the yarn for 5 hours
- Air dry the yarn and it is ready for use

CONCLUSIONS

As the world becomes more aware of eco-friendly living, the natural dyeing is increasing slowly from developing country like India to developed country like US. In India, there are more than 450 plants that can yield dyes. Natural dyes are not only used in the colouring of textiles, they are also used for colouring various food products, drugs, cosmetics etc. due to their non-toxic effect. The indigenous practice has also declined manifold due to invasion of market forces and use of synthetic dyes. If people can produce these dyes in large scale and commercially by opening factories then it can be compete with the synthetic dyes, which are harmful from environmental point of view.

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