

# Utilization of plants in Nataleira village, the northeastern coast of Viti Levu island, Fiji

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## 1. Introduction

In Fiji, despite the population inflow into urban area, many Indigenous-Fijians live in villages. In the village, almost all the local people live on subsistence farming adapted to their environment. They have traditional customs including rules about natural resource management. In accordance with customs, the local people have maintained rich natural environment without conscious natural resource management. However, the resource utilization will be changed because the population of Indigenous-Fijian is increasing in the rural area. According to the report of Fiji's department of environment, a significant portion of Fiji's economy is dependent on exploitation of Fiji's natural resource base, and any planning for economic development needs to include the conservation and management of these resources in a sustainable manner<sup>1</sup>. For natural resource dependent regions, an understanding of the indigenous plant utilization is necessary<sup>2</sup>. This study, therefore, analyses the plant utilization and livelihood in Nataleira village, the northeastern coast of Viti Levu islands, Fiji.

## 2. Material and methods

The study area is Nataleira village in Dawasamu district, Tailevu province, Fiji. Surveys composed of plant utilization survey and livelihood were performed in October of 2012 and September of 2013. For the plant utilization survey, the villagers were interviewed using transect walks in the village and around the village. Data for the useful plants consist of the plants local name, useful parts and the plants usage. For the livelihood survey, the villagers were interviewed with unstructured interview and participant observation was performed.

## 3. Results

165 species were identified by local name. These plants are cultivated plants, wild plants and semi-domestication. The plants utilization was categorized into the 8 functions and useful parts were 17 parts.

There was no knowledge difference about plant utilization among the villagers who were interviewed. Although one of the interviewee is a secondary student, he has his own farm and plants knowledge as much as elders. Some villagers have knowledge about plant utilization as well as knowledge about site of plants distribution. Indigenous villagers learned the knowledge about plants by farming and playing around the natural environment.

## 4. Conclusion

In Nataleira village, the wealth of knowledge about plant utilization has been handed down orally. For the villagers, therefore, plants resource is important. Recently, tourism in the village is promoting handing down the knowledge orally. However, it may be suspected that the tourism will increase using natural resource. In the village, therefore, the natural resource management will be necessary and important.

## Citation

1) Fiji Department of Environment, (2010), Fiji's fourth national report to the United Nations convention on biological diversity, published 2010, May 31. (<https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/fj/fj-nr-04-en.pdf>) (Accessed 2013, December 16<sup>th</sup>)

2) G.J. Martin (1995) "Ethnobotany, A method manual" WWF international, UNESCO and Royal Botanic gardens KEW, Chapman and hall