



Traditionally used wild edible plants of block Bhalwal, district Jammu (J&K)

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to explore the wild edible plants traditionally used by the people of the block Bhalwal. The elder people of the area are source of knowledge about the wild plants and their uses. A total of 35 plants species belonging to 23 different families were enlisted and information regarding the method of their use was collected. The knowledge about the use of wild edible plants is restricted to elder people only and they are well aware with the parts of plants which are to be eaten and recipe of preparing them. Wild edible plants contribute toward food security of poor people of area and are important source of their earning.

Keywords: edible plants, traditionally, Jammu and Kashmir

Introduction

Plants are an integral part of nature and the nature reflects the creativity of God. The plants are designed with a specific purpose. They are the life sustaining force on the earth. Wild edible plants have played an important role in human life since time immemorial. In India most rural inhabitants depend on the wild edible plants to meet their additional food requirements. The wild edible plants form an important constituent of traditional diets in the Himalaya. The primitive people are well acquainted with the properties and uses of plants of their surroundings (Nadanakunjidam, 2003). Plants serve an important role to fulfillment of the diet of local habitat. Wild edible plants are not only important for their food quality but also a large contribution to the population's nutrition throughout the year (Katewa, 2003) [3]. Now a day's wild edible plants play an important role as a cheap source of valuable food. Keeping in into view the importance of wild edible in sustaining life of local people present study was conducted in four village of block Bhalwal.

Literary Survey

Uncultivated plants provide a "green social and cultural security" to millions of mountain people in the form of food, medicines, clothes and shelter (Aryal *et al.*, 2009) [4]. The dietary use both as a food and nutrition of uncultivated plant resources is common among indigenous people in Himalayas (Sundriyal and Sundriyal, 2001) [6]. The contribution of uncultivated plants to livelihood support depends largely on individual circumstances (Piya *et al.*, 2011) [5]. Many thousands of "wild" species of plants provide important sources of protein, fats, vitamins and minerals. This is especially true for both the poorest and the richest socioeconomic groups of the people (Aryal, 2010; Thapa, 2009; Akhtar, 2001) [4, 7]. Beside food security, wild edible plants also serve as a reserve gene pool which can help in improvement of their cultivated relatives.

Previous Work

Yeshodaran and Sujana (2006) [1] collected, identified and documented wild food plants traditionally used by the tribes in the Parambikulam wild life Sanctuary in Pallakad district of Kerala. Dhore *et al.* (2012) [2] in their study explored the wild edible plants of Digras tehsil of Maharashtra. Rashid *et al.* (2008) [8] studied less known wild edible plants used by the Gujjar Tribe inhabiting hilly areas of District Rajouri, J&K.

Study Area

The present study was conducted in four remote villages (Ranjan, Nargada, showa and Patta) of block Bhalwal of Jammu district. These villages lies on northern end of block and are situated on moderate to gentle hill slopes. Topography of the area is semi arid locally known as the "Kandi area". The forests in the study area are subtropical scrub forest. These forests are rich in both floral and faunal diversity. People of the area belong to Gujjar community; their main occupation is agriculture and raring animals. These people are dependent on forests for requirements like fuel wood, fodder and timber for construction of shed for animals. People also take benefit from medicinal and edible plants growing in these forests. Elder people of the area are resource of knowledge about plants and their uses.

Methodology

An extensive field survey was conducted in all the four villages during study period. During the visit data is collected about wild edible plants by questioning the local people. Most of the information is collected from elder people. A total of 40 males and 25 females of age group between 40-85 years were connected. The information collected on wild edible plants, local name, part used and use methods were recorded. Plants are identified with the help of experts and herbarium from botanical department of Jammu University.

Results

In present study a total of 35 edible plants belonging to 23 different families eaten by the people of the study area recorded and tabulated according to their local names, part (s) used, method of using Table 1. Fabaceae was the most dominant family with 7 species followed by Moraceae with 5 species and rest are represented by one or two species. There are 16 species whose fruits are eaten, flowers of 6 species are edible, leaves are cooked as vegetable from 11 species, tuber and gum from one species each are eaten. Flowers, fruits and roots of *Bauhinia variegata*, *Cordia dichotoma*, *Moringa oelifera* respectively are preserved after drying and salting as pickle for use in off season. Collection of tubers of *Dioscorea helophylla* from deep forest are done by males while females collected leafy plants like *Solanum nigrum*, *Medicago polymorpha*, *Portulaca quadrifolia*, *Chenopodium album* etc which are cooked as vegetable (saag). These are not only rich in nutrients but also have certain curative properties against

many diseases and disorders. Some of the edible plants have medicinal value and are used by local people in treatment of diseases for e.g. *Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellirica* and *Aegle marmelos*. Flowers of *Bauhinia variegata* are collected and sold in local market by some people. Children are mostly involved in collecting and selling wild fruits of plants like *Ficus ramosa*, *Carissa opaca*, *Ficus palmata*, *Coccinia cordifolia*, *Ficus auriculata* etc. Only weaker section of the society is more involved in collection of wild edible plants to meet their food requirements and economically rich people pay less attention to their use. Study also found out that this traditional knowledge on wild edible plants is now mostly confined to elderly persons only, as the new generations have adapted to consuming and cultivating the modern high yielding varieties. These wild edible plants with high commercial value are also threatened by many factors such as deforestation, forest fire and rapid land transformation etc.

List of edible plants of block Bhalwal, District Jammu (J&K)

Table 1

S. No	Botanical name	Local name	Family	Habit	Part(s) used	Importance
1	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Kaya kothi	solanaceae	herb	Fruits (berries)	Ripen fruits are eaten
2	<i>Ficus ramosa</i>	rumbal	Moraceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen Fruits are eaten
3	<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	Mayna	Fabaceae	herb	Tender shoots and leaves	Cooked as vegetable
4	<i>Dioscorea helophylla</i>	tarad	Dioscoriaceae	climber herb	tubers	Boiled and cooked
5	<i>Opuntia elatior</i>	Tarapad thoar	Cactaceae	herb	flowers	Boiled and eaten after mixing with curd. Used for treatment of tooth ache.
6	<i>Carissa opaca</i>	Garna	Apocynaceae	shrub	Fruits and leaves	Ripen fruits are eaten Leaves are used as fodder for goats.
7	<i>Telosma cordata</i>	Gooal manda	Asclepiadaceae	climber herb	Flowers	Boiled and cooked as vegetable
8	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>	kartad	Fabaceae	tree	Flowers	Boiled and mixed with curd, cooked as vegetable, preserved as pickle
9	<i>Bauhinia vahlii</i>	balangud	Fabaceae	tree	Seeds	Roasted seeds are eaten
10	<i>Moringa oelifera</i>	soanjana	Moringaceae	tree	Flowers, roots and leaves	Flowers are cooked as vegetable, roots are used as pickle, leaves are eaten raw or cooked as vegetable
11	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	bilan	Rutaceae	tree	Fruits	Pulp of ripen fruit is eaten
12	<i>Butea monosperma</i>	Palash	Fabaceae	tree	Flowers	Flowers are cooked as vegetable
13	<i>Cassia fistula</i>	korangal	Fabaceae	tree	Flowers	Flowers are cooked as vegetable
14	<i>Ficus palmata</i>	Fakoda	Moraceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
15	<i>Grewia optiva</i>	Taman	Malvaceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
16	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	Bhera	Combretaceae	tree	Fruits	Pulp of the fruit is eaten
17	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Reed		tree	Fruits	Fruits are eaten and also used in making pickle
18	<i>Flacourtia indica</i>	kakoi	salicaceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
19	<i>Cordia dichotoma</i>	Lasoor	Boraginaceae	tree	Fruits and leaves	ripen fruits are eaten and also used in making pickle tender leaves are cooked as vegetables
20	<i>Amaranthus polygamus</i>	chalari	Amaranthaceae	herb	Leaves and tender shoots	Cooked as vegetable
21	<i>Coccinia cordifolia</i>	kantori	Cucurbitaceae	climber herb	Fruits	Eaten raw and cooked as vegetable
22	<i>Acacia nilotica</i>	falai		tree	Gum	eaten after frying in oil
23	<i>Malva rotundifolia</i>	saonchal		herb	Leaves and tender shoots	Cooked as vegetable
24	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	kanaa	Chenodiaceae	herb	Leaves and tender shoots	Cooked as vegetable Leaves are dried for use in off season.
25	<i>Euphorbia royleana</i>	thoar	Euphorbiaceae	herb	Pulp of leaves	crushed, boiled and eaten after mixing in curd
26	<i>Adhotoda vasica</i>	brankad	Acanthaceae	herb	Flowers and leaves	Juice from the flowers is used. Leaves are used for treatment of cough.

27	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Badh		tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
28	<i>cassia tora</i>	Aduma		herb	Leaves and tender shoots	Cooked as vegetable
29	<i>Murraya paniculata</i>	kari patta			Leaves	Leaves are used as flavoring agent in curries
30	<i>Morus alba</i>	toot	Moraceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
31	<i>Momordica diodica</i>	kakoda		climber herb	Fruits	Cooked as vegetable
32	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Daduani	Lythraceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten, seeds are dried and used in Chutney
33	<i>Portulaea quadrifolia</i>	Lunac	Portulacaceae	herb	Leaves and tender shoots	Cooked as vegetable
34	<i>Ficus auriculata</i>	triambal	Moraceae	tree	Fruits	Ripen fruits are eaten
35	<i>Cannabis sativa</i>	Vang	Cannabinaceae	herb	Leaves	Leaves are eaten after frying Extract of leaves is used for tooth ache.

Conclusion

The wild edible plants play important role in sustaining food security of the people. These are not only having nutritional value but also have therapeutic value. But due to modernization the traditional knowledge about the edible plants is eroding. Many useful edible herbs are now considered as weed only. There is urgent need to inventories of wild edible plants and documentation of traditional knowledge before they completely lost.

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