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Ethnomedicinal observations among the inhabitants of sarf naar area of Shiekhpora-Kreeri, Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

The green valley of Kashmir contains rich floral diversity. The paper throws light on diversity of medicinal plants of Sarf Naar area of Sheikhpora-Kreeri Baramulla J&K. This paper gives an account of 40 species of medicinal plants belonging to 22 different families. The dominant family of the area being used by local population is Asteraceae with 08 different species like *Conyza canadensis*, *Artemisia absinthium*, *Achillea millefolium* etc. The area is under serious threat and needs to be conserved.

Keywords: Ethnomedicine, medicinal plants, shiekhpora-kreeri

Introduction

Plants are being used to treat diseases before the introduction of chemical medicines. About 80% of the populations living in rural areas in various developing countries directly depend on traditional medicines for their health care needs (WHO, 2000) [1]. The plant-based medicines are more effective, inexpensive and have no side effects. Because of which patients in developing countries such as Bangladesh, India and Nepal have strong belief in this system (Kar and Barthakur, 2008) [8]. Almost all communities of the world have some knowledge about the therapeutic properties of local flora (Houghton, 1995) [3]. Almost every civilization has a history of medicinal plant use (Ensminger *et al.*, 1983) [5]. Plants play an important role in the introduction of novel therapeutic agents, and also drugs from the higher plants carry on habitation in a leading position in modern medicine (Dev, 1997) [6]. The various plant materials used in traditional medicine are generally proved more effective and are cheaper than modern medicine (Mann *et al.*, 2008) [7]. India has a great diversity of plants that are being used deadly by local communities for medicinal purposes (Dutta B.K and Dutta P.K, 2005) [2]. Being the part of Himalayan belt rich diversity of medicinal plants is found in Kashmir valley (Dar G.H, Bhagat R.C, and Khan M.A, 2001) [4]. Besides the allopathic medicines the tribal people of Kashmir are dependent on herbal medicines. For the purpose of information an attempt was being made to explore the ethnomedicinal uses of plants found in sarf Naar area of Sheikhpora-Kreeri Baramulla, as no other attempt has been made to explore the same before this work in the said area.

Material and Methods

Study area

Sarf-Naar area is situated near Jamia Masjid of the village Sheikhpora-Kreeri which is at the distance of about 39-kms from district Baramulla (Figure.1). The temperature of the area remains the same as that of whole village. Summer temperature can reach upto 35°C, whereas winter temperatures are usually -2 to 10°C. The people of Sheikhpora are mostly farmers, speak Kashmiri and have a great knowledge of the use of plants. The people still use many plants as medicines. *Descurainia Sophia*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Artemisia absinthium*, *Urtica dioica* etc are some of the commonly used species of plants to cure various ailments.

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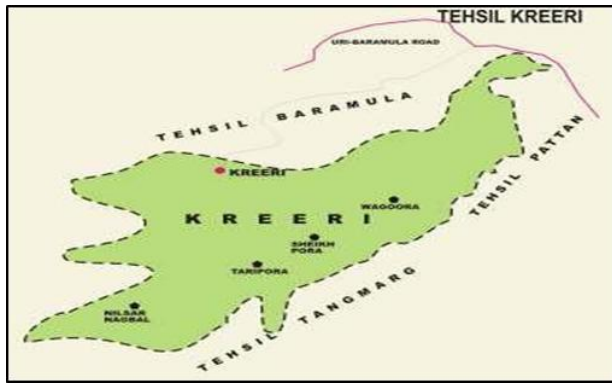


Fig 1: Map of the Study Area

Methodology

For the course of investigation entire area was frequently surveyed during the course of study. Plant specimens were collected from the study area. Possible information regarding the use of plants was obtained from the local population and herbal healers (Hakeems). They provide us with ethnic knowledge regarding the medicinal plants which was noted accordingly. The unidentified plant specimens of appropriate size with relevant parts were collected from the field and

sealed in polythene bags after taking photographs. The dried specimens were mounted on the herbarium sheets according to perfect Jain and Rao (1977) [9]. The plant species were identified by matching with the species at herbarium of Govt. Degree College Baramulla and by using concerned floras (Dhar and Kachroo, 1983; Gaur, 1999) [10, 11].

Results

Sarf-Naar area of Sheikhpora kreeri represents a rich diversity of medicinal plants. The present study was an attempt to know about the diversity of the medicinal species found in the mentioned area. For that purpose field trips were conducted to find the required information. During the course of study 40 plant species belonging to 22 families were documented which are used in unique way by the local people in Sheikhpora Kreeri and its allied areas for curing various diseases/ailments (Table 1). The plants are used to cure diseases like toothache, gastric disorders, rheumatism, headache, etc. Asteraceae (8), Brassicaceae (4), Ranunculaceae (3), Fabaceae (3), Poaceae (2), Lamiaceae (2) are the dominant families being used among the local population (figure 2).

Table 1: Enumeration of plants used for various ailments by local people of Shiekhpora.

S. no	Botanical name/Family	Local name	Part used	Common Uses
1	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> L. Asteraceae.	Tethwan	Leaves	Extraction of leaves is used to treat fever, sugar patients and worm infections.
2	<i>Anthemis cotula</i> L. Asteraceae.	Fakk gassesh	Whole plant	Plant is antispasmodic and to induce menstruation.
3	<i>Rumex acetosa</i> L. Polygonaceae	Abijj	Roots	Used to cure sudden and ongoing pain and swelling.
4	<i>Berberis lycium</i> Royle Berberidaceae	Kawdach	Roots, fresh fruits	The paste cures eye complaints, menorrhagia, chronic diarrhoea and piles.
5	<i>Bidens pilosa</i> L. Asteraceae	Bhojpatar	Leaves	It is used to speed up clotting of blood in fresh wounds.
6	<i>Conyza canadensis</i> L. Asteraceae	Shall loett	Whole plant	The tea cures gastro-intestinal problems.
7	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i> L. Poaceae	Dramun	Whole plant	The juice normalizes the sugar level.
8	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> L. Cannabaceae	Bhang	Whole plant	Used in vomiting, reduce chronic pain and muscle spasms by bathing.
9	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> L. Brassicaceae	Kralmond	Leaves	Extraction treats internal and external bleeding, diarrhoea.
10	<i>Chenopodium album</i> L. Amaranthaceae	Kean	Whole plant	Paste is used to cure bug bites, sunstroke, urinary problems, and skin problems.
11	<i>Datura stramonium</i> L. Solanaceae	Datur	Seeds	The seeds are burned and smoke is used to cure toothache.
12	<i>Descurainia Sophia</i> L. Brassicaceae	Zarkash	Whole plant	Paste is used to treat chronic coughs, headache.
13	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> L. Plantaginaceae	Gull	leaves	Its tea is used to cure cough and infection.
14	<i>Urtica dioica</i> L. Urticaceae	Soii	Leaves and roots	Used to cure of chambal (in which white spots are formed on the body).
15	<i>Malva sylvestris</i> L. Malvaceae	Sochall	Flowers	Crushed flowers are used as pain relief.
16	<i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i> L. Euphorbiaceae	Gueirr dood	Stem, leaves	It cures breathing disorders including asthma.
17	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> F.H.Wigg Asteraceae	Hand	Leaves	Wounds are covered by crushed leaves.
18	<i>Trifolium pratense</i> L. Fabaceae	Batak lautt	Flowers	By making tea it is used to treat indigestion, high cholesterol.
19	<i>Trifolium repens</i> L. Fabaceae	Batak neeg	Leaves	It is crushed and used as ointment to gout.
20	<i>Rubus niveus</i> Thunb Rosaceae	Chaanch	Leaves	The leaves are used as a tonic for older people.
21	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i> L. Lamiaceae	Kalweuth	Flowers	The flowers are anti-allergic and cure headache by bathing.

22	<i>Silybum marianum</i> L. Asteraceae	Chair kund	Arial parts	Arial parts are used to cure cervical cells and kidney ailments.
23	<i>Indigofera heterantha</i> AGM Fabaceae	Kiexch/Zand	Leaves	Leaves are crushed and used to cure internal body disorders.
24	<i>Plantago major</i> L. Plantaginaceae	Bad gull	Roots	It is used to cure Wounds, fever and respiratory infections.
25	<i>Smilax elegans</i> Wall. Smilacaceae	Kilam gass	Roots	It treats leprosy, tumors, cancer.
26	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i> L. Geraniaceae	Paenzi ungajj	Whole plant	The plant is crushed treat the uterine and other bleeding.
27	<i>Emilia sonchifolia</i> L. Asteraceae	Dodizeh	Leaves	Leaves are used to cure eye inflammations, night blindness, cuts and wounds.
28	<i>Sorghum halepense</i> L. Poaceae	Durham	Seeds	The seed is demulcent and diuretic.
29	<i>Nasturtium officinale</i> W.T. Aiton. Brassicaceae	Naram nor	Whole plant	It treats chronic illnesses.
30	<i>Polygonum orientale</i> L. Polygonaceae	Marchavangan gass	Leafy stem	It is used to treat hernias, hepatitis, brighten the eyes.
31	<i>Nepeta cataria</i> L. Lamiaceae	Gand soii	Leaves	Its tea reduce stress and promote sleep.
32	<i>Dioscorea deltoidea</i> Wall. Dioscoreaceae	Kraeth	Leaves	The plant is crushed to alleviate constipation.
33	<i>Ranunculus muricatus</i> L. Ranunculaceae	Thol hakh	Whole plant	The plant is boiled and used as treatment of intermittent fevers.
34	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i> L. Ranunculaceae	Chirim	Whole plant	Whole plant is used to treat fungal allergies.
35	<i>Ranunculus acris</i> L. Ranunculaceae	Dimm gass	Whole plant	The plant used as a poultice to the chest to relieve colds and chest pains.
36	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i> L. Oxalidaceae	Tsok-tsen	Whole plant	The plant is used as treatment of influenza, fever, and snake bites.
37	<i>Equisetum arvense</i> L. Equisetaceae	Gandam gund	Above ground parts	Its tea cures kidney and bladder stones, urinary tract infections.
38	<i>Solanum nigrum</i> L. Solanaceae	Kambai kul	Leaves, fruits	The leaves and fruits are anti-inflammatory and antihepatic.
39	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> L. Asteraceae	Pahal hakh	Leaves	Chew the fresh leaves to relieve toothache.
40	<i>Cardamine impatiens</i> L. Brassicaceae	Pahal laish	Leaves, young shoots	The extraction has the ability to heal body and mind.

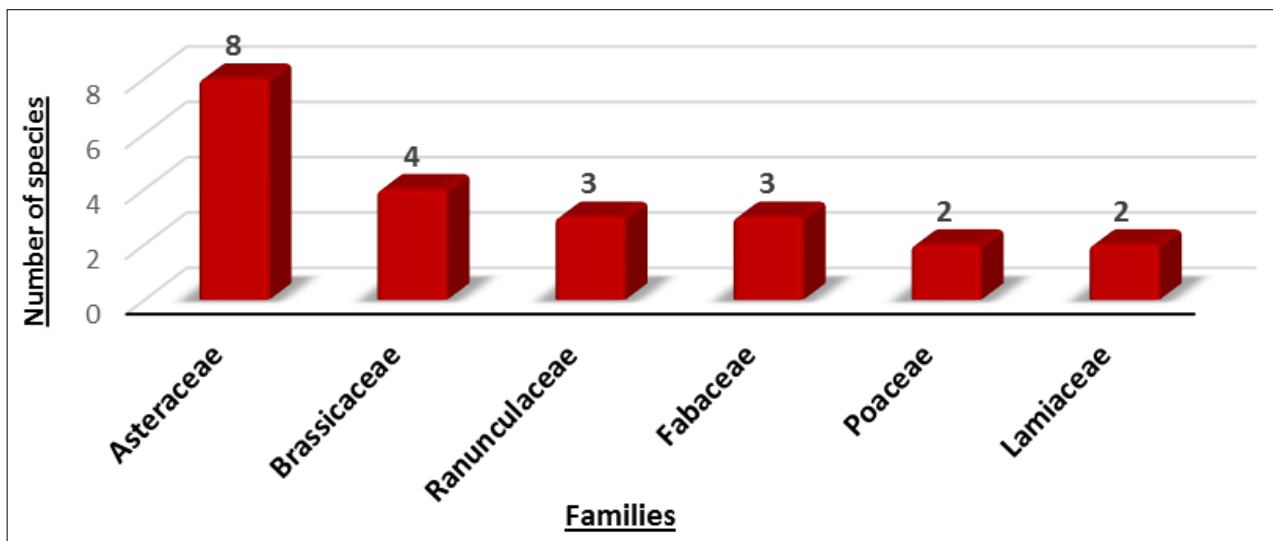


Fig 2: Graph showing dominant families.

Conclusions

Plants are vitally used to cure diseases from ancient times and are still used more in villages lives. Sheikhpora-Kreeri a smallest part of Kashmir valley has a fairly rich medicinal plant diversity and the local people have enough knowledge about the medicinal uses of these plants. Due to modernization, this knowledge is draining away day by day and now has been restricted to the few old aged people only. So there is a need to save this traditional knowledge regarding the medicinal plants. The aim of present investigation was to state

that medicinal plants still play a vital role in the primary health care of the people. This present study shows the relationship between plants and people of Sheikhpora in the context of traditional medical system.

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