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A STUDY ON THE WILD VEGETABLE PLANTS CONSUMED BY TRIBES OF BHIMASHANKAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY IN DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Wild plants and their parts mainly root, corm, stem, leaves, and sometimes whole plants are directly utilized as a seasonal cuisine. Among all, it has been directly utilized as a traditional medicine. Wild vegetables are a reviving, tasty, and inexpensive source of vitamins, minerals, and proteins for users. Some components of plants have proved to be effective in preventing or reducing the risk of certain diseases and cost of using chemical remedies. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate ethnic knowledge and expertise on edible plants' nutritional and therapeutic benefits. The present study was carried out in the tribal communities of Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary (Maharashtra) which itself is recognized as one of the 12 biodiversity hotspots of the world. The sanctuary includes nine tribal villages. Tribes are part of nature, they fulfill their need through wild resources. Their knowledge based upon traditional source. Consuming wild edible is food habits of people. This is an endeavor to preserve the important ethnomedical knowledge of these tribes. It also describes recommended actions for biodiversity conservation and cultivation of wild vegetables by tribes which enhance the economy of tribes rehabited in Bhimashankar Wildlife Sancutary.

Keywords: Wild Edible Vegetable, Tribe Communities, Ethnomedicinal and Traditional Knowledge

INTRODUCTION:

Wild vegetables are used for discovering and screening of the biochemical constituents which are very helpful for the manufacturing of new drugs. Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary has an area of 131 km^2 (51 sq m) and is a part of the Western Ghats (Sahyadri Ranges). The areas bio-diversity has been retained as it will be preserved as a cluster of sacred groves for generations. These sacred groves act as gene pools of this area, from where seeds were dispersed. Most of wild edible vegetable species have medicinal property and can be used to keep

people healthy and fit. Apart from the antioxidant, like ascorbic acid, phenols such as cholorogenic acid and its polymers are available in plant because of these component, the wild vegetable most have potential to improve physical as well as mental health, help in reduce the risk of disease.(1)

It recognizes the important role of the ambient vegetation in the economic life of people. Ethnobotany has now contributions to an understanding of man-plant relationships, as well as for the practical applications of the biological knowledge of aboriginal people in medicine, health, agriculture and industry(2)

From ancient time plants have been used as a source of food, shelter, clothing, medicine, fibre, gum, resin, oil, etc. Several wild plants are used as food by tribals and other local people living in and around the forest areas. Tribal and local people prefer wild vegetables over the cultivated as they grow naturally; provide better taste and good health. By selling these wild edibles to the nearby urban markets could earn them extra income.(4)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present studies were conducted to explore the knowledge of wild edible plants to meet the increasing demands of the growing population. The diversity of these plant resources needs to be documented and analysis should be done for their nutritional values. Increased use of traditional vegetables can contribute to enhancing people's health and standard living as well as the economic and social status of the food producers themselves.

STUDY AREA:

Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary was created in the Ambegaon and Khed talukas of Pune District, in the Western Indian state of Maharashtra. It spreads through 3 district of Maharashtra that is Pune District, Raigad District & Thane District. The sanctuary was notified by the state government of Maharashtra in 1985 with the total area of is 130.78sq. km., from nine villages in Pune District and reserve forest along the west slopes of the crestline in Thane District between 19.0226361–19.2305555 N & 73.4827777– 73.6308333 E. The elevation ranges between 340m on the west side and 1,208m above mean sea level at the Nagphani (Hindi: Snake's Hood) point.

METHODOLOGY:

A questionnaire was prepared to obtain information on medicinal plants with their local name, parts used, mode of preparation and administration of drug. Prior to start of collection work, an informed concert was sought from the individual key respondents. During the course of study Five field visits of 2-3 days each were undertaken in the study areas. A total of 4 informants were

identified. They were selected on the basis of their knowledge of wild vegetables. During the field visits information on the medicinal uses of plants was collected, through informal interviews and general conversations. They were as per our request, accompanied us in the field, showed the wild vegetables with local names and helped in collection of wild vegetables.

RESULT:

Wild leafy vegetables used as a food, posse's medicinal property which can be used to treat various disorders. So it is believed that these plant contain some bioactive component by further analyzing this constituent these plant can be introduce as future medicinal plant, these wild vegetable are used traditionally by people in householder hence they have less side effect. To conserve this traditional knowledge there is need of public awareness about the natures gift. In Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary there are various wild edible plants such as, Achyranthes aspera L., Clerodendrum serratum, Holarrhena pubescens Wall.ex G.Don 1837, Impatiens balsamina L., Leucas aspera (Wild.) Link, Vigna vexillata (L.) A. Rich etc. The wild taxa include 20 magnolids, 285 monocots, one Ceratophyllales and 788 eudicots. Out of these, 217 taxa are Indian endemics; which comprise about 19.84% of the total number of wild taxa (1,094) in the sanctuary and 5.04% of total Indian endemics (4,303). Total 53 taxa are under different threat categories according to IUCN. Tribes are part of nature, they fulfill their need through wild resources. Their knowledge based upon traditional source. Consuming wild edible is food habits of people.

CONCLUSION:

Demand of food and vegetables of increasing population cannot be fulfilled unless we cannot find out the ways and means to increase the production of vegetables and other substitute like wild plants. So it is of the immense need to document the indigenous knowledge of wild edibles for future generations and to encourage the peoples for cultivation of wild edible plants in their home gardens. Further research on cultivation and utilization of wild vegetables would help the tribal and rural people to have better nutrition.

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