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Ethno- medicinal significance of selected plant species mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and the Ahadith

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Abstract

The present research work is based on plant species mentioned in Holy Qur'an and Ahadith. The plants are perennial source of basic requisites, health and hygiene to human beings. The main aim of this study is to document the knowledge of ethno- medicinal importance of plants highlighted 1400 years back in the Noble Qur'an and the Ahadith (Tradition's of Prophet Mohammad (SAW)) which have stood the test of the time. In view of the importance of this study comprehensive data was collected from Holy Qur'an, Ahadith books and the books written on the Islamic medicines Tibb-e-Nabvi. The Holy Qur'an is full of references to plants bearing fruits, vegetables, food and medicinal plants. It is concluded that ethno- medicinal plants are being widely used in the world because of better cultural acceptability, and no side effects. We propose to establish Quranic Botanical Gardens in collaboration with State Forest Departments and Private Institutions to cultivate and introduce Quranic /Prophetic plants in urban localities and open fields.

Keywords: Plant species, ethno- medicinal, Holy Qur'an, Ahadith, botanical gardens

Introduction

Plants are perennial source of basic requisites, health and hygiene to human beings. There has been spontaneous and sustained endeavour since ancient times in this direction to discover and unravel the potentials of plant wealth to make life comfortable and to mitigate the human sufferings such as diseases and starvation. Plants are essential components of the universe. Human beings have been using plants as source of medicine from time immemorial, since the origin of life on this planet. By trial and error methods through generations, over a period of time, some plants with positive response picked up and identified as a source of important medicine. Therefore treatment through these medicinal plants, began in the early stage of human civilization (Malik.2001) [13]. In Islam, diseases are cured in two ways; first the cure of soul through prayer and second the cure of ailments through medicine. Fresh and dry fruits are serves as good food but also good source of medicines (Anonymous.2009) [3]. Vegetables are included in meals mainly for their nutritional values, however some are reserved for sick and used in convalescence because of their medicinal properties (Mensah *et al.*, 2008). Our Prophet (SAW) used certain herbs and recommended various plants as cure of common diseases. The Prophet (SAW) frequently commented upon the nature and value of various food and spices. These comments were noted by companions of Prophet (SAW) and the tradition continued till to date (Anonymous, 2009) [14].

Life and diseases go together Where there is a life, diseases are bound to exist. Dependency and sustainability of man and animal life has been revolving around plants through their uses as food, shelter, but also plants have been used to control diseases and therefore, the use of plants as medicine is an ancient and reliable practice (Arshad and Rao, 2001) [8]. Cure of diseases through medicinal plants is always a salient feature of Islamic teaching and preaching. Use of Islamic medicine started from Hazrat Adam (AS) and completed by Hazrat Mohammad (SAW) since then research is being continued in various corners of the world (Nasr, 1976). Medicinal plants help in alleviating human suffering and are widely used for subsistence, home remedies, and trade (Kunwar *et al.* 2006).

The Holy Qur'an

Divine revelation revealed upon the last messenger Prophet Mohammad (SAW) It is a complete guide and compilation of bye- laws for the human beings. This deals with various aspects of human life.

Hadith

The sayings, deeds, and practices narrated by Prophet Mohammad (SAW) are called Hadith (plural Ahadith/Traditions).

Ethno- botanical references from Ahadith**Hadith 1**

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

“Any one who plants a tree from which (Fruit/Fodder) any human or animal eats, is an act of charity” (Source-‘Sahih Muslim’)

Hadith 2

Usama bin Shuraik said:

“I was with Prophet Muhammad (SAW), when the Bedouins (villagers) came to him and said, “O messenger of Allah, should we seek medicine?” He said ‘yes, O’ slaves of Allah seek medicine, because Allah has not created a disease except that he has also created its cure except for one illness, they asked, what is that? Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: ‘Old age’ (Narrated by Tirmidhi).

Hadith 3

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

“Every illness has cure, and when proper cure is applied to the disease it ends it, if Allah is willing”.

Keeping in view the importance of diverse medicinal flora and rich medicinal cultures of Islam, research work was conducted to investigate ethno- botanical uses and create awareness about the plant species enlisted in Holy Qur’an and Ahadith for the welfare of human communities throughout the world.

Materials and Methods

The research work was conducted by reviewing the Holy Qur’an, Ahadith and Islamic books. The comprehensive information about plants of ethno- botanical importance mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and Ahadith were collected from the sources listed out in the Table 1. Plants Mentioned in the Holy Qur’an Table 2. Fruits plants mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and Ahadith, Table 3. Medicinal plants of Ahadith. The detailed medicinal significance of plant species mentioned in Qur’an and Ahadith have been arranged in systematic order of scientific name, English name, Arabic

name, Urdu name, Family, part used, ethno botanical significance so as to create awareness about the species and to explore the inherent benefits to mankind throughout the world. The information collected about the plant species is divine and prophetic hence accurate and authentic, stood the test of time, and references were cited from Qur’an, Ahadith. Correct botanical names, their families and identification of plants were done by using Flora of Andhra Pradesh (Pullaiah *et al.*, 1997)

Results

Present finding were confined to 12 plant species enlisted in Holy Qur’an and Ahadith. The plant species discussed are *Phoenix dactylifera* L., *Olea europaea* L., *Vitis vinifera* L., *Punica granatum* L., *Salvadora persica* L., *Ficus carica* L., *Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standley, *Allium cepa* L., *Allium sativum* L., *Citrullus lanatus* (Thunb.) Matsum. & Nakai., *Cucumis sativus* L., *Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.

Discussion

Since times immemorial, humans have used plants to alleviate their sufferings from diseases. Approximately more than 90% of unani medicine is prepared from herbs. A close look at checklist of medicinal flora tells us that these plants are not of Arabic origin but the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), gave the references of such plants that are not only grown in Arab countries but exist throughout the world. This shows that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was endowed with vision from the Almighty. The necessity for exploration for such useful data from Holy Quran, Ahadith and Islamic books has long been felt with the increasing needs of drugs, medicines and other useful products, for welfare of human beings. The present approach is in consonance of above need. This study is the logical and applicable step in the direction towards the ultimate goal of development of Natural Botanical Gardens in collaboration with Forest Department and Pharmaceutical Industries as has been doing on principles of Ayurveda to boost up the native system of medicine for prosperity and safety of human beings without side effects as apprehended in other system of medicines. Now the present scenario of prime Pharmaceutical Industries of the world and India diverting their attention and inclination towards Herbal Medicines, because it has better cultural acceptability permanent cure with minimal or zero side effects.

Table 1: Plants Mentioned in Holy Qur’an

S. No	Name in Arabic	No. of times mentioned in Qur’aan	Name in English	Scientific Name	Name in Urdu	Family
1	Al-Manna	3 Times	Manna/Camel Thorn	<i>Alhagi maurorum</i> Medic.	Turanjabeen	Fabaceae
2	Nakhal	20 Times	Dates	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i> Lin.	Khajoor	Aracaceae
3	Zaitoon	6 Times	Olives	<i>Olea europaea</i> Lin.	Zaitoon	Oleaceae
4	Enab	11 Times	Grapes	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> Lin.	Angoor	Vitaceae
5	Rumman	3 Times	Pomegranate	<i>Punica granatum</i> Lin.	Anar	Punicaceae
6	Teen	1 Times	Fig	<i>Ficus carica</i> Lin.	Anjeer	Moraceae
7	Sidra	4 Times	Cedar	<i>Cedrus libani</i> Loud.	Beri	Pinaeaceae
8	Asal	1 Times	Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix aphylla</i> (L) Karst.	Jhadoo	Tamaricaceae
9	Khamth	1 Times	Tooth-Brush Tree	<i>Salvadora persica</i> Lin.	Miswak	Salvadoraceae
10	Kafoor	1 Times	Henna	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> Lin.	Mehendi	Lythraceae
11	Zanjabeel	1 Times	Ginger	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rosc.	Adrak	Zingiberaceae
12	Adas	1 Times	Lentil	<i>Lens culinaris</i> Medic.	Masoor	Fabaceae
13	Basal	1 Times	Onion	<i>Allium cepa</i> Lin.	Pyaz	Liliaceae
14	Foom	1 Times	Garlic	<i>Allium sativum</i> Lin.	Lehsun	Liliaceae
15	Qhisha	1 Times	Cucumber	<i>Cucumis melo</i> .	Kakdi	Cucurbitaceae
16	Talah	1 Times	Acacia	<i>Acacia seyal</i> Del. Syn.A	Babool – e – Arab	Fabaceae

				<i>Fistula Schweing</i>		
17	Yaqhteen	1 Times	Gourd	<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i> Standl.	Kaddu	Cucurbitaceae
18	Khardil	2 Times	Mustard	<i>Brassica nigra</i> Koch.	Rae	Brassicaceae
19	Reehan	2 Times	Sweet Basil	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> Lin.	Sabza/Tulasi	Lamiaceae
20	Zaqqoom	4 Times	Euphorbia	<i>Euphorbia resinifera</i> Berg.	Tohadh	Euphorbiaceae

Table 2: Fruit Plants Mentioned in Qur'an & Ahadith (Traditions)

S. No	Name in Arabic	Name in English	Scientific Name	Name in Urdu	Family
1	Naqal/Tamar/Balah/ Ajwa/Rutub	Dates	<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i> Lin.	Khajoor	Arecaceae
2	Unab/Zabeeb	Grapes	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> Lin.	Angoor	Vitaceae
3	Behi/Safr-e-jal	Quince	(i) <i>Cydonia oblonga</i> Lin. (ii) <i>Aegle marmelos</i> Lin.	Behi/Safr-e-jal	(i) Rosaceae (ii) Rutaceae
4	Bithikh	Water-melon	<i>Citrullus vulgaris</i> schrad.	Tarbooz	Cucurbitaceae
5	Zaitoon	Olives	<i>Olea europaea</i> Lin.	Zaitoon	Oleaceae
6	Rumman	Pomegranate	<i>Punica granatum</i> Lin.	Anaar	Punicaceae
7	Teen	Fig	<i>Ficus carica</i> Lin.	Anjeer	Moraceae

Table 3: Medicinal Plants of Ahadith (Prophetic Medicines)

S. No	Name in Arabic	Name in English	Scientific Name	Name in Urdu	Family
1	Hena	Henna	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> L.	Mehendi	Lythraceae
2	Lobaan/Laban	Benzoin	(i) <i>Boswellia carterii</i> . (ii) <i>Styrax bezoin</i> .	Oodh	(i) Burseraceae (ii) Styracaceae
3	Kafoor	Camphor	(i) <i>Dryobalanops aromatica</i> . (ii) <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i> .	Kafoor	(i) Dipterocarpaceae (ii) Lauraceae
4	Khusth/ Khust – al - Hind/ Khust – al - Bhar/ Oodul – al - Hindi	Costus	<i>Saussurea costus</i> (Falc) (syn) <i>S. lappa</i> C.B. Clarke	Meetha kosth	Asteraceae
5	Habbus – Sauda/ Shoneiz	Black – cumin	<i>Nigella sativa</i> Lin.	Kalonji	Ranunculaceae
6	Aluva / Sibr	Aloes	<i>Aloe vera</i> Lin. <i>A. barbadense</i> Mill.	Aelva	Liliaceae
7	Hulbah	Fenugreek	<i>Trigonella foenum – graecum</i> Lin.	Methi	Fabaceae
8	Sana	Senna	<i>Cassia senna</i> Lin.	Sana	Fabaceae
9	Sanooth	Dill	<i>Anethum graveolens</i> Lin.	Soya vilayathi	Apiaceae
10	Shabrum	Euphorbia	<i>Euphorbia pithyusa</i> Lin.	Doodhi	Euphorbiaceae
11	Kutum/Vasma	Indigo	<i>Indigofera sp.</i>	Neel	Fabaceae
12	Virs	Pseudo – saffron	<i>Moghania grahamiana</i> Kuntze.	Vars	Fabaceae
13	Safa/Harf/ Harbbur-rishad	Garden Cress	<i>Lepidium sativum</i> Lin.	Halum Haloon	Brassicaceae
14	Kasni	Chicory	<i>Chichorium intybus</i> Lin.	Kasni	Asteraceae
15	Utrujj	Citron/Lemon	<i>Citrus sp.</i>	Meetha Nimboo	Rutaceae
16	Al-Kamath	Mushroom	<i>Agaricus sp.</i>	Kumbhi	Agaricaceae
17	Marzan Josh	Marjoram	<i>Origanum majorana</i> Lin.	Marzan Josh/ Marva	Lamiaceae
18	Narjis	Narcissus	<i>Narcissus tazetta</i> .	Nargis	Amaryllidaceae
19	Baqlatul Hamkha	Purslane	<i>Portulaca olaracea</i> Lin.	Kulfa/ Ghol	Portulacaceae
20	Karfis	Clery	<i>Apium graveolens</i> Lin.	Ajmood	Apiaceae

1. *Phoenix dactylifera* L.

English Name: Date palm

Arabic Name: Nakhil

Urdu Name: Khajoor

Family: Arecaceae

Part used: Fruits

Medicinal uses: Heart diseases, Liver disorders, Kidney diseases, Boost up haemoglobin content of the blood.

References from Holy Qur'an: Sura Al-Baqara. v. 266, Sura Al-An' am. v. 99,141, Sura Ar-Ra'd. v. 4, Sura An-Nahl. v. 11, 67, Sura Bane Israel. v. 91, Sura Al-Kahf. v. 32, Sura Maryam. v. 23, Sura Taaha. v. 71, 25, Sura Al-Muminun. v. 19, Sura As Shuara. v. 148, Sura Yasin. v. 34, Sura Kaaf. v. 10, Sura Al-khamar, v. 20, Sura Ar-Rahman. v. 11,68, Sura Al-Haqa. Verse 7, Sura Abasa. v. 29.

References from Ahadith

- Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar(RA) narrated that Prophet (SAW) said, "There is a tree among the trees which is similar to a Muslim. Its leaves do not fall. What is that tree? The Prophet (SAW) himself said, "That is the date palm tree". (Farooqi.1998, Al-Qadr.2007).
- Hazrat Aisha (RA) reports that, "Prophet(SAW) ate watermelon with fresh dates".(Farooqi.1998).

2. *Olea europaea* L.

English Name: Olive

Arabic Name: Zaitoon

Urdu Name: Zaitoon

Family: Oleaceae

Part used: Fruit and oil

Medicinal uses: Eczema, Kidney pain, Pancreas pain, Tuberculosis, Respiratory disease, Strengthen body muscles.

References from Holy Qur'an: Sura Al-An' am. v. 99,141, Sura An-Nahl. v.11, Sura Al-Muninun. v. 20, Sura An-Nur. v.35, Sura Teen. v. 1-4.

References from Ahadith

- Hazrat Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Prophet(SAW) said "Eat the olive oil and massage it over your bodies since it is a holy tree.(Farooqi. 1998).
- Hazrat Abu Huraira(RA) narrates that the Prophet(SAW) stated "Eat the olive oil and apply it since there is cure for seventy diseases in it, one of them is Leprosy.(Farooqi.1998, Al-Qadr.2007).

3. *Vitis vinifera* L.

English Name: Grapes

Arabic Name: Enab

Urdu Name: Angoor, Munaqqah

Family: Vitaceae

Part used: Fruits

Medicinal uses: Cooling effects on body, urinary bladder pain, stomach diseases.

References from Holy Qur'an: Sura Al-Baqara, v. 266,Sura An'am, v. 99, Sura Ar-Ra'd, v. 4, Sura An-Nahl, v. 11, 67,Sura Bane Israel, v. 91, Sura Al-Kahf. v. 32,Sura Al-Muninun, v. 19, Sura YaSin. v. 34, Sura An-Naba, v. 31-32.

References from Ahadith

- Narrated Abu Huraira(RA) The Prophet said, "Don't call the grapes Al-Karm, Al-Karm is the heart of the Momin".(Farooqi.1998).
- Prophet(SAW) said, "You have raisins which make the colour of the face handsome and remove the phlegm".(Farooqi.1998, Ghaznavi.1991)

4. *Punica granatum* L.

English Name: Pomegranate

Arabic Name: Rumman

Urdu Name: Anar

Family: Punicaceae

Part used: Fruit

Medicinal uses: Heart and liver diseases, Hepatitis, Eye diseases.

References from Qur'an: Sura Al-An'am. v. 99, 141, Sura Ar-Rahman. v. 68.

References from Ahadith:

- Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (RA) narrated that the Prophet(SAW) said, Pomegranate and its rind strengthen digestion.(Al-Qadr.2007).

5. *Salvadora persica* L.

English Name: Tooth-Brush Tree

Arabic Name: Khamth

Urdu Name: Miswak

Family: Salvadoraceae

Part used: Root, stem

Medicinal uses: Gastric disorders, asthma bronchitis, constipation.

References from Qur'an: Sura Saba. v.16.

References from Ahadith

- Hazrat Jabbar Bin Abdullah (RA) narrates that Prophet (SAW) said, "The black coloured Kapas (fruit of Salvadora) is the best one" (Azami. 1985, Farooqi. 1998).
- Hazrat Aaisha (RA) narrates that Prophet (SAW) said, "Miswak purifies the mouth and is a cause of Allah's pleasure" (Azami. 1985).

6. *Ficus carica* L.

English Name: Fig

Arabic Name: Teen

Urdu Name: Anjeer

Family: Moraceae

Part used: Fruit

Medicinal uses: Remove kidney stone, piles, relieves constipation, helpful hemorrhoids, enhance intestinal mobility.

References from Qur'an: Sura Teen, v. 1.

References from Ahadith:

- Hazrat Abu Darda (RA) narrates that Prophet(SAW) said, "Eat fig, for it cures the piles and is useful for rheumatism"(Farooqi.1998).

7. *Lagenaria siceraria* L.

English Name: Gourd

Arabic Name: Yaqhteen

Urdu Name: Kaddu

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Part used: Fruit

Medicinal uses: Kidney and liver disorder, hear disease, piles, arthritis.

References from Qur'an: Sura As-Saffat. v.146.

References from Ahadith:

- Hazrat Ishaq bin Abdullah bin Abu Talha(RA) narrated that i heard Anas bin Malik saying, "A tailor invited Prophet(SAW) to a meal which he had prepared to that meal he served the Prophet with bread and soup made with gourd and dried meat. I saw the Prophet (SAW) taking the pieces of gourd from the dish." Anas added, since that day i have continued to like gourd.(Abdullah,2005).

8. *Allium cepa* L.

English Name: Onion

Arabic Name: Basal

Urdu Name: Pyaz

Family: Liliaceae

Part used: Bulb, leaves and seeds

Medicinal uses: common cold, cough, ear pain spermatorrhoea(improve sperm production), constipation.

References from Qur'an: Sura Al-Baqra, v. 61.

References from Ahadith:

- Narrated Aisha, Ummul Momineen, Khalid said, Abu Ziyad Khiyar ibn Salamah asked Aisha about onions, She replied the last food which the Prophet(SAW) ate was some which contained onions.(Ahmad.2004).

- Abdullah Bin Abu Talah narrates, Prophet(SAW) said, those who eat onion and garlic should eat them in cooked form (Khan,2001).

9. *Allium sativum* L.

English Name: Garlic

Arabic Name: Fum, soom

Urdu Name: Lahsun

Family: Liliaceae

Part used: Cloves

Medicinal uses: Blood pressure, paralysis, digestive problems, asthma, intestinal pains.

References from Qur'an: Sura Al-Baqra, v. 61.

References from Ahadith

- Hazrat Anus bin Malik narrated, the Prophet(SAW) said, "Whoever has eaten garlic should not come to our mosque (Farooqi.1998)

10. *Citrulus lanatus* (Thunb.)

English Name: Water melon

Arabic Name: Bitteekh

Urdu Name: Tarbooz

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Part used: Fruit and seeds

Medicinal uses: Increase immunity, jaundice, kidney and urine disorders.

References from Ahadith

- Narrated Sahl bin Sad Al-Sadi(RA), Prophet(SAW)used ate ripe dates with water melon(Gaznavi.1991).
- Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas (RA) narrates that Prophet(SAW) said, "Water melon is diet as well as drink. It washes and purifies the urinary bladder, it increase potency.(Farooqi.1998).

11. *Cucumis sativus* L.

English Name: Cucumber

Arabic Name: Qhisha, Khairum

Urdu Name: Kheera/Kakadi

Family: Cucurbitaceae

Part used: Fruit

Medicinal uses: Cooling, vermifuge, purgative, diuretic.

References from Qur'aan: Sura Al-Baqra, v. 61.

References from Ahadith

- Narrated Abdullah bin Ja'far (RA) I saw Prophet(SAW) eating fresh dates with cucumber (Ghaznavi.2000).
- Abdullah bin Ja'far (RA) I saw Allah Messenger(SAW) eating cucumber with fresh dates (Farooqi.1998).

12. *Trigonella foenum-gracum* L.

English Name: Fenugreek

Arabic Name: Hulbah

Urdu Name: Methi

Family: Fabaceae

Part used: Leaves and seeds

Medicinal uses: Stomach problems, diabetes, lungs infections, galactagogue (to stimulate milk production in mammary glands, dissolve phlegm from chest, hair conditioner.

References from Ahadith

- Prophet (SAW) said, seek cure by using fenugreek. Narrated by Qhasim bin Abdur Rahman. (Ghaznavi. 1991).

- Prophet (SAW) said, if my followers (Umma) know the importance of fenugreek then they will buy it by paying gold of equal weight to fenugreek (Ghaznavi.1991).

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