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REVIEW ARTICLE

ALHAGI MAURORUM AND TAMARIX APHYLLA-TWO MEDICINAL WEEDS MENTIONED IN HOLY QURAN AND AHADITH AND THEIR ETHNOMEDICINAL USES IN DISTRICT RAJHANPUR OF PAKISTAN

Muhammad Shahzad Aslam^{1D}, Muhammad Syarhabil Ahmad^{1D}

School of Bioprocess Engineering, University Malaysia Perlis, Kompleks Pusat Pengajian, Jejawi 3, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The present research work is based on two medicinal weeds: *Alhagi maurorum* and *Tamarix aphylla* (L.) mentioned in the 57 Ayat of Sura Al-Baqarah and 16 Ayat of Sura Saba in Holy Quran respectively. These plants were collected from Rajhanpur District, Punjab, Pakistan. The foremost purpose of this study is to document the knowledge of the ethnomedicinal significance of these plants in the light of Islam. An extensive and complete data was recorded. The comprehensive morphological character of these species was discussed. Botanical names, family, Quranic name, Arabic name, English name, Vernacular name, habit and habitat, distribution, parts used, medicinal uses are documented and references cited from Holy Quran, Ahadith.

Keywords: Ethnomedicinal study, Holy Quran and Ahadith, Rajhanpur,

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Address for Correspondence:

Muhammad Shahzad Aslam, School of Bioprocess Engineering, University Malaysia Perlis, Kompleks Pusat Pengajian, Jejawi 3, 02600 Arau, Perlis, Malaysia, Tel: +0060193009674, E-mail: aslammuhammadshahzad@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Holy Quran is not only the religious book but also scientific in nature that is proved by about 1000 of verses related to scientific knowledge. There are more than 900 verses that can describe to new scientific discoveries. There are 6600 verses which explain with a lot of normal aspect of life¹. Treatment of different diseases through medicinal plants is an important character of Islam which has been started since the beginning of world from Hazrat Adam (A.S.) and was accomplished at Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) but searches and compiling of these medicines is still continued throughout the world². The significance of plants in several Surahs of the Holy Quran has been described such as *Phoenix dactylifera* commonly known as the date is mentioned in fourteen different Surah of the Holy Quran; Verse no.6, Surah Baqra; verse no. 99, Surah Al Anam; verse no. 4, Surah Al Rahad; verse no. 11- 27, Surah Al Nahal; verse no. 91, Surrah Al Israa; verse no. 36, Surah Al Kahaf; verse no. 23-25, Surah Mariam; verse no.148, Surah Shurah; verse no. 71, Surah Taha; verse no. 34, Surah Yaseen; verse no. 60, Surah Al Qamar; verse no. 11-28, Surah Rahman; verse no. 7, surah Al Haqqa; verse no. 39,

Surah Abbas³. Ahadith [the sayings of Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Sallalloho Alayhi Wassallam)] have also defined the status of many plant species. There has been reported about 70 plants and plant products in Ahadith⁴. Muslims are always influenced by Greco-Roman medicine traditions and with the passage of time considerable additions in it. This system was evolved as Unani system of medicine containing elements both from Ayurvedic and Greco-Roman system⁵.

Importance of *Alhagi maurorum* and *Tamarix aphylla*

Alhagi maurorum has an anti-ulcerogenic affect as six flavonoids was isolated from the plant and their biological evaluation showed a very promising antiulcerogenic activity with curative ratios 66.31%, 69.57%, 75.49%, and 77.93%, respectively⁶. The aerial part of *Alhagi maurorum* possesses anti-bacterial and anti-oxidant activity. It possesses anti-inflammatory activity as it significantly reduces the thickness of paw edema induced by formalin in mice⁷. *Tamarix aphylla* possess strong anti-fungal activity⁸. It also possesses anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and wound healing activity⁹.

Ethnomedicinal uses

Alhagi maurorum is used to improve the eye sight of the eye. The flowers are ground into sugar and powder is used for eyes diseases, which clean the eyes. One tea spoon of powdered is taken in the morning one in the evening which improves eyesight¹⁰. A decoction of *Alhagi maurorum* is used for skin eruption taken as a bath¹¹. The powder of dry flowers is used for stomach pain. The roots are soaked in water and extract is useful for liver complaints. Egyptian uses this plant as an antinociceptive¹². It is also used as a blood purifier and as an expectorant as people of District Tank dispense its dry roots for kidney trouble (2g/per day)¹³. Other uses are Diaphoretic, diuretic, laxative¹⁴. *Tamarix aphylla* are applied as an astringent. The bark is bitter, astringent, powdered and in combination with oil and Kanala, it is used as an aphrodisiac. It is also employed as an application in eczema capitis and other diseases¹⁵. The smoke of the plant is given for treating fever¹⁶. Roots of the plant are used as tuberculosis, leprosy, smallpox, and all contagious diseases. It is applied as decoction. A decoction of the leaves and young branches Used for a swollen spleen. When ginger is added to the same decoction it can be used for problems of the uterus¹⁷.

METHODOLOGY

The research work was conducted by reviewing the Holy Quran, Ahadith, and Islamic books. Comprehensive and detailed information about Two ethnobotanical important plants mentioned in the 57 Ayat of Sura Al-Baqarah and 16 Ayat of Sura Saba were collected from Rajanpur (29:06N, 70:19E) with a geographical span of 12,319 km². The current study was performed on the weeds of district Rajanpur. Botanical names family, Quranic name, Arabic name, English name, Synonyms, distribution, partly used, medicinal uses and references cited from Holy Quran, Ahadith were mentioned. Correct botanical names, their families and identification of plants were done by using flora of Pakistan.

Present findings were confined to two weeds species belonging to two genera of two families enlisted in Holy Quran, Ahadith, and Islamic literature. These plants are *Alhagi maurorum* and *Tamarix aphylla* which is used throughout Pakistan for various aspects. The botanical name, family, Quranic name, English name, Vernacular names, Arabic name, habit, and habitat, distribution; parts used, medicinal uses were documented and references cited from Holy Quran and books of Ahadith.

Botanical name: *Alhagi maurorum*

Family: leguminosae

Quranic name: Manna

English name: Camelthorn

Local names: Shing

Synonym:

Alhagi camelorum Fisch.ex DC.

Alhagi persarum Boiss. and Buhse

Alhagi pseudalhagi (M.Bieb.) Desv.

Hedysarum alhagi Linn.

Hedysarum pseudalhagi M. Bieb.

Description: Undershrub, 60-100 cm tall, glabrous or pubescent. Leaf simple, 10-25 mm long, 3-8 mm broad, obovate or elliptic-oblong, glabrous or pubescent, entire, apiculate; petiole c. 2 mm; stipules minute. Inflorescence lateral axillary racemes 1-5 cm long, ending in a spine. Pedicel 1-3 mm, with 1-2 minute bracteoles. Calyx 2-2.5 mm, glabrous, teeth almost obsolete to triangular. Corolla 6-9 mm long, pink or reddish - violet. Fruit 19-34 mm long, 2-3mm dorab, glabrous, more or less constricted between the seeds, 1-9-seeded.

Distribution in Pakistan: Rajhanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Sukkur and Hafizabad

Distribution in the world: Pakistan, India, Pakistan; Kashmir; Iran, Afghanistan; Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Cyprus, N.Africa.

Parts used: Roots and flowers

Flowering period: April-September.

Folkmedicinal uses

The flowers are ground into sugar and powder is used for eyes diseases, which clean the eyes. One teaspoon of powdered is taken in the morning one in the evening which improves eyesight. The powder of dry flowers is used for stomach pain. The roots are soaked in water and extract is useful for liver complaints.

References from Quran

And we shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which we have provided you." And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves. (Sura Al-Baqarah (The cow) , verse 57) O Children of Israel, We delivered you from your enemy, and we made an appointment with you at the right side of the mount, and we sent down to you manna and quails. (Sura Taha , verse 80) and we divided them into twelve descendant tribes [as distinct] nations. And we inspired to Moses when his people implored him for water, "Strike with your staff the stone," and there gushed forth from it twelve springs. Every people knew its watering place. And we shaded them with clouds and sent down upon them manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which we have provided you." And they wronged us not, but they were [only] wronging themselves. (Sura Al-Araf (The Heights), verse 160)

Botanical Name: *Tamarix aphylla*

Family: Tamaracaceae

Quranic name: Athel

Arabic name: Abal, Tarfaa, Ghaz, Athel

English name: Athel tamarisk

Local Name(s): Khagal , Frash

Synonym:

Tamarix aphylla(1.) Lanza

Tamarix aphylla(L.) Warb.

Tamarix articulata Vahl

Tamarix orientalis Forssk.

Thuja aphylla Linn.

Description: Trees or tall shrub, up to c. 13 m tall with reddish brown to grey bark, entirely glabrous. Leaves vaginate, abruptly mucronate 1.5-2 (-3) mm long, hoary due to the salt deposition from the impressed punctate glands. Racemes mostly aestival, simple or

compound, 2-6 cm long, (2-) 34 (-5) mm broad, spirally curved. Flowers bisexual, subsessile, pinkish white, pedicel less than 1 mm long. Bracts vaginate, ovate, acuminate, 1.25-1.5 mm long, 0.5 mm broad. Sepals 5, free, 1.5 mm long, c. 1 mm broad, almost entire, obtuse, broadly ovate to elliptic, outer 2 somewhat smaller than the inner 3. Petals 5, filaments filiform, 2 mm long, anthers cordate, somewhat apiculate. Disc deeply 5 lobed, filaments inserted in between the lobes of the disc (mesodiscine), insertion peridiscal. Stigmas 3 or 4, discoid, styles half the length of the ovary, ovary conical, 1.75-2 mm long. Capsule pyramidal rounded at the tip, 2.5-3.5 mm long, c. 1.5 mm broad¹⁸.

Distribution in Pakistan: This is the largest and commonest species, often planted as roadside tree throughout Pakistan.

Distribution in World: Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Senegal, Sudan, Abyssinia, Eritrea, Somalia and Kenya), Middle East (Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Iran), Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan.

Parts used: Bark, leaves, and twigs.

Flowering period: June-October

Folkmedicinal uses Jaundice, bad evils, rheumatism, wound, and abscesses. It makes a good shelter hedge in coastal gardens the wood has been used for fuel and timber. The wood is also used for making of agricultural tools. Leaves are browsed by camels.

References from Ahadith

Hazrat Khalid bin Umair Advi (R.A.) narrates that once during a journey with Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wassallam) we had nothing to eat except leaves of tamarisk¹⁹. Hazrat Annus (R.A.) said (pointing towards a cup) that he took drinking substances (e.g. honey, water, milk etc.) in that cup and gave them to Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wassallam).

CONCLUSION

The second biggest religion in the world, with more than 1 billion followers is Islam. Islam has shown us the complete path in every aspect of life even in the field of health and medicine. After a complete Survey in District Rajhanpur, we found two medicinal weeds i.e. *Alhagi maurorum* and *Tamarix aphylla*. The name of these two weeds is mentioned in Holy Quran and Ahadith. This proves that health is always a prime importance in Islam and Islam has given guidelines to all Muslim world that would continue till modern world.

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