

Short Communication

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A Glance at the Medicinal Plants of the Northern Area in the Himalayan Region

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Study Area. Study sites were comprised of Gilgit and Skardu regions and are situated in the extreme north of the country [1, 2].

Vegetation. Phytogeographically Karakorum belongs to the Central Asian region [3, 4]. Thus the north of Pakistan also reflected Central Asian elements in vegetation.

(i) **Skardu region.** Vegetation cover of the Skardu region was recorded as follows:

Peganum harmala, *Sophora alopecuroides*, *Echinops cornigerus* and *Capparis spinosa* were some of the perennial angiosperms which were commonly found throughout Skardu. Where species such as *Ephedra gerardiana*, *E. intermedia* var. *tibetica*, *E. przewalskyi* and *E. religiosa* were found in the form of patches on the rocks of the mountains in Skardu. Some common plants found in the Skardu region were: - *Daucus carota* (Shangrila, Skardu), *Artemisia maitima* (Skardu, Khaplu), *A. brevifolia* (Satpara Dam, Skardu), *A. sacrorum* (Skardu to Deosai), *Rosa webbiana* (Skardu to Deosai plains), *Aconitum heterophyllum* (Deosai plains), *Saxifraga* sp. (Deosai plains), *Epilobium latifolium* (Deosai plains), *E. angustifolium* (Deosai plains), *Corydalis adiantifolium* (Satpara Dam), *Prunus americana*, *P. amygdalus*, *P. avium*, *Malus sylvestris* and *Fragaria nubicola* were the common fruit plants found in cultivation in Skardu proper and its suburbs.

Vegetation cover of Deosai plateau included the following: *Geranium meeboldii*, *Gentiana pedicularis*, *Filago arvensis*, *Pedicularis pyramidata*, *Aconitum violaceum*, *Astragalus melanostachys*, *Ferula ovina*, *Funeria hygrometica*, *Polygonum alpinum*, *Sibbaldia cuneata*, *Juncus membranaceous*, *Gentiana tienschanica*, *Rumex* sp., *Arenaria griffithii*, *Galium boreale*, *Campanula* sp., *Artemisia* sp. and *Myosotis alpestris*.

(ii) **Gilgit region.** The herbs of medicinal importance observed in the Gilgit area were as follows:

COMPOSITE

Artemisia maritima L.

Vern: Kirmala

Locality. Gilgit

Artemisia vulgaris L.

Vern. Nugadouna

Locality. Gilgit

Jurinea himalaica RRs

Vern. Dhup or Gugal

Locality. Sarda Kothi to Burzil top and Kalapani to Kamri top.

Saussurea lappa (Decne) Sch. Bip.

Vern. Chob kishtorkuth

Locality. Mir Malik Nalla, Kalapani, Purana Maidan, Kamri top. Chiti Nadi, Riat Nalla and on Naltar Nalla side.

COLCHICACEAE

Colchicum aitchisonii (Hook. f.) E. Nasir

Vern: Surinjan shireen

Locality. It grows in Rattu area on Burzil side and Gudai.

Frequency. 2000 kg. rhizomes can be collected each year.

Colchicum luteum Baker

Vern: Surinjan talkh

Locality. Gudai, Rattu, Chilam, Burzil top, Doyon, and Gurez.

Frequency. Annual yield is estimated to be about 1500 kg.

CUPRESSACEAE

Juniperus macropoda Boiss

Vern.: Padam

Locality: Gilgit, Rattu, Astor, Nomal Naltar,

EPHEDRALES

Ephedra pachyclada Boiss

Vern: Asmai buti or Som

Locality. Turbling, Astor, Gurikot, Rattu, Harchoo, Burzil top, Mamari top.

LEGUMINOSAE

Glycyrrhiza glabra Var. *glabra*

Vern: Malathor malathi

Locality. Danyur

PODOPHYLLACEAE

Podophyllum emodi Wall ex Royle

Vern: Bandakri

Locality: Kalapani, Deosai, Burzil top, Bubin Nalla, Mir Malik Nalla.

RANUNCULACEAE

Aconitum heterophyllum Wall

Vern: Patris or Batis

Locality. Rattu, Kalapani, Purana Maidan, Kamri top, Chilam, Burzil top, Harchoo Nalla

Frequency : 2500 kg roots can be collected annually.

Aconitum nepallus H. T.

Vern: Mori

Locality. Chilam, Kalapani, Lozang, Bubin Nalla

SOLANACEAE

Hyoscyamus niger L.

Vern: Bazerul banj or Ajwain khurasani

Locality. Astor and Rattu. Occurs near villages or old ruins.

UMBELLIFERAE

Bunium persicum (Boiss.) Fedtech.

Vern: Kala zira

Locality. Astor, Rattu

Frequency: 1500-2500 kg./annum seeds *Cuminum cyminum* Linn.

Vern: Zira safed

Locality. Astore, Rattu

Ferula jaeskeana Valke

Vern: Heeng

Locality. Doyun, Astor

VALARIANACEAE

Valeriana jatamansi Jones

Vern: Mushkbala

Locality. Chilam, Kalapani, Gudai, Bubin Nalla, Harchoo Nalla, Rattu.

Frequency: Abundantly collected in Aug.-Oct.

Key words: Medicinal plants, Vegetation, Himalayas.

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