

## Ethnobotany of Sindh's (Pakistan) Native Flora

**Elsa Saeed\***

*Taxonomist, Department of Botany, University of Karachi, Pakistan*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Elsa Saeed, Taxonomist, Department of Botany, University of Karachi, Pakistan.

**Received:** August 24, 2019; **Published:** August 30, 2019

The word Ethnobotany is a combination of 2 words i.e. Ethno and Botany. Ethno derives from the word "Ethnic" which refers to a culture's belief, knowledge and practices while Botany deals with the flora exists on earth as domesticated or wild [1]. In Ethnobotany, there are different techniques to collect data out of which the traditional technique is to visit the region along with team to interview the locals of that area to find out the uses of flora of that particular area.

In this article, I am writing about the ethnobotanically important native flora of Sindh, Pakistan. Before discussing the ethnobotanical uses of native flora we must know the Phyto-geographical feature of Sindh. It is located on the South Asia's western corner and on the west bordering the Iranian plateau. Thar Desert bounded it from the east, Kirthar mountains to the west while Arabian sea from the south. There is fertile plain in the center of it because of the Indus river [2]. The plants in Sindh are usually xerophytes, halophytes or xero-halophyte because of its arid/semi-arid or saline environment. In Pakistan, Sindh comes under the category of tropical and sub-tropical region. As it is very hot in summer season while mild to warm during winter season. The monsoon season is usually from July to mid of the September and the annual rainfall is 7 - 10 inches. The extensive variations in the altitude, geography, climate, soil and culture have created vegetation of rich floristic diversity in Sindh [3]. It is considered as a promising agricultural Province of Pakistan. It has fertile land which is often covered with dense vegetation. Several medicinal species are also recorded from the various districts of Sindh. Native people are commonly using native flora for the treatment of many diseases and also to maintain their health [4]. As the most vegetation of Sindh is xerophytic, so these plants produce secondary metabolites under stress condition and those metabolites are helpful for the cure of different diseases.

Sindh is mostly consist of rural areas with less availability of proper healthcare unit and also the traditional medicines are cheaper and accessible for the native people as compared to allopathic medicine. So, the people here found to use the local vegetation for many cures. Initially, there were no surveys to record the traditional uses of Sindh's vegetation. All of the studies are mostly started from 2005 in Pakistan and most frequently after 2007. All of the studies regarding the ethnobotanical uses of native flora were done to collect and record data of our culture to prevent it from biopiracy.

There are some plants from Sindh, Pakistan which are discussed below along with their uses according to the local people of Pakistan. These are:

1. ***Acacia catechu* L:** The English name of this plant is "Hear wood" and locally in Sindh it is known as "Bhhoh". This plant belongs to family Fabaceae. The most used parts of this plant are leaves and pods to heal wounds.
2. ***Acacia nilotica* L. Wild:** The English name of this plant is "Gum Arabica" while locally it is known as "Babar". This plant belongs to family Fabaceae. Leaves and bark of this plant are used to treat Tinea Versicolor and Scabies.
3. ***Aerva javanica* Burm. F Juss:** The English name of this plant is "Pillow weed" and locally it is known as "Bhooh". It belongs to family Amaranthaceae. Leaves of these plants are used to treat wound infection.
4. ***Allium cepa* L:** The English name of this plant is "Onion" and the local name of this plant is "Basar". It belongs to family Amyrillida-ceae. Its bulb are used to treat Scabies, Ringworm, Wound, Onchomycosis, Snake Bite, Pimple, Abscess, Alopecia.

5. ***Aloe vera*** (L.) Burm f: The English name of this plant is "Aloe Vera" and the local name of this plant is "Ghee Kunwar". It belongs to family Liliaceae. Its gel is used to treat Acne, Pimple, Sunburn and Wound.
6. ***Azadirachta indica*** A. Juss: The English name of this plant is "Velvet mesquite" and the local name of this plant is "Neem". It belongs to family Meliaceae. Its bark, leaves and seeds are used for the treatment of Scabies, infections, Ringworm, Heat rashes, Hair fall, dandruff, deep lesions and Candida Infections.
7. ***Brassica rapa*** L: The English name of this plant is "Mustard" and the local name of this plant is "Sarsoon". It belongs to family Brassicaceae. The oil of its seeds are useful for the treatment of Scabies, Dandruff, Otitis Externa, Ringworm.
8. ***Calotropis procera*** W. T. Aiton: The English name of this plant is "Crown Flower" and the local name of this plant is "Aak Akada". It belongs to family Apocynaceae. The leaves, flowers and bark of this plant are used to treat Ringworm, Wound, Tinea Versicolor, Prickly heat and Otitis Externa.
9. ***Cassia fistula*** L: The English name of this plant is "Golden Shower" and the local name of this plant is "Chimkini". It belongs to family Fabaceae. The Stem, Fruit and Seeds of this plant are used to cure Athlete's foot and lesions.
10. ***Corchorus depressus*** L: The English name of this plant is "Quercus Margrettieae" and the local name of this plant is "Mundiari". It belongs to family Tiliaceae. Its leaves and seeds are used to treat skin infections.
11. ***Lawsonia inermis*** L: The English name of this plant is "Henna" and the local name of this plant is "Mehendi". It belongs to family Lythraceae. The leaves of this plant are used to treat Burns, Hairfall, Dandruff, Alopecia, Eczema, Tinea Capitis and heat Rashes.
12. ***Ziziphus nummularia*** L: The English name of this plant is "Chinese apple" and the local name of this plant is "Bairr". It belongs to family Rhamnaceae. Its fruit is used to treat Eczema.

Above mentioned plants are still be used in the rural areas of Sindh for the particular treatment. The only few of the recorded vegetation is mentioned above. This data obtained from ethnobotanical studies could be helpful in the field of ethno-pharmacology for the production of medicine. Different chemical compounds like Phenolic compounds, etc. are extracted from the plant material for the preparation of drug. As we know that, the natural products are effective and with fewer side effects as compared to the synthesized one.

### Bibliography

1. "What Is Ethnobotany?" Botanical Dimensions RSS.
2. Weiss A. Pakistan. Louis Kotzé and Stephen Morse (eds) (2012): 9.
3. E. Nasir and SI Ali. "Flora of Pakistan". National Herbarium, NARC, Islamabad, Department of Botany, University of Karachi, Karachi (Fascicles) (1972-1994).
4. Hussain F. "Some important medicinal plants associated with the vegetation in District Mirpurkhas". *International Journal of Biology and Biotechnology* 9.4 (2012): 405-420.

**Volume 14 Issue 9 September 2019**

**©All rights reserved by Elsa Saeed.**