

Obnoxious Weeds Mankind's Need

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Survey of weeds of sugarcane crop in the District Sukkur was carried out during 1998-1999. Fifty weed species belonging to 21 angiosperm families are reported from sugarcane field. Irrespective of their potential negative effects on crop, due to competition for light, nutrients and space, there are many beneficial aspects of these plants. Poor inhabitants depend on these naturally distributed sources. People use these plant species for fodder, vegetable, fruits and medicine. This study has been carried out to explore the potential beneficial aspects of weeds.

Keywords: Obnoxious weeds, Sukkur, Inhabitants, Beneficial aspects.

Introduction

Weeds are unwanted plants growing among the domesticated crops. They compete with crops chiefly for light, nutrients, water and carbondioxide (Anderson, 1983). Weeds in sugarcane fields utilize three to four times more nitrogen, potassium and magnesium than a weed-free crop (Schwerzel and Thomas, 1971). They start growing immediately during the period of germination of sugarcane. Even after germination, weeds grow very fast and compete with the crop in its initial growth stage which results in reduced crop yield (Hussain, 1983;

Mahmood, 1987). For the procurement of good yield, they are generally eradicated by various methods.

Besides these negative effects, there is much use of these weeds. Poor inhabitants rely on these natural resources. They fulfil their requirements with these plant species for fodder, vegetables, fruits and medicines. They keep cattle for milk and work but they do not have their own land for cultivation. The main use of these weeds is for fodder to meet nutritional needs of their cattle. This study has been carried out to explore the potential beneficial effects of weeds. No such type of work has been reported earlier in this area. The present paper reports current identification of weed species, their uses and medicinal significance in the sphere of ethnobotanical and ethnopharmacological perspective.

Material and Methods

Five sugar cane growing sites viz.: 1) Kundi Farm, 2) Hingoro, 3) Pano Aqil, 4) Rohri and Saleh Pat, all within the radius of 10-15 km of District Sukkur were surveyed during 1998-99. The plant species were collected and identified with the help of authentic literature (*Flora of Pakistan* and *Flora of Karachi*). Local people were interviewed to get their vernacular names and uses, in the light of following proforma:

Proforma for the interview from local inhabitants

Respondent's Name/Address:	Date:	Collector's No:
Vernacular Name:	Language:	
Locality:		
Uses:		
A) Medicine:		
i. Part of Plant being used:	
ii. Method of Preparation:	
iii. For which Ailment:	
B) Veterinary:		
i. Disease (for which it is used):	
ii. Part of plant used:	
iii. Method of Preparation:	
C) Fodder:		
i. Whole plant:	
ii. Leaves:	
iii. Fruit/seeds:	
D) Fuel		
Any other Use/Cultural Beliefs:		

Weeds species recorded in this survey under their respective families are alphabetically arranged in results and discussion.

Results and Discussion

The dominant weed species in the (five) areas under study were *Desmostachya bipinnata* (L.) Stapf., *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers., *Leptochloa panicea* (Retz.) Ohwi., *Tribulus terrestris* L., *Cucumis callosus* (Rottl.) Cogn., *Trianthema portulacastrum* L., and *Cyperus rotundus* L.

The local inhabitants are using these weeds for the fulfilment of their different necessities. Their major uses by local inhabitants are as under:

AIZOACEAE

Trianthema portulacastrum Linn.

Rahmat, 45.

Local name: *Waho*.

Uses: 1) Fodder for the cattle. 2) Cooked as a vegetable.

AMARANTHACEAE

Achyranthes aspera Linn.

Rahmat, 01.

Local name: *Ubat Kandri*.

Uses: 1) Fodder for camel, sheep and goat. 2) The paste of leaves is applied on insect bites.

Amaranthus viridis Linn.

Rahmat, 03.

Local name: *Mariro*.

Use: 1) The plant is used as a potherb. 2) The plant is dried under shade and is cooked as a vegetable after passing the season.

Digera muricata (L.) Mart.

Rahmat, 20.

Local name: *Lulur*.

Uses: 1) The plant is cooked as a vegetable. 2) It is a favorite fodder for cattle.

ASCLEPIADACEAE

Oxystelma esculentum (L.f.) R.Br.
Rahmat, 32.

Local name: *Phuli*.

Uses: 1) Its decoction is used as a gargle and is considered effective in throat infection. 2) Its flowers are edible.

ASTERACEAE

Cirsium arvense (L.) Scop.
Rahmat, 08.

Local name: *Kanderi Bhattar*.

Use: It is used as fodder for camel.

Conyza canadensis (L.) Cronquist.
Rahmat, 10.

Local name: *Giddar Buti*.

Uses: 1) It is used as fodder. 2) Its decoction is used for sore throat.

Eclipta prostrata (L.) Linn.
Rahmat, 23.

Local names: *Daryahi Buti, Bhangrio*.

Use: It is used as fodder.

Launaea nudicaulis (L.) Hk. F.
Rahmat, 28.

Local name: *Lassi Bhattar*.

Uses: 1) Fodder for cattle. 2) The plant is crushed in water and the infusion is given in painful urination.

Sonchus asper (L.) Hill.
Rahmat, 42.

Local name: *Bhattar*.

Use: Fodder for the cattle.

Sonchus oleraceus Linn.
Rahmat, 43.

Local name: *Bhattar*.

Use: Fodder for the cattle.

Xanthium indicum J. Koenig.
Rahmat, 50.

Local name: *Bhurt*.

Use: Decoction of this gregarious weed is given for urinary/renal complaints.

CARYOPHYLLACEAE

Spergula arvensis Linn.

Rahmat, 44.

Local name: *Lani, Hazar Dani*.

Use: Fodder for camel.

CHENOPODIACEAE

Chenopodium album Linn.

Rahmat, 07.

Local names: *Chill, Jhill*.

Uses: 1) Cooked as a vegetable. 2) Fodder for the cattle.

CONVOLVULACEAE

Convolvulus arvensis Linn.

Rahmat, 09.

Local name: *Naro*.

Uses: 1) It is a favorite fodder for the cattle. 2) Its paste is applied over insect bite and inflammations.

CUCURBITACEAE

Cucumis callosus (Rottle.) Cogn.

Rahmat, 15.

Local names: *Mitero, Chibhar*.

Uses: 1) It is eaten as a wild fruit. 2) The fruit is dried under shade and is mixed in curry with other vegetables, thus acts as a flavouring agent. 3) Its sauce is also made from the ripe fruit. 4) Used as a fodder for the cattle.

CYPERACEAE

Cyperus rotundus Linn.

Rahmat, 17.

Local name: *Kabah*.

Use: Used as fodder for the cattle.

EUPHORBIACEAE

Euphorbia granulata Forsk.

Rahmat, 25.

Local name: *Khir Wal*.

Use: Fodder for animals.

Leptochloa panicea (Retz.) Ohwi.

Rahmat, 29.

Local name: *Kalar Gah*

Use: Favorite fodder species for cattle.

Phalaris minor Retz.

Rahmat, 33.

Local name: *Nor Puchh.*

Use: Fodder grass for cattle.

Phragmites karka (Retz.) Trin.

Rahmat, 34.

Local names: *Nar, Naro.*

Use: Unknown.

POLYGONACEAE

Rumex dentatus Linn.

Rahmat, 39.

Local name: *Jhangli Palak.*

Use: Fodder for cattle.

PORTULACACEAE

Portulaca oleracea Linn.

Rahmat, 37.

Local name: *Lonak.*

Uses: 1) It is used as potherb. 2) Fodder for cattle.

PRIMULACEAE

Anagalis arvensis Linn.

Rahmat, 04.

Local name: *Billi Buti.*

Use: Fodder for cattle.

SOLANACEAE

Solanum nigrum Linn.

Rahmat, 40.

Local name: *Kanwal.*

Uses: 1) Its ripe fruit is eaten. 2) Its fresh juice is given in liver diseases such as in jaundice for relief. 3) The leaves are warmed over fire and are applied on painful and inflamed parts. 4) Fodder for cattle.

Solanum villosum Miller.

Rahmat, 42.

Local name: *Khat Mithro.*

Uses: 1) Its ripe fruit is eaten. 2) Fodder for cattle.

TILIACEAE

Corchorus aestuans Linn.

Rahmat, 11.

Local name: *Datri.*

Use: Regarded as a good fodder for cattle.

Corchorus tridense Linn.

Rahmat, 12.

Local name: *Datri.*

Use: Regarded as a good fodder for cattle.

Corchorus trilocularis Linn.

Rahmat, 13.

Local name: *Datri.*

Use: Regarded as a good fodder for cattle.

TYPHACEAE

Typha elephantiana Roxb.

Rahmat, 47.

Local name: *Deer.*

Use: Its leaves are woven together to make mats.

VERBENACEAE

Phyla nodiflora (L.) Greene.

Rahmat, 35.

Local name: *Bukkan Buti.*

Uses: 1) The plant is crushed in water and is given in bleeding piles for relief. 2) Fodder for cattle.

ZYGOPHYLLACEAE

Tribulus terrestris Linn.

Rahmat, 46.

Local names: *Bakhro, Bhurt.*

Uses: 1) The fruit is ground in water and the mixture/infusion is regarded as a cooling agent. It is given for relieving painful urination/micturition. 2) The leaves are used as vegetable. 3) Fodder for cattle.

Uses: 1) The plant is cooked as a vegetable. 2) It is a favorite fodder for cattle.

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Local name: *Khair Wal*.

Use: Fodder for animals.

Euphorbia hirta Forsk.
Rahmat, 26.
Local name: *Khira Wal.*
Use: Used as fodder for animals.

Phyllanthus fraternus Webster
Rahmat, 35.
Local name: *Hazar Dani.*
Use: Fodder for cattle.

FABACEAE

Alhagi maurorum Medic.
Rahmat, 02.
Local name: *Kandero.*
Uses: 1) The dried plant is used for fencing boundary around huts. 2) Bath is taken from the decoction of this plant for relieving skin eruptions.

Lathyrus aphaca Linn.
Rahmat, 27.
Local name: *Jhangli Matri.*
Use: Fodder for the cattle.

Melilotus albus Medik.
Rahmat, 30
Local name: *Sinjhi, Sinjh.*
Use: It is a favorite fodder species for cattle.

Melilotus indicus (L.) All.
Rahmat, 31.
Local name: *Sinjhi, Sinjh.*
Use: It is a favorite fodder species for cattle.

Rhynchosia minima (L.) DC.
Rahmat, 38.
Local name: *Matri.*
Use: Fodder for cattle.

Vicia hirsuta (L.) S.F. Gray
Rahmat, 48.
Local name: *Andhri Matri.*
Use: Fodder for cattle.

Vicia sativa Linn.
Rahmat, 49.
Local name: *Andhri Matri.*
Use: Fodder for cattle.

LILIACEAE

Asphodelus tenuifolius Cavan.
Rahmat, 05.

Local name: *Basri.*
Uses: 1) Cooked as a vegetable. 2) Used as fodder for cattle.

POACEAE

Brachiaria eruciformis (J.E. Smith) Griseb.
Rahmat, 06.

Local name: Unknown.
Use: Fodder grass for cattle.

Cynodon dactylon (L.) Pers.
Rahmat, 16.

Local name: *Chhabar.*
Uses: 1) It is a favorite fodder grass for camels, horses, donkeys, buffalo and cows. 2) It is ground in water and is a paste applied on cuts for relief.

Desmostachya bipinnata (L.) Stapf.
Rahmat, 18.

Local name: *Dabh.*
Uses: 1) Fodder grass for buffalo and cows. 2) The stalk of the inflorescence is used to make broom. 3) The leaves are used to make ropes of ordinary nature.

Dicanthium annulatum (Forssk.) Stapf.
Rahmat, 19.

Local name: Unknown.
Use: Fodder species for camels, horses, donkeys, buffalo and cows.

Echinochloa colona (L.) Link.
Rahmat, 21.

Local name: *Sawri.*
Use: Favorite fodder species for cattle.

Echinochloa crus-gali (L.) P. Beauv.
Rahmat, 22.

Local name: *Sawri.*
Use: Favorite fodder species for cattle.

Eragrostis minor Host.
Rahmat, 24

Local name: Unknown.
Use: Favorite fodder species for camel and goat.

Conclusion

The plants are the gifts of nature and their uses should be documented in order to make people aware of their benefits and further to explore their potentiality. Nothing can be regarded as useless in this world. What is required is to pay attention to these wild natural resources. Even the famous antipyretic and blood purifier *Fumaria* is a weed. Weeds can easily grow in conditions with least favourable factors for their growth following their dispersal by wind, irrigated and rain water, birds, animals and by man. They can be easily grown on large scale with little effort and least input in a given favourable environment. But by utilising these plants growing as weeds we keep their propagation under control in cash crops to meet the nutritional and economic needs.

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