

Alternative Medicine 2017: Local perceptions on the status, values and conservation and ethnobotanical implications of medicinal and multipurpose plants in and around selected church forests in central Ethiopia

Egual Tadesse^{1,2}, Yowhan Son¹ and Asia Khamzina¹

¹Korea University, South Korea

²Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute (EEFRI), Ethiopia

Societies have varied attitude and perception on the forest resources around them. Ethnobotanical knowledge should be integrated with biophysical studies so as to be used for managing and conserving forests. The objectives of the study were to assess the prevailing knowledge about the uses of plant species and to look at the plant species that provide the varied uses. Focus conference, questionnaire-based social survey and vegetation inventory were undertaken. The main target group discussants were selected from traditional healers, elders of the society, development agents, and other people who are knowledgeable about the vegetation of the areas. Voucher specimens were collected for those species difficult to spot and identified at Addis Ababa University Herbarium Laboratory. The info analysis was done by descriptive statistics using Excel 2010 and SPSS v20. The results indicated agricultural expansion, charcoal making and fuel wood because the major causes of deforestation in Site 1, Site 2 and Site 3 respectively. Livestock owned by household respondents (HHs) and wildlife in each site were also mentioned likely to affect the vegetation. The foremost effective solution for the degradation to guard the church forests was religious preaching as stated by group discussants. The plant species have varied uses within the 3 sites like traditional medicine, food, construction wood, household utensils, and firewood but higher percent of the mentioned species were used either for human or livestock medicine. Sørensen similarity index indicated Site 1 and Site 2 have 12.5%, Site 1 and Site 3 have 10.9% and Site 2 and Site 3 have 43.5 is analogous. Documenting the wealth of indigenous knowledge and in place conservation of the plant species are key recommendations.

Ethiopia may be a centre of diversity for variety flora and fauna the sixth centers of biodiversity within the world. The country is endowed with rich flora, having quite 6,500 species of vascular plants out of which an estimated 12% are endemic and about 887 species are used as medicinal plants. The bulk (80%) of Ethiopian people depends on traditional medicine for his or her health care, and quite 95% of traditional medicinal preparations made up of plant origin. Ethiopia is additionally a home for several languages, cultures and beliefs that have successively contributed to the high diversity of lore and practice of the people, which, among others include the utilization of medicinal plants.

Herbal medicine, in the simplest form, are medicines or drugs which are made up of plants or herbs and may be said to process several synonyms all of which ask plants because the raw materials for medicines like plant medicines, phytomedicines, green medicines, traditional remedies, traditional medicine portions, plant drugs and forest health products among others. The Planet Health Organization (PHO) has defined herbal medicines as labeled finished medicinal products which contain therapeutic active ingredients at underground or aerial parts of plants or other plant parts or materials or combinations thereof whether in crude juices, gums and fatty oils and other substances of this nature. Herbal medicine may contain standard excipients additionally to the active ingredients. Exceptionally, in some countries herbal medicine can also contain by tradition, natural organic or inorganic active ingredients which aren't of plant origin.

Ethnobotanical Methodology:

Ethnobotanical information on the management and normal use of TMPs was collected from rural appraisal and participatory involving semistructured focus group discussions and interviews. All the discussions and interviews were conducted in Amharic language. The impact of the 1984-85 resettlements on vegetation rehabilitation has been examined with guided field walk. Market survey was integral a part of this research. Purpose sampling method (PSM) was used and six representative sites (Kebeles) which usually consisting of 38 villages were selected from the district. Most of the sites were within the centre agroecological zones of the eastern part where the 1984/85 famine. In total, 72 informants aged 20 to 88 years (55 males and 17 females) were selected, of whom 18 key informants were selected by purpose sampling supported recommendations of elders and native authorities from every six study sites with equal numbers.

Plant specimens were collected with local names and GPS data, pressed, dried, and delivered to the National Herbarium (ETH), Addis Ababa University, for final determinations and confirmation using taxonomic keys within the flora of Ethiopia and Eritrea, comparison with authentic specimens, and expert assistance. The voucher specimens with labels were then deposited at the ETH. The study of the vegetation area was generally described using both the etic and emic categorization methods. The dominant or associated codominant species gave etic plant

community types and thus the emic categories followed Martin's system of emic vegetation classification, which relied on the way the people perceived plants and gave names in the language of Amharic.

Conclusion:

In view of long human settlement history of the planet, the natural vegetation has enormously been altered. It came out clearly from the study that the threats facing TMPs are both anthropogenic (e.g., agricultural expansion, which is ranked 1st) and natural factors (e.g., drought), which are having detrimental effects on wild medicinal resources. This finding is in agreement with other studies conducted elsewhere in Ethiopia. The previous studies conducted elsewhere also confirmed that LK of untamed plants in Ethiopia is in peril of being lost, as habits, value systems, and therefore the natural environment change.