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## **Ethnobotanical Uses of Plants of Lawat District Muzaffarabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir**

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**Abstract:** An ethnobotanical exploration was carried out in Lawat and its allied areas District Muzaffarabad. The checklist consisted of 52 species out of which 3 species are of 2 gymnospermic families while 49 species are of 35 angiospermic families. The plants were used medicinally and other purposes. The investigation indicated that the medicinal plants were used singly or used with mixtures by local inhabitants. The area under investigation due to unplanned exploitation had resulted in loss of medicinally important plant species. It was concluded that afforestation programme followed by proper protection is need of time.

**Key words:** Ethnomedicinal, local community, Lawat, district Muzaffarabad

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### **Introduction**

Lawat is situated in Neelum Valley District Muzaffarabad. It is confined to right bank of river Neelum as the cease-fire line between the Indian held Kashmir and Azad Kashmir comes frequently close to the left bank of river in this area. The average maximum and minimum temperature of the year is 20 and 0°C respectively. November, December and January are the coldest months of the year while June and July are the hottest months.

Shahzad and Qureshi (2001) discussed common ethnomedicinal uses of plants in Jatlan area, District Mirpur. Shinwari (1996) reported the present status of ethnobotany in Pakistan. He emphasized on the need of investigation, documentation and application of traditional knowledge in the use of natural resources. Hamid *et al.* (1998) reported the medicinal plants of family Cannabaceae. They reported that in Pakistan, this family has 2 genera, each has single species which are of narcotic and sedative effects. Goodman and Ghafoor (1992) conducted ethnobotanical study in Balochistan province. It is the region where a heterogeneous cultural group known as Baloch lives. They collected information about 114 plant species used by nomads and village dwellers. Shinwari and Khan (1999) studied the ethnobotanical conservation status of Margalla Hills National Park, Islamabad. They reported that people living around the Park used medicinal plants since ages. The people of the area also depend on surrounding plant resources for their food, shelter, fodder, health care and other cultural purposes.

For the area like Lawat no information about the plants used in medicine and other purposes by local inhabitants

is available. The objective of the study was to explore the treasure and also to enlist and confirm the species that are used for different purposes, nationally trade important.

### **Materials and Methods**

Plants were collected from Lawat and its allied areas of District Muzaffarabad, pressed in presser papers and were dried carefully. Data regarding to different ethnobotanical aspects were collected from local people of the area. The collected plants were identified with the help of literature (Nasir and Ali, 1970-1987). Further identification was done by comparing the collected plants with the collection in Herbarium, Department of Botany, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad.

### **Results and Discussion**

Information about the plants, which were useful, collected and documented as used by the local people. The plants comprise of 49 species of 35 angiospermic and 3 species of 2 gymnospermic families (Table 1). Medicinal plants are either used singly (mufrad) or in combination with some other plant or plant parts (murakkab).

Natural vegetation of medicinal plants was adversely affected by a number of factors, in the area explored. Vegetation of the area was intensely affected by heavy grazing and fall of trees. Unplanned exploitation had resulted in loss of such medicinally important plant species. Some species that were common in the past were rarely found now. It is concluded that local people, hakims and traders collect and use the plants, which are being eradicated and becoming rare. It is suggested that afforestation programme followed by proper protection is the need of time.

Table: 1 Ethnobotanical status of Plants of Lawat District Muzaffarabad

| Family name    | Botanical name  | Local name       | Status               | Ethnobotanical uses   |
|----------------|---|------------------|----------------------|---|
| Aceraceae      | <i>Acer caesium</i> wall ex Brandis                                       | Tarkanna/killu   | Tree                 | Leaves used as fodder, wood used as fuel and for making furniture.  |
| Alliaceae      | <i>Allium humile</i>  | Pari payaz       | Herb                 | Fresh leaves used as vegetable, dried leaves as flavoring agent, used in gastric problems.  |
| Amaranthaceae  | <i>Amaranthus viridis</i> Linn.   | Ganhar           | Herb                 | Leaves used as vegetable, roots laxative, seeds for curing backache.  |
| Asteraceae     | <i>Achillea millefolia</i> Linn.  | Sultani booti    | Herb                 | Stomachache, diuretic, leaves are chewed in acute toothache, tea made from roots to treat fever.  |
|                | <i>Artemisia scoparia</i> L.  | Jahoo            | Herb                 | Powdered root used to treat epilepsy, tea made to treat sore throat.  |
|                | <i>Saussurea costus</i> (Falc.) Lipsch                                    | Kuth             | Herb                 | Dried root is used to treat asthma and in certain cardiac complaints, dried roots with sugar are used to cure backache problems.  |
| Berberidaceae  | <i>Berberis lycium</i> Royle.   | Sumbal           | Shrub                | Fruit is eaten; roots and bark in dry condition are used in throat pain, toothache and rheumatism.  |
| Boraginaceae   | <i>Arnebia benthamii</i> Wall ex G.Don                                    | Gao zaban        | Herb                 | Roots used in backache. Tea made from roots carminative.  |
| Brassicaceae   | <i>Capsella bursa pastoris</i> L.   | Bun paincha      | Herb                 | Juice of whole plant used in chest problems and to stop nose bleeding.  |
| Cannabaceae    | <i>Canabis sativa</i> Linn.   | Bhang            | Herb                 | Leaves and flowers used as narcotic, in combination with tobacco to treat asthma, fiber from stem is used to make ropes.  |
| Caprifoliaceae | <i>Viburnum grandiflorum</i><br>Wall ex D.C                               | Ikloo/ guchh     | Shrub                | Leaves purgative and diuretic, bark used against malaria; fruit edible.   |
| Chenopodiaceae | <i>Chenopodium album</i> Linn.  | Bathwa           | Herb                 | Young leaves and branches used as vegetable. Dried leaves used in pain.   |
| Cupressaceae   | <i>Juniperus communis</i> Pallas.   | Bhanthari        | Shrub                | Branches used as fuel. Fruit used to increase mucous secretion and helps in digestion and relieves gas.   |
| Cuscutaceae    | <i>Cuscuta europea</i>  | Neela dhari      | Twiner               | Poultice made from plant used against insect sting and piles.   |
| Cyperaceae     | <i>Cyperus rotundus</i> Linn.   | Jabbay gha       | Herb                 | Leaves used to make ropes, root paste used in wounds and fever  |
| Dipsacaceae    | <i>Dipsacus inermis</i> Wall ex Roxb.                                     | Oppalha          | Herb                 | Leaves used as vegetable, fodder and sexual tonic for females.  |
| Euphorbiaceae  | <i>Euphorbia helioscopia</i> Linn.  | Dodhal           | Herb                 | Dried root used to stimulate gastric secretions, fever, abdominal pain and blood purifier   |
| Fabaceae       | <i>Quercus dilatata</i> Griffith.   | Choor            | Tree                 | Leaves used as fodder for cattles, sour mouth. Seed used to cure sour mouth and throat.   |
| Gentianaceae   | <i>Swertia paniculata</i> Wall.<br><i>Gentianoides kurroo</i> Royle.      | Jabba jarri      | Herb<br>Herb         | Whole plant used to diarrhea, malarial fever and weakness.<br>Whole plant used as blood purifier  |
| Labiataee      | <i>Ajuga bracteosa</i> Wall ex Benth.<br><i>Mentha longifolia</i> L.      | Maneer<br>Poodna | Herb<br>Herb         | Leaves used in stomachache and as blood purifier.<br>Leaf extract used against vomiting and dysentery. Leaf in dry powdered form used in asthma and as condiment.                   |
|                | <i>Thymus linearis</i>  | Bun jamain       | Herb                 | Decoction of leaves and flowers used against dysentery and in stomach problems. Tea made from flowers is carminative.   |
| Loranthaceae   | <i>Viscum album</i> L.  | Neela            | Parasite<br>on trees | Leaf diuretic, fruit used as glue, used as fodder for goats and sheep.  |
| Moraceae       | <i>Ficus palmata</i> Wall.<br><i>Morus alba</i> L.                        | Phagwara<br>Toot | tree<br>Tree         | Fruit edible, laxative, wood used as fuel and milk used to cure warts.<br>Fruit used in fever and sour throat young branches used in making baskets. wood used in making furniture. |
| Morinaceae     | <i>Morina longicaule</i> Wall ex D.C.                                     |                  | Herb                 | Roots used to treat wounds and kills worms.   |
| Oleaceae       | <i>Jasminum humile</i> Linn.  | Chamba           | Shrub                | Flower used in perfumes, roots used against worms, flower extract used in eye problems  |
| Orchidaceae    | <i>Habenaria pectinata</i> D.Don.   | Nar madi         | Herb                 | Roots used as blood purifier, also used to increase sexual power in males.  |
| Papilionaceae  | <i>Trifolium repens</i> L.<br><i>Indigofera hetranth</i> Wall ex Brandis. | Sinja<br>kanthi  | Herb<br>Shrub        | Used as vegetable, as fodder<br>Branches used in making baskets, as fuel, as miswak and as fuel.  |
| Pinaceae       | <i>Abies pindrow</i> Royle.<br><i>Pinus wallichiana</i> A.B. Jackson.     | Rewar<br>Biarr   | Tree<br>Tree         | Wood used in furniture, house making and fuel.<br>Wood used in furniture, shoots used as fuel, resin used in paint. Fruit edible.   |
| Plantaginaceae | <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> Linn.  | Chamchi patra    | Herb                 | Leaves used as vegetable applied on wound and burns. Seed used against constipation.  |
| Poaceae        | <i>Saccharum spontanium</i> Linn.   | Narri            | Herb                 | Used as fodder and for making pen (Qalam).  |
| Podophyllaceae | <i>Podophyllum emodi</i>  | Khakhri          | Herb                 | Fruit edible. Root paste applied on ulcers, cuts and wounds, used to treat vaginal warts. Powdered roots used to increase yield of butter.  |
| Polygonaceae   | <i>Polygonum amplexicaule</i>   | Masloon          | Herb                 | Leaf extract is used to beautify the skin, tea made from roots is used against asthma also fodder for animals.  |
|                | <i>Rheum webbiana</i> Royle.  | Chotal           | Herb                 | Roots used in headache and stomach pain.  |
|                | <i>Rumex nepalensis</i> Linn.   | Hola             | Herb                 | Decoction of leaves and roots used in cuts.   |
| Primulaceae    | <i>Androsace hazarica</i> R.R.Stewart                                     |                  | Herb                 | Leaves in combination with sugar and ghee used in correcting menstrual flow in females of age group 20-30.  |
| Ranunculaceae  | <i>Aconitum chasmanthum</i><br>Stapf.ex Holmes                            | Mohree           | Herb                 | Roots used to treat fever and pain in body, in piles, gulqand made from flowers used in different diseases.   |
|                | <i>Anemone neelamiana</i> R.A.Qureshi                                     |                  | Herb                 | Root and leaves used in toothache and measles.  |
|                | <i>Caltha palustris</i> L.  | Kalari patra     | Herb                 | Leaves very bitter, used as febrifuge   |
|                | <i>Aconitum heterophyllum</i> Stapf.                                      | Patrees          | Herb                 | Roots used as tonic, in diarrhea, cough and vomiting in children. Roots useful against bites of snake and scorpions.  |
| Rosaceae       | <i>Potentilla eriocarpa</i> Wall ex Lehm.                                 | Malli chaw       | Herb                 | Roots used as tea, paste made from roots is used to cure toothache, carminative.  |

Table 1: Continued

| Family name      | Botanical name                  | Local name | Status | Ethnobotanical uses   |
|------------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------|---|
|                  | <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> Smith.  | Grachha    | Shrub  | Leaf extract used in diarrhea. Root decoction used in cough and sore throat.  |
| Scrophulariaceae | <i>Rosa macrophylla</i> Lindle. | Shingari   | Shrub  | Fruit edible.   |
|                  | <i>Verbascum thapsus</i> L.     | Gadhi kan  | Herb   | Crushed leaves are used in rheumatism, mature leaves smoked against asthma and sore throat, used against snake bite |
| Solanaceae       | <i>Solanum nigrum</i> Linn.     | Kach mach  | Herb   | The juice of whole plant used against ulcers, fever, asthma and sore throat of babies; Fruit edible.                |
| Umbellifereae    | <i>Angelica glauca</i> Edgew    | Chora      | Herb   | Dried root and seeds used as spices and condiments, root extract used in different cattle diseases.                 |
| Urticaceae       | <i>Urtica dioica</i> Linn.      | Kairi      | Herb   | Root extraction used for easy delivery in females. Causes irritation when touched.                                  |
| Violaceae        | <i>Viola biflora</i> Wall.      | Banafsha   | Herb   | Leaves are laxative, roots emetic, tea made from leaves and roots used to treat the fever.                          |

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