

Unripe Pods of *Prosopis cineraria* used as a vegetable (sangri) in Shekhawati region

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Abstract:

Shekhawati region of Rajasthan specially in Thar desert of Sikar, Jhunjhunu, Churu (Sardarshahr) (Picture) are endowed with fertile vegetation and give extent help to human beings, livestock and the nutrient deficient soils. The local people like to use the vegetation of unripe fruit (sangri) make vegetable and health care, ripe fruit known as 'Kho-Kha' orally eaten by children and cattle. People successfully manage different diseases using plant-based medicines. Recently survey for ethno botanical plants among the people of these localities recorded the use of many species of dicotyledonous plants. Indian and traditional systems of Medicine are among the well known wide desert area of medicine. Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani has been also necessary information on systems has also been provided. The arid plant *Prosopis cineraria* (Fabaceae) is known as Khejri/Shami/ Janti or the 'kalp virkash' of Indian thar deserts. The unripe and dried pods are consumed as a vegetable and leaves as traditional medicine. The antibacterial activity of the various extracts of the stem bark of *Prosopis cineraria* the leaves (green and dried) are also benefit fodder for cattle feeder. Roots of this plants are benefits for nitrogen fixation. Rajasthan (Sikar, Jhunjhunu, Churu) has the distinction of producing 17 of the total 60 varieties of Indian spices which are being regularly utilized for special desert cuisines most common of them is panchkuta/sangri vegetable.



Keywords :- Sangri, Khejri, loong

Introduction

Prosopis cineraria (Linn.) (Mimosaceae) is popularly known Khejri is a multipurpose tree of Arid and Semi-Arid Zone in Rajasthan.(Diagne,1992)² It gives Green leaves,dry leaves(loong) and green un dried pods, dried pods(saangri and kho -kha) for food, fodder, firewood, timber, medicine, mesquite gum etc(Bhandari,1978)¹. it is also called 'kalp varksha' of desert area. It is good economic importance in arid and semi arid regions. *Prosopis* species are the dominant species in Indian desert.(Tripathi,2008)⁸ Soils are generally sandy with weak nutrient position and little water holding capacity. In this region are constrained by environmental limitations: low precipitation (low rain fall), high pre-monsoon temperatures (mean maximum of the hottest month: 45-50oC approx.), wind blowing high speed and high potential evapotranspiration. (Tewari et.al. 2006)⁷ In the environment of scanty vegetation circumstances, all the tree species are significant in this region. Amrita Devi from Marwar region sacrificed her life along with her daughters and 363 people for the sake of Khejari. King wanted to cut Khejari trees for the construction of their king's palace. But the persons family of Bishnoi under the leadership of Amrita Devi hugged the trees and faced axes of king's soldiers. later than the incident, the king call back the soldiers and realized his mistake. every year bhadwa sudi dassam (Aug-sept) in the village Khejarli held a fair in the memory of the 363 killed people.



MATERIAL AND METHODS

It is one of the original trees of the arid or semi-arid area in Rajasthan. Shekhawati region is spread over the Sikar, Jhunjhunu districts towards the East and the Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur, and Churu districts west of Rajasthan. The Plants of *P.cineraria* was collected from natural habitat. The tree is evergreen. It produces new leaves before summer. The flowers are small in size and yellow or creamy white, appear from March to May. The pods are growing rapidly in size attaining full size in about two months time. Pods

are brown to coffee in colour on ripening and have a sweetish pulp. Unripe pods are also used as vegetable. Boiled and dried pods are the important constituents of this region's famous dishes "Panchkutta"(ker, kumat, lasoda, amchur, sangri). (picture-1) The trees successfully raised by sowing in conjunction with field crops in irrigated lands. On an average, the yield of green forage from a full grown tree complete lopped and unlopped. The root of plant is long and well developed. Growth above the ground is slow but below the ground the roots penetrate deeper and deeper for the sub soil water.



Picture -1 "Vegetable panchkutta"

Food Production

leguminous trees had played a great role in human food, which was based partly on the gathering and the harvest of leaves and fruits from trees. The sale of the takings from the collection has brought about an improvement in the state of the economy of the populations. the leguminous trees are very important as source of food for the nomads who move to pastures with their cattle during the dry season looking for aerial forage, dry fruits and water.

Discussion

Unripe pods (sangri)/ripe pods indicate that they can offer a good source of livestock feed compared to other native available feeds. Arid foods had are great nutritional values.(Malik et al.,2013). A little is known concerning the species even though the nodulation and nitrogen fixation were proved (Felker and Clark, 1980³; Shearer *et al.*, 1983⁵; Shoushtari and Pepper, 1985⁶). There is a significant traditional knowledge available on various remedial uses of arid foods along with a great potential in the filed of processing and value addition.(Goyal and Sharma 2006)⁴ Therefore a good future scope lies in the filed of value addition in view of abundant availability, deliciousness, quality and remedial uses of arid fruits and vegetables.



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