The present study deals with the local uses of 25 species belonging to 21 genera of the family Asteraceae. Dir Kohistan valley has diverse habitats for the growth of various medicinal plants. The local medicinal uses include painkiller, diuretic, febrifuges, carminative, anthelmintic, anti-inflammatory, aphrodisiac, cardio tonic, tonic, stomachache, dyspepsia, jaundice, leprosy, cough, asthma, ulcers, vomiting etc. People have strong faith in herbal medication by ethnomedicinal plants and women are leading men in applying the recipe for medication by these plants. Some of useful species are under serious threat due to unsustainable activities. Hence, a proper documentation of useful plants with their present status and local traditional knowledge as well as practices is urgently needed. Effort should also be initiated to implement appropriate conservation measures for preservation and sustainable uses of these useful species.

Key Words: Medicinal Value, Asteraceae, Dir Kohistan Valleys, NWFP, Pakistan.

Introduction

Kohistan, the place of mountains, was called “Yaghistan” the land of rebels during the British rule. It is a name applied to all hilly areas, such as Swat Kohistan, Dir Kohistan and Indus Kohistan. Literally the word means "the place of mountains" (Hamayun, 2005). The Kohistan under focus in this paper is generally called "Dir Kohistan." The Dir Kohistan Valley covers 140,351 acres of the coniferous forests situated between latitude 35°- 9’ to 35°-47’ and longitude 71°-52’ to 72°-22’ in the northern position of the watershed of Panjkora river.
Ethnobotany in Pakistan

Ethnobotany includes all sorts of relationships between people and plants. The definition of ethnobotany can be summed up in four words i.e. People, Plants, Interactions, and Uses. The term ethnobotany was first used by John Harshberger in 1896. In the last 100 years, the science of ethnobotany has progressed and the trend is shifting from mere documentation process to a more practical one which emphasizes on conservation and sustainable use of plant resources. Ethnobotanical work in Pakistan is in its infancy. Only a few projects have been launched for documentation as well as sustainable use of plant resources despite the fact that Pakistan presents very rich and diverse flora due to her diverse climatic, soil conditions and multiple ecological regions. Pakistan has four phytogeographical regions, the uniregionals, consisting of Irano-Turanian (46%), Sino-Himalayan (10%), Saharo-Sindian (9.5%), and Indian element (4.5%). The country has about 6,000 species of wild plants of which about 400 to 600 are considered to be medicinally important (Khan, 1991).

The northern areas of Pakistan with unique biodiversity due to the presence of Himalaya, Karakorums and Hindu-Kush mountain ranges are under tremendous pressure from locals because of illicit cutting of valuable plants, poor collection and storage methods of medicinal plants, smuggling of timber wood, over grazing, corrupt forest officials, illiterate population with no sense or lust for conservation and above all passive and non-practical policies of Government as well as NGOs working in the area (Sher, 1998).

Methodology

Research work was carried out during July 2007 - August 2008 in the area of Dir Kohistan (N. W.F.P). Field work was carried out in order to investigate the existing ethnobotanical practices. During these trips different plant species of the family Asteraceae were collected, dried, documented and were identified both by comparing them with herbarium specimen and with the help of flora of Pakistan (Riedl, 1991; Choudhary et al., 2000). The field work includes interviews, observations and guided field walks/transects walks. Medicinal usage data were collected from local people and practitioner medical experts (hakims) that practice medicine regularly. About 100 informants were interviewed in this regard.

Enumeration

Botanical name

*Achillea millefolium* L.
Local name: Jarai  
Habit: Perennial herb  
Parts used: Whole plant  

Local uses: The plants contain a volatile oil, which is a stimulant tonic and astringent, and stops intestinal bleeding. The whole plant is used as a diuretic, a stimulant, for piles, cold and to stop perspiration. Also used as fodder.

Flowering season: July-Sept.

**Botanical name**  
*Anaphalis triplinerus* (Spreng.) Hand, Mazz.

Habit: Herb  
Parts used: Fresh leaves  
Local uses: The fresh leaves are bruised and applied to the wound as a plaster.

**Botanical name**  
*Artemisia trichophylla* Wall.ex DC.

Local name: Jaukay.  
Habit: Herb.  
Parts used: Leaves and shoots.  

Local uses: It is used as respiratory stimulant, anathematic and purgative us used as a cure for earache and used for burning. Shoots are used in making brooms for sweeping lawns and ropes of houses and for construction of roofs.

Flowering season: July-September

**Botanical name**  
*Artemisia maritime* L.

Local name: Tarkha  
Habit: Herb  
Parts used: Leaves  

Local uses: Anthelminthic. Also useful for curing skin diseases. Shoot is used as fodder. Brooms are constructed for sweeping dirt from lawns.

Flowering season: July-September

**Botanical name**  
*Artemisia scoparia* L.

Local name: Jawkay, Kamasla tarkha  
Habit: Herb
Parts used                                Flowering head
Local uses                               Used as anathematic, used as medicine against malarial fever. Also used to make brooms.
Flowering season                         July-September

**Botanical name**                        *Artemisia absinthium* L.
Habit                                      Herb
Parts used                                 Whole plant
Local uses                                 It is an aromatic tonic. It was formerly found as a high reputation in debility of the digestive organs. The powdered herb in small amount mixed in soup, will serve to relieve bilious melancholia and will help to disserve the yellow hove of jaundice from skin.
Flowering season                          July-September

**Botanical name**                        *Bidens pilosa* L.
Habit                                      Shrub
Parts used                                 Whole plant
Local uses                                 Young shots are used for treatment of rheumatism. The young leaves are used for abdominal pain. Flower is remedy for diarrhea and infusion of the leaf and root is remedy for colic.

**Botanical name**                        *Calendula officinalis* L.
Local name                                 Ziar gulae
Habit                                      A cultivated ornamental herb
Parts used                                 Flower and leaves
Local uses                                 Flowers and shoots are used to treat wounds.
Flowering season                          March-July

**Botanical name**                        *Cichorium intybus* L.
Local name                                 Hun
Habit                                      Herb
Parts use                                  Whole plant
Local uses                                 The roots are used for Jaundice. Leaves are used as a "Saag" against Typhoid .It also increases bile secretion and is used to promote digestion.
Flowering season                          July-Sept.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Botanical name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Local name</th>
<th>Habit</th>
<th>Parts used</th>
<th>Local uses</th>
<th>Flowering season</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conyza canadensis (L) Cronquist.</td>
<td>Malooch</td>
<td>Herb</td>
<td>Vegetative parts</td>
<td>Fresh fodder, stimulant, homeostatic, diuretic, used in diarrhea and dysentery.</td>
<td>July-Sept.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum L.</td>
<td>Chitti phulari</td>
<td>Herb</td>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Flowers are used for digestive problems.</td>
<td>August-September</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipsacus fullonum L.</td>
<td>Herb</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>The water held by the leaves is used to cool inflammation of the eyes.</td>
<td>June-August.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echinops cornigerus L.</td>
<td>Herb</td>
<td>Aerial parts.</td>
<td>Flowers are dried and crushed to obtain powder, which is commonly used for fever of domestic animals</td>
<td>September-October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnaphallium officinale L.</td>
<td>Asteraceae</td>
<td>Herb</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Leaves are used as an astringent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Botanical name**  
*Inula royleana* Clark.

Family  
Asteraceae

Habit  
Herb

Parts used  
Whole plant

Local uses  
Aromatic tonic used as diaphoretic, diuretic and expectorant.

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**Botanical name**  
*Lactuca serriola* L.

Local name  
Zangali salad

Habit  
A common herb

Parts used  
Whole plants

Local uses  
The herb is used as cooling, sedative, diaphoretic, diuretic, antiseptic and expectorant.

Flowering season  
April-June

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**Botanical name**  
*Lacuta virosa* L.

Habit  
Herb

Local name  
Kahu

Parts used  
Flowering parts

Local uses  
Laxative, antispasmodic and diuretic. It is also used as a remedy in palpitation of the heart and fever.

Flowering season  
April-June

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**Botanical name**  
*Onopordeum acanthium* L.

Local name  
Ghna botay.

Habit  
A thorny herb

Parts used  
Leaves and roots

Local uses  
The leaves and roots are taken in drink to help the cramp in the neck. The leaves and roots are of healing quality. Antispasmodic.

Flowering season  
July-Oct.

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**Botanical name**  
*Saussurea heteromala* (D.Don) Hand.

Family  
Asteraceae
Local name: **Kali Zira**  
Parts used: Seeds and roots  
Local uses: The seeds are carminative in nature and also used as a cure for horse bite. Roots is used as tonic and useful in liver diseases, kidney and chest complaints.  
Flowering season: July-September

**Botanical name:** *Saussurea costus* (Falc.) Lipsch.  
Family: Asteraceae  
Local name: Minyal, Kuth  
Habit: Herb  
Part Used: Root  
Local uses: Used to treat pains especially arthritis.

**Botanical name:** *Senecio chrysanthemoides* DC.  
Family: Asteraceae  
Local name: Kalay di Jar  
Habit: Herb  
Part used: Rhizome  
Local uses: Rhizome is used against asthma and respiratory problems.

**Botanical name:** *Senecio chrysanthemoides* DC.  
Local name: Ghopga  
Habit: Herb  
Parts used: Flowers and leaves  
Local uses: Flowers are ornamental and poisonous. Leaves are used for emollient purpose.

**Botanical name:** *Sonchus asper* L.  
Family: Asteraceae  
Local name: Shawda pai  
Habit: Herb  
Parts used: Young shoots and flowers  
Local uses: Its decoction is used as a tonic, diuretic and for jaundice. Also used for curing constipation and as fodder.
Flowering season: March-September

**Botanical name**: *Taraxacum officinale* Weber.

- **Local name**: Ziar Gulae
- **Habit**: Herb
- **Parts used**: Flower, root and leaves

**Local uses**
- Its decoction is used as a tonic, diuretic and for jaundice.
- Also used for curing constipation. It is used against tumors.
- It is purgative, mild laxative, used as remedy for kidney and liver diseases. It is also helping in the flow of bile. It is also ornamental plant

Flowering season: Feb.-April

**Botanical name**: *Xanthium strumarium* L.

- **Local name**: Geskay
- **Habit**: Shrub
- **Parts used**: Leaves

**Local uses**
- Leaves are applied for curing skin diseases. Leaf is also locally used for curing malarial fever.

Flowering season: March-September

**Discussion**

The present study provides information on the indigenous uses of 25 important ethnobotanically important plants belonging to Asteraceae family. The important objective of this study was to record the indigenous uses of these plants used by the local women for various purposes. The ethnobotanically important plants are a source of income and cure for the local women. Local people are using the plants for various purposes i.e., medication, food, cosmetics, and fodder for the cattle. They have faith on these plants. The ratio of the women using allopathic medicines is negligible because they are directly dependent on plants for medication and other basic needs. The ethnobotanically important and other beneficial plants are quite useful for the basic health and hygiene of the local women. Local people are directly dependent on these plants for cure of different diseases, food, skin care, cosmetics and fodder for the cattle. These plants are a source of interaction between the people and the natural resources of the area. It is very important that the precious ethnobotanical knowledge about these plants should be transferred to the younger generations. The data may be valuable in the future for pharmacological studies.
References


