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Helpful Nature

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ABSTRACT

Modern housing in the suburban part of city of Mumbai has resulted in clearing of lot of vegetation. The area adjacent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park Borivili has many housing societies with modern amenities and facilities. Even formal gardens, parks, lawns & swimming pools etc. are being laid out by the builders. To add to property value many of the trees and plants are being maintained by the societies. Some of the plants still do exist in the waste areas which grow on their own and are considered as weeds. Although they are being considered as useless plants yet they are of medicinal importance. Some of these plants of medicinal importance which are common plants in these areas include *Achyranthes aspera*, *Calotropis gigantea*, *Catharanthus roseus*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Datura metel*, *Euphorbia hirta*, *Lantana camera*, *Ricinus communis*, *Scoparia dulcis* etc.

Key Words: -Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Housing Societies, Tribal, Medicinal plants.

Introduction

Mumbai being a populous metropolis being connected to all other states of India is also well connected world over. More and more people from city for spacious modern housing and other facilities are moving to suburbs. One such suburb is area adjacent to Sanjay Gandhi National Park Borivili which extends from Dahisar to Goregaon and Thane.

The area has changed and is changing rapidly. Many housing colonies with modern amenities and facilities are coming up. Although lot of vegetation is getting cleared, yet many ornamental, big trees and fruit trees and plants are being maintained in the form of lawns, avenue, pergolas, edges and parks which add value to the property.

Some pockets (waste areas) abound with wild plants so called unwanted plants (weeds).Some of the tribal people who live in National Park or have moved out in these surrounding areas are seen collecting these plants or plant parts for various types of ailments. On surveying these waste areas it was a pleasant surprize to find that these plants which otherwise looked as weeds are plants of medicinal importance. Thus present study a preliminary one was carried out.

Material and Methods

Visits to the waste areas during daily morning walk and observing the plants being collected by the people (tribal) having taken up jobs and few

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others have settled in Tata Power Chawls. These people do get treated in hospitals for serious ailments but usually believe in usage of these plants or parts or decoction or paste as medicines for many ailments.

Study Area:

Housing colonies (societies) in the adjacent area surrounding Sanjay Gandhi National Park especially Borivili area. Sanjay Gandhi National Park encompasses an area of 104 square kilometres and it is surrounded on three sides India's most populous city Mumbai. It occupies most of the northern suburbs. The park is located about forty kilometres away to the north of island of Mumbai city & about 8 km from Arabian Sea. Borivili is the nearest railway station from where the park entrance is just a kilometre away. The park is encircled by the congested suburbs of Mumbai and the adjoining district of Thane. The park hilly terrain is undulating and is regarded to be an outer spur of the Western Ghats. To the west lies the township of Goregoan, Malad, Kandivali, Borivali, Dahisar & Vasai. To the east lies the township of Bandup & Mulund. To the south lies the Arey milk colony.

The northern reaches of this forest lie in Thane district (Yeoor Hills). The housing colonies rather societies are with modern amenities and facilities with well laid gardens, amphitheatre few with swimming pools and lawns for children to play.

Results

The waste area (small pockets), where from the people collected these plants for use were observed and plants recorded and identified. These people belonged to three tribes Warli, Dhodia and Dubli and they were commoners and not practioners. Few of the plants which were observed and included in Table 1.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study reveals that even waste areas are not useless and the plants which are quite common have medicinal property. Despite modernization and civilization the tribals still prefer use of plants and plant parts for medicinal purposes because of their natural origin and no side effects. (Jenna and Gupta, 2012).

Table-1. Observed plants

Sr.no	Name of the Plant	Family	Plant Part Used	Use
1.	*Achyranthes aspera*	Amaranthaceae	Leaves whole plant	Extreme cold and cough Laxative
2.	*Calotropis gigantea*	Asclepiadaceae	Root peeling	Acute dysentery
3.	*Catharanthus roseus*	Apocynaceae	Root &leaf decoction Water extract of leaf juice empty stomach	Hypertension Blood Dysentery
4.	*Cynodon dactylon*	Poaceae	Leaves crushed or decoction	To check nose bleeding, Urinary problems
5.	*Cyperus rotundus*	Cyperaceae	Rhizomes	Diarrhoea, vomiting & Irregular Mensuration
6.	*Datura metel*	Solanaceae	Leaves and flower	Antispasmodic & sedative
7.	*Euphorbia hirta*	Euphorbiaceae	Leaves	Cold and cough, Worms, pimples
8.	*Lantana camara*	Verbenaceae	Leaves	Antiseptic for wounds
9.	*Ricinus communis*	Euphorbiaceae	Leaf juice Leaf crushed(paste)	Jaundice Tooth ache
10.	*Scoparia dulcis*	Scrophulariaceae	Whole Plant	Sore throat, cough & measles
11.	*Tridax procumbens*	Asteraceae	Leaves	Cough & cold

People have become health conscious and therefore there has been an exponential growth in the field of herbal medicine.

Traditional systems of medicines are based on herbal drugs (Srivastava et al 2011). Since plants are easily accessible and inexpensive and have been utilized since time immemorial are now in great demand both in developed and developing countries (Saikia, 2006; Patel et.al, 2013). According to WHO more than 80% of the world's population depends on traditional herbal medicine for their primary health care (Vijayan et al 2007). Lot of research has been and is being carried out on plants and plants are the sources of drugs. (Reddy, 2015). At present new drugs are developed and discovered on the basis of traditional use.

The benefits of the knowledge of tribals can be offered to common people by establishing the medicinal usage of such plants. The knowledge which is not documented and has been passed from generation to generation(Bown,1995) needs to be documented fast as due to urbanization and continuous exploitation of these natural resources along with traditional knowledge are depleting as the days pass. (Srivastav et.al, 2011 and Vinatha Naini and Estari Mamidala, 2013).

This preliminary information was passed on by three people after much coaxing. In the initial stages they were not ready to share their knowledge. A detailed study in future will give lot of information about ethano-medicinal plants. As there is always a hunt for ethno medicinal plants. (Survase and Raut, 2011) Since these plants grow in waste areas such areas can be utilized without over exploitation and stress on the forest ecosystems.

I wish this study could serve as the basis for future detailed study in this respect so that the vast potential in the field of Ethno medicinal research is tapped.

Conflict of Interests:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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