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Conservation and Biodiversity Erosion in Ondo State, Nigeria: (4). Assessing Botanicals Used in the Cure of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Owo Region

J. Kayode^{1,4}, R. A. Jose² and O.E. Ige³

¹Department of Plant Science, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

²Department of Science Technology, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Nigeria

³Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology

Adekule Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria

⁴E-mail: jokayode@mail.com

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Abstract

A combination of social survey and direct field observation was used to assess the botanicals used in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases in Owo region of Ondo State, Nigeria. A total of 33 belonging to 28 families were identified, 14 of which were found to be rare on the abundance scale used in the study. The need for the conservation of these species was stressed.

Key words: Botanicals, sexually transmitted diseases, Owo Region, Nigeria.

Introduction

In the recent times, there seems to be an unabated increase in the incidences of sexually transmitted diseases despite the series of awareness programs by governmental and non-governmental organisations. Previous studies had asserted that many indigenous groups in Nigeria depend on the use of botanicals for their health cures and maintenance. The dependency had been attributed to their ready availability, cheap, effectiveness with little or no side effects. It is also believed that the medicinal plants wiped away the diseases causative agents and unlike the orthodox medicines that treat only specific disease, medicinal plants have wider spectrum.

The Owo indigenous group, popularly referred to as *Owomode*, is a distinct group of Yoruba in the rainforest zone of Nigeria. They are extremely conscious of their culture and tradition which include the use of botanicals for health maintenance. The study being reported here is part of on-going studies on the ethnobotanical utilization in Ondo State being conducted by the Department of Plant Science, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria and the Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

A combination of social survey and direct field observation (after Kayode 2002, Kayode and Ogunleye 2008) was used in this study. Three major communities, each of which possessed big market centers were selected. In each of these communities, five botanical vendors, ten indigenes who had maintained continuous domicile in the region for minimum of ten years were selected and interviewed with the aid of semi-structured questionnaire matrix.

Botanicals identified as been used in for the cure of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) were documented and their relative abundance determined by taken into consideration the time taken to physically come across the species in a distance of 500 m form the center of the community. Voucher specimens of the species identified were obtained and later deposited at the herbarium of the Department of Plant Science, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

Secondary information was obtained from records and key informants which consisted of the officials of the Local Governments, General Hospital, Owo and the Ondo State Ministry of Health office.

Results and Discussion

A total of 33 botanicals were observed to be commonly used for the cure of STDs in the study area. These species belong to a total of 28 families (Table 1). The part mostly utilized was the leaves. The leaves of 16 of the botanicals were used. This constitutes 48% of the botanicals. Other parts include the roots (27%), stem barks/stem (24%) and fruits (12%). The forest constituted the major primary source of these species. 20 of the botanicals, that is 61% of the botanicals were claimed to be sourced primarily from the aboriginal forests of the communities. Household farms constituted the major secondary source as 52% of the botanicals were sourced from farms while the major tertiary source was the herbal markets section in the communities from where over 40% of the botanicals were sourced.

The dependency of the respondents on the aboriginal forests and household farms confirmed the earlier assertions by Kayode *et al.* (2008), Kayode and Omotoyinbo (2008, 2009) that the use of botanicals was freely assessable to the rural and urban resource-poor. Also the availability of botanical parts in major markets of the study area, though not a new phenomenon, confirmed the use of medicinal botanicals as important source of income in the study area. While the extraction methods used in most of these botanicals (leaves) could be said to be non-predatory, same cannot be said of the following species whose stem or stem barks or/and roots were used. They are *A. difformis*, *A. djalonensis*, *C. gabonensis*, *D. guineense*, *D. senegambiensis*, *K. ivorensis*, *M. puberula*, *P. angolensis*, *S. anceps*, *S. mombin*, *T. macroptera*, *T. potatoria*, *U. afzeli* and *Z. zanthoxyloides*. All these species were not even cultivated in the study area. Field observation revealed that hours of man time were taken before samples of these species were found in the study area. This observation tends to suggest that they were presently rare in the abundance scale. *F. capiensis* was observed to be found occasionally in the study area but field observation revealed that its being domesticated already existed in the study area where it is being cultivated as shade tree and wind breaker.

In conclusion, the conservation of these species, especially the identified rare species, is now desirable. Previous strategies already suggested by Kayode *et al.* (2009) in a study conducted in other part of Ondo State will still be quite relevant.

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Table 1.

Botanicals used in Used in the Cure of Sexually Transmitted Diseases
in Owo region of Ondo State, Nigeria

Botanical Name	Vernacular Name	Parts Used in the Cure of Sexually Transmitted Diseases
<i>Abrus precatorius</i>	Omisimisi	Leaves
<i>Ageratum conyzoides</i>	Imi-esu	Leaves
<i>Alcornea laxiflora</i>	Iya peepe	Leaves
<i>Anchomanes difformis</i>	Isu-abirisoko	Stem
<i>Annona senegalensis</i>	Ewe-aso	Leaves
<i>Anthocleista djalonenensis</i>	Sapo	Root
<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>	Ata wewe	Fruits
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Ibepe	Fruits
<i>Colocynthis citrullus</i>	Eso-bara	Fruits
<i>Cylicodiscus gabonensis</i>	Olisa-rogun	Roots
<i>Dialium guineense</i>	Uyan	Stem bark
<i>Dissotis senegambiensis</i>	Atawo edun	Roots, Stem bark
<i>Dracaena mannii</i>	Peregun wewe	Leaves
<i>Dracaena sp</i>	Ope- orisa	Leaves
<i>Elaeis guinensis</i>	Ojele imo ope	Young leaves
<i>Ficus capiensis</i>	Opoto	Stem bark
<i>Ficus exasperata</i>	Ipin	Leaves
<i>Glyphae brevis</i>	Atorin	Leaves
<i>Heinsia crinite</i>	Tannaposo	Leaves
<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>	Alabose/ Lapalapa	Leaves
<i>Khaya ivorensis</i>	Oganwo	Roots
<i>Microdermis puberula</i>	Apeta	Roots
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Ogede agbagba	Fruits
<i>Pycnanthus angolensis</i>	Ifu	Stem bark
<i>Sida acuta</i>	Iseketu	Leaves
<i>Smilax anceps</i>	Igbao	Leaves
<i>Sorgum bicolor</i>	Oka baba	Leaves
<i>Spondias mombin</i>	Ekikan/Iyeye	Roots
<i>Terminalia macroptera</i>	Idi	Roots
<i>Tetracera potatoria</i>	Efun-amuren	Leaves
<i>Uvaria afzeli</i>	Gbogbonise	Stem bark, Roots
<i>Xylopiya aethiopica</i>	Erinje/Eru	Leaves
<i>Zanthoxylum zanthoxyloides</i>	Orin-ata	Roots