Uses and management of ximenia americana, olacaceae in semi-arid East Shewa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Wild edible plants are crucial resources with multipurpose uses and indigenous people have ethnobotanical knowledge of their use and management. Ximenia americana L., is among the preferred multipurpose use wild edible plants (WEPs). These uses and managements were inadequately documented. Ethnobotanical studies can explore the uses and management of this species and associated indigenous knowledge (IK). Ethnobotanical and socioeconomic studies were carried out in Fantalle (Galcha, Qobbo, Dheebiti) and Boosat (Xadacha, Trii Bireti and Diglau Tiyo) districts in Ethiopia. The main data collection methods used were, field inspection by guided walks, focus group discussions with 14 key informants taken from transhumance pastoralists and settled framers of the two districts, and systematic field observations along six transects. Indigenous people have explained 7 major uses of X.americana (Food, medicine, fuel wood and others). Food value was the highest. Ten major threat factors have affected the species, of which agricultural expansion ranked highest. All (100%) indicated that there was no domestication of the species indicating that people collect the fruits from the wild. The indigenous people have knowledge of the use and management of X.americana. The fruits were used for food while roots and other pats of the species were used for medicine and source of income. However, because of overexploitation, the species became rare in the study area. This can lead to erosion of associated indigenous knowledge on the use and management of X.americana. Its multipurpose uses can contribute to livelihood of semiarid people and calls for urgent rehabilitation by closure of the natural habitat by complementing with domestication of the species.