



Original Research Article

Non-Wood Forest Products in Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Sayings (Hadith)

Ismail Mohamed Fangama Abdalla*

College of Forestry and Range Science, Sudan University of Science and Technology (SUST)

*Corresponding author

A B S T R A C T

Keywords

Fruits,
Honey,
Plant
leaves,
Medicine
and plant oil

Non-wood Forest Products (NWFPs) are important products in the forest, due to its economic, nutritional, medicinal and social values. The importance of these was explained in Holy Qur'an many centuries ago and mentioned its benefits and uses for humanities. These products are found in most countries with different types. The expansion of mechanized rain-fed agriculture contributes to the decline of animals and plants products. Also these products are not developed by the government authorities, because they looked at these products as secondary products and they have no big impacts according to their ideas and this is different from what was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The weaknesses of mass media, extension and absence of religious guidance have negatively affected the human knowledge regarding importance of NWFPs. If these sciences of NWFPs are put under considerations of religious guidance and their benefits have been highlighted for human life. All these collectively can overcome all the problems that affect these products. This study reflects and explains the religious guidance for non-wood forest products to find methods to overcome any obstacles that faced the products, and to find solutions because of its importance to human beings.

Introduction

The use of Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) has existed since the creation of man. When Adam descended on the forest land, man and animals depended in their livelihood on (NWFPs) in their food, shelter, clothes or treatment etc. These products played a significant role and clearly contributed to the life of man, such as different types of food, fodder, fertilizers, drinks domestic materials. These products support the village communities with the raw materials needed for small scale industries. For these reasons, the (NWFPs) has gained its world importance as a

community uses it for manufacturing food, species, medicines, paints etc. 80% of the population in developing countries depends in their livelihood on (NWFPs). It provides them with food and it increases their incomes, other countries export (NWFPs) (FAO, 1991).

This study aims to exploring the use of (NWFPs) and illustrating the benefit behind their creation. Explaining the importance of (NWFPs) to today's man as well as their benefits. Highlighting the global trend that focused on the importance of the (NWFPs) as food and cure.

The significance of the (NWFPs)

The (NWFPs) are known to include all the services that are rendered by forests or any piece of land with similar use. Woods are not considered in all its forms (FAO, 1995). These products are the most important foodstuff that supports meals particularly in the rural areas. However, the forest food guarantees food for man against anemia, during outbreak of hunger or food shortage at the time of drought or war. The activity of collecting food from forest is not confined to the poor sector only or the landless or men. But these sectors are the most affected when there is forest food shortage because it adds to a variety of foodstuff; it provides it with the necessary vitamins, proteins and calories (FAO, 1992).

Types of (NWFPs)

The (NWFPs) can be divided in terms of food into:

- Wild plants food: it includes leaves, fruits, and seeds, roots, ground tubers, juice and mushrooms.
- Food from wild animals: it includes big and small animals, birds, insects etc.

The importance of this section comes from the fact that the meat from wild animals contains between 20% -25% protein which exceeds protein derives from domesticated animals. So, it is a major source of animal protein in many parts of the world. The scientific researches have proved that the source of iron and vitamin A and B which are found in all types of food, it is abundant in wild animal meats. Protein and vitamin are found in insects such as ant larvae beetles. However, birds and their eggs, some insects such as rodents are main source of food for people in rural areas (FAO, 1991). Rats, rabbits and some famous rats in West Africa are the most important consumer species of animals. The vast majority of

population in West Africa is dependent on consumption of wild animals.

Falconer (1992), in Nigeria approximately 84% of the population live around the reserved forests and obtain animal protein from wild life, 79% of the total consumed meat in Nigeria is from wildlife, the people of Amazon use animal protein with more than 85% this percentage included the fish. It is worth noting that the Holy Quran has pointed out, to all these in many of its verses. This indicates the extent to which Quran is much concerned with these products. This is consistent with the fact that God has created forest for the benefit of mankind and other living organisms. This study aims to investigate/highlight the importance of (NWFPs) in Holy Quran and Prophetic Hadith, highlighting their benefits as reflected by Prophet Mohammed.

Fruits and Rangelands

Qura'anic verse (10, 11) indicated the Lord fall the rains from clouds for drink and germinates the trees on the ground, and the different fruits in types, tastes and colors are food for human and livestock (Al-Sabooni, 1981). Also the fruits and rangelands Mentioned in Quranic Verse such as, Saajda, An-Nahl, Fattir, An-Nazi'at and Taha respectively. "It is He who sends down water from heaven, which provides drink for you and brings forth trees on which your herds feed [10] And thereby He brings forth crops and olives, palms and vines, and all the fruits. Surely, in this there is a sign for a nation who think" [11] An-Nahl. Do they not see how we drive the water to the parched lands and bring forth there from crops from which their cattle and themselves eat? Will they not see! [27] Al-Sajdah. And what He has multiplied for you in the earth is of various hues; surely, in that there is a sign for a nation who remember [13] An-Nahl. Did you not see how Allah sends

down water from the sky and with it brings forth different colored fruits? In the mountains there are paths of various colors, of white and red, and jet black [27] Fattir. And the earth He extended after that; [30] and then brought from it its water and pastures [31] And the mountains He set firm [32] an enjoyment for you and your herds [33] An-Nazi'at. It is He who has made for you the earth as a cradle and threaded roads for you and sends down water from the sky with which we bring forth every kind of plant [53] You eat and let your cattle graze. 'Surely, in this there are signs for those of understanding [54] Taha.

Food and income

The foods created by the God are different in types, taste, colors and scent from region to other. On the other hand the human and animals find the palatable food anywhere according to environment. Quran describes different types of food such as fruits and meat for human beings. Such as: 'we shall give them fruits and meat as they desire'' [22]. At-Tur., 'And in the land, there are adjoining plots, gardens of vines, sown fields and palmtrees in pairs and single that are watered with one water, yet We make some excel others in produce. Surely, in that are signs for a nation who understand'' [4]. Ar-Ra'd., 'He brings forth gardens, trellised and untrellised, palmtrees and crops, different to eat, and the olive and pomegranates alike and unlike. When it bears fruit eat of it and pay what is due (the zakat) of it upon the harvest day. But do not be wasteful; He does not love the wasteful ''[141] Al-'An'am.

Al- Sabooni (1981) mentioned that he established gardens and horticulture consist of palms and berries, in addition to other types of fruits should be eaten in summer and in winter such as date, berry and vines. He added the dates and vines have numerous

benefits represents the popular food for Arab. This is stated in Surrat Al-Mu'minun and Surrat Maryam''With it, We produced for you gardens of palms and vines, yielding abundant fruit for you to eat'' [19] Al-Mu'minun. 'And shake the trunk of this palmtree it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you [25] Therefore eat and drink and rejoice with your eyes. If you meet any human say to him: "I have vowed a fast to the Merciful and will not speak with anyone today." 26]. Maryam.

He added the ripe dates is a good food, it strengthen the stomach and improve the human body. *In addition, in the Sahihain it is narrated that Abdullah bin Ja'far said: Isaw the messenger of Allah eating cucumbers with ripe dates. Abu Dawud in addition narrated in his Sunan that Anas said:'' The messenger of Allah b used to break his fast on some ripe dates, and if he did not have any, on dry dates. Otherwise, if he did not have dry dates, he would have several sips of water.''*

Al- Sabooni (1981) mentioned that other vegetable is important as food to the human mentioned in the Quran such cucumber. It has many benefits as food and characterized by fast growing, fine large leaves and are not touched by flies. It would be eaten ripe or cooked, and the cortex is used for killing different worms in the stomach. This is mentioned in the following Verses. 'But We cast him, upon the shore, and he was ill [145] And We caused a pumpkin tree to grow over him'' [146] As-Saffat. 'Eat of the lawful and good things with which Allah has provided you and be thankful for the favors of Allah if it is He you worship ''[114] An-Nahl. 'It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down water from the heaven with which He brings forth fruits for your provision. He has subjected to you ships which, by His

command, run upon the sea. He has subjected to you rivers” [32] Ibrahim.”We sent down blessed water from the sky with which We caused gardens and the grains of harvest to grow [9] and tall palm trees with compact spathes [10] As a provision for the or shippers; thereby We revived a land that was dead. Such shall be the emerging” [11] Qaaf.

Medicine

The honey is the best medicine. It has high energy, 100 grams contain 280 calories. The inflorescence of trees every year saves the food for bees. On the other hand the bees contribute to fertilization of some trees so it increases the production of seeds and fruits. Honey has been introduced in manufacturing of many medicines used by human and this is mentioned in Quran such as “Your Lord revealed to the bee: 'Build your homes in the mountains, in the trees, and in what they are building [68] Eat every kind of fruit, and follow the easy ways of your Lord. 'From its belly comes forth a drink (honey) of many hues in which there is healing for people. Surely, in this there is a sign for a nation who reflect” [69] An-Nahl.

(Al- Sabooni ,1981) mentioned in his book that this small fly (bee) feeds on the nectars of flowers with beautiful colors, white, yellow and red and other attractive colors. The taste of honey made depends on the taste of the tree such as honey of *Ziziphus spini Christi* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* etc.

The proof from Al-Sunnah are: *-It is narrated in the Sahihain that Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari said: " A man came to the Prophet and said, ' My brother is complaining about stomach, or he is complaining about diarrhea' the Prophet b said, ' give him some honey,' the went and came back later, saying 'I have given him some honey, but it*

did not help,' or he said,' it made his diarrhea worsre.'He repeated this twice or three times, all the while the Prophet be continued saying to him, 'Ggive him some honey.' In the third or fourth time, the Prophet, said, Allah has said the truth while your brother's stomach has lied.”

- A Hadith[narrated by Ibn Majah and others] stated that the Prophet b said: “ Make use of the two cures: honey and the Qura'an.”

-Al-Bokhary narrated that the Prophet said:” There is cure in three substances, a drink of honey, a slash with a knife used for cupping and cauterizing by fire. I forbid my Nation from cauterizing by fire.”

Ibn quy'em el-Jozeyah (2002) mentioned that the date is the best food which keeps the health in hot and cold region. It uses as medicine and it differs from place to another. Some plants are poisonous, they can kill man.

Al-Raihan

Every scent plant is called Raihan in Arabic countries and it has different names in each country. The benefits of Riahan are: cure the swollen parts , decrease the colic, smell for nuzzle and its seeds useful for Diarrhea(Ibn-Ga'm,2002).

“If he is among the near [88]there shall be calmness and ease, a Garden of Delight”[89] Al-Waqi'a. “The grain in the blade; and aromatic herbs “ [12] Ar-Rahman

Muslim narrated that the prophet said:” Whoever was presented with Rayhan should not be refuse, because it is easy to bear and has a good scent.’

Pomegranate (Al-Roman)

Roman is strengthening stomach and good for throat, chest, lungs and cough. Its water good for abdomen, remove liver temperature and strengthening all organs.

[68] Ar-Rahman. In them are fruits, palm trees and pomegranates

In addition, " Ali was reported to have said, " Eat Rumman with its pulp, because it coast the stomach."

Ginger

Ginger is used for food digestion and useful for liver, stomach, and chest and dry the phlegm or spoutnm.

And they shall be given to drink from a cup whose mixture is ginger [17] Al-Insan

Salvadora persica

The wood of *Salvadora persica* is useful against the tooth decay and gum disease. Its roots are used as a drink for stomach troubles.

-In the Sahihain it is narrated that Jabir Ibn Abdullah said, " We were with the Messenger of Allah collecting Kabath when he said: " Collect the black type of Kabath because it is best type."

Kabath is the fruit that grows on the on the plant called Arak which grows in the area of Hijaz, and whose branches used foe Siwak as stated above.

-In the Sahihain it is narrated that the Prophet b said: " If it is not for the fact that my nation would not be able to bear it, I would have ordered them to use Siwak before every prayer."

-In addition, in the Sahihain it is narrated that: Whenever the Prophet as would wake up at night, he would clean his mouth with Siwak."

Prophet b said: " Siwak clean the mouth and pleases the Lord"

-Further Muslim narrated that: "Whenever the Prophet b would enter his house, he would first use the Siwak."

Plant oils

The God mentioned plant oil in Quran "Also, a tree which grows on the Tor of Sinai and gives oil and relish for its eaters [20] Al-Mu'minun." Allah is the Lighter of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light is like a tube, in which there is a wick. The wick is in a lamp and the lamp is as a glittering planet kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West. Its oil would almost shine forth though no fire touched it. Light upon light; Allah guides to His Light whom He will. Allah strikes parables for people. Allah has knowledge of all things" [35] An-Noor.

Oil extracted from grasses as oil perfume and from woods like sandal oil, from seeds as Heglil oil which is used in cooking and soap manufacturing as well as used by diabetic patients. Also the oil extracted from leaves of *Eucalyptus sp.*, *camation*, *calyx*, *cinnamon*, *peppermint* etc.

- At Trimidhi and Ibn Majha narrated that Abu Hurairah related from the Prohpet b that he said: " Eat the Zait and use it as an ointment, because it is produced by a bless tree."

- Al- Bayhagi and Ibn Majha in addition narrated that ' Abdullah Ibn' Umar said that the Messenger of Allah b said: Eat oil

and use it as an ointment because it is from a blessed tree (Olive tree).”

Agricultural crops

The God mentioned in Quran:“Who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a dome, and has sent down water from the sky to bring forth fruits for your provision. Do not knowingly set up rivals to Allah” [22] Al Baqarah. The crops and fruits are food for human and different animals. 'Moses, ' you said, 'we will no longer be patient with one type of food. Call on your Lord to bring forth for us some of the produce of the earth, green herbs and cucumbers, corn, lentils and onions. ' 'What! ' he answered, 'Would you exchange that which is lesser for what is better? Go down into Egypt, there you shall find all that you have asked. ' Humiliation and abasement were pitched upon them, and they incurred the Anger of Allah; because they disbelieved His signs and slew His Prophets unjustly; because they disobeyed and were transgressors [61] Al Baqarah.

Fishery

The forest is the good environment for fish reproduction in sea and rivers shores. FAO (1993) mentioned that the income of fish protein is estimated by 50-60%.

“It is He who has subjected the sea to you, so that you eat of its soft flesh and bring up from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing their course through it in order that you seek His bounty and give thanks” [16.14] An-Nahl.

Imam Ahmed and Ibn Majah narrated that ' Abdullah Ibn 'Umar said that the Prophet b said:

“We are allowed two dead animals and two bloods: fish and locust, and liver and spleen.”

It is a God blessing that He made fish, whales and other aquatic animals which have soft meat as food to man. However, they are considered as the best white meat which is used by diabetic patients and cholesterol. Its oil was used to manufacture tablets used for people with vitamin deficiency.

In the Sahihain it is in addition narrated that Jaber bin Abduallah said, “ The Prophet b sent us with three hundred riders under the leadership of Abu 'Abaidah bin Al-Jarrah. We went by the seashore and were very soon hungry until we ate tree leaves. The sea then threw out a whale that is called 'Anbar. We ate from it for a half a month and in addition used its fat in our food.Abu Ubaidah then took a rib of the fish and asked a man to ride on his camle and then pass under the rib, which is easily did.”

Fire

The God has created fire from green trees such as *Al Mrakh tree* and *Al-Afaar* grow in *Hizgaz* and *Clotropsis procera* in the Sudan. The fire is necessary for cooking the food, warm and other benefits. Who has made fire for you from the green tree with which you kindle? '[80] YaSeen. The Prophet Said: 'Human shares in three: water, pasture and fire.'

Handicrafts

Most of handicrafts and furniture are manufactured from special trees grown in the forest.

Cast down your staff. ' And when he saw his staff writhing as though it were a serpent, he turned about in retreat, and did not turn back. 'O Moses, approach and have no fear. You are surely safe [31] Al-Qasas.

Qattada stated that the stick of Prophet Musa made from *Al-Awsag* tree.

The socio-economic role of (NWFPs)

Given our daily life, these products play a significant role particularly among people in rural areas, in our lives, practically, when there is food shortage, it can be met, it also reduces the risk and impact of drought and little rains. These products play different roles in our lives as food or drug or socio-economic aspects.

The role of food

The (NWFPs) represent the main source of foodstuff for considerable number of people in the third world. They add to the variety of foodstuff. We found that majority of farming communities depend on food that comes from forest or trees during food shortages. These products continue to be a source of food for hunters, farmers and food gatherers, for they give a variety to food they are also rich with proteins and vital minerals for example, Bioluz groups in Senegal consume leaves of *Poselica* plant for year round, as a paste that is used with the main meal, the food is taken either in a smoked or dried forms or fermented, this preserves the food for longer periods of time, it guarantees food supplies for the whole year. While in Sudan, there are number of good examples.

The role of drug

We found that the relationship between the drugs that are extracted from forests and food is vitally important; there are a lot of diseases whose drugs have been supplied by the forests. The vast majority of people particularly in the traditional healing (i.e. home remedies) use seeds, fruits, roots leaves (Fangama, 2012).

The role of wood products as a source of income and social service

Many people in rural areas generate their incomes and job opportunities from gathering, selling, and preparing forest products. They are regarded as a source of family income. The services that are rendered by the forest benefited the human being. These services can be represented by hunting, organizing scientific camps, sporting activities as well as provision of rangelands for wild and domesticated animals.

Problem facing (NWFPs) in Sudan

1. Little attention is paid for developing (NWFPs) by the official authorities.
2. The expansion in mechanized agriculture has been on expense of forestlands. This has led to loss of plants and animals products, some wildlife have migrated to the neighboring countries.
3. Production areas are far away from the markets; this is attributed to the disappearance of forests which in turn increases the costs.
4. Extension and education programmes are very poor on local level.
5. People are not interested to deal with these products (NWFPs).

In conclusion, God has created the forests for the benefit of all creatures whether, man, plan and animals. Forests are rich with different products for multiple uses such as food, medicine, income, scientific research and tourism. Man should relate these products to proof from the Holy Quran and Prophetic Sayings and to find out that God has arranged, classified, distinguished and clarified the use of these products. However, these products are not considered as new discoveries in the world. Man should endeavour in his research to reach the benefits of these products.

Recommendations

The forestlands that have been cleared due to expansion in mechanized agriculture should be rehabilitated so as to restore the vegetation cover to its early stage and to create a conducive environment for these products (NWFPs).

Extension programme should be intensified to enlighten people about the benefits and availability of these products and relating them to the Holy Quran.

3- Attention should be placed on developing these products, classifying them and integrating them as a part of traditional healing.

References

- Al-Sabooni, M.A. (1981). Safoat al-Tafaseer, Tafseer of Quranic. Publication Company limited, Al-Amaria, al Rihad,Saudi Arabia.
- Falconer .J. (1992) NTFPs in Southern Ghana ODA forestry service No.2.
- Fangama, I. M. and Mohamed, A. A. (2012). Important plants used for traditional remedy and their environments in Gedaref State. *The Scientific Journal of Alzaiem Alazahari University*, June-2012.ISSN 1858-5035. Sudan.
- FAO (1991) Non-Wood forest products. The Way ahead Forestry papers No. 97.
- FAO (1992) Forest and Food Security. Series of forestry studies No. 95. Italy.
- FAO (1993) More than wood, special option on multiple uses of forests, Rome, Italy.
- FAO (1995) International Expert Consultation on NWFPs.
- FAO and Indonesia (1995) Terminology, Definition and classification of forest products other than Trees.
- Ibn quy'em el-Jozeyah (2003) .The

Prophetic medicine. Translated by Abdel-Qader the son of Abdel-Azeez. Reviewer by:Dr. Ingi. First edition 2003,ISBN 977-372-005-5,No.2003/ 13488. Dar Al-Ghadd Al- Gadeed,Al-Mansoura,Egypt.