



RESEARCH PAPER

Medicinal and indigenous use of *Morchella esculenta* for socio-economic development of tehsil Thunag /Seraj block, district Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, North Western Himalaya, India

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Abstract : Inhabitants of the Seraj valley largely depend on wild herbs for medicine, food and for economy. As the valley is the rich repository of wild medicinal herbs. Present study was carried out in the Thunag Tehsil (31.55°N , 77.17°E) at an altitude of 2052m, of district Mandi (31.5892°N,76.9182°E). *Morchella esculenta* commonly known as growing gold of mountains because it fetch good price in market. Favourable environmental conditions like thick coniferous forest, loamy soil rich in humus, high altitude, cool climate. All these conditions favour the natural growth of this fungus. It is found in coniferous forest habitat at a height of about 2500-3500 m. It is commonly found as a mycorrhizal or saprobic relationship with hardwood and coniferous trees. Its growing season is from March to July. It contains carbohydrates, proteins, fibres, all important vitamins, minerals and aromatic compounds. Due to its unique flavour, taste and texture it is used in different recipes all over the world. It contains a wide range of pharmacological properties which includes antioxidant, antitumor, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties, it also acts as an immune-stimulant due to the presence of various active constituents. The aim of this study was to investigate the nutritional, medicinal and judicious use of this herb for socio-economic development of study area.

Key Words : Medicinal, Indigenous use of *Morchella esculenta*

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