An evaluation into utilization and nutritional status of *Elaeodendron transvaalense* in the treatment and management of weight loss in Venda

by

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ABSTRACT

Forest resources are highly valued productive resources among the rural people all over the African countries. Most households in tropical areas depend on wild plants part or products gathered from wild. They harvest several different resources such as fruits, medicine, firewood, fodder and many other needs for their well-being. The aim of the study was to determine the ethnobotanical importance of *Elaeodendron transvaalense* in Tshirolwe village, Nzhelele Limpopo South Africa.

In terms of ethnobotanical studies local uses of *Elaeodendron transvaalense* are medicinal purpose (45%) which is contributed the highest percentage, followed by fuelwood (20%), fruits (15%), fodder (10%) and utensils (10%). Bark (30%) contributed the highest percentage in terms of plants parts used followed by roots (20%), branches and stem (20%), branches alone (10%). The remaining 20% of use category was attributed to fruits (15%) and leaves (5%). Dominance of bark harvesting for medicinal purposes which is also a dominant use category necessitate the need to minimize unsustainable harvesting practices that lead to overharvesting.

The results on the nutritional analysis showed that *Elaeodendron transvaalense* contain rich source of mineral elements. *Elaeodendron transvaalense* contains significant levels of mineral elements that are essentials for human health. Concentration level ranged as follows: Ca 1770.82±144.58, Mg 1974.17±204.59, K 4671.83±229.11, Na 57500±24.11 Zn 19.24±1.03, Fe 54.52±4.97, Mn and Cu 3.57±0.31. These results become important when the usefulness of minerals like Ca, Mg, K, Na, Zn, Fe, Mn and Cu in the body is considered.

Keywords: Forest resources, Ethnobotanical, Unsustainable harvesting, Nutritional analysis.