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Worm-studded storm demand in the mountains

- Shalini Joshi
- From Dehradun, for BBC Hindi.com

September 9th, 2009

 पॉवर फंगस यानी कीड़ी जड़ी

Image caption,

Worm-studded is considered to be a good source of vigor.

In the himalayan high altitude areas, a rare herb is found in 'Yarshagumba' which is not used in India but is used in China as a natural steroid.

Due to its enchanting ability in increasing power, these studded players in China are given to athletes, especially.

Seeing this utility, locals are exploiting and smuggling it in the areas of Pithoragarh and Dharchula in a big way as it gets a mouth-to-mouth price in China.

Even those involved in its collection and business have seen incidents of bloody conflict and two murder cases have been registered in Kumaon.

When the news of its illicit business fell into the ears of the government and scientists, everyone awakened and went to the snow-laden peaks in search of it.

worm studded

In general, it is a kind of wild mushroom that kills caterpillars of a particular insect.

The scientific name of this herb is cordyceps sinensis and the name of the insect caterpillars on which it rises is hapilus fabricus.

Locals call it worm-studded because it is half worm and half-studded and in China-Tibet it is called Yarshagunba.

A team from the Dehradun-based Indian Forest Research Institute, FRI has recently studied and returned. Dr Nirmal Sudhir Harsha, head of forest pathology department at FRI, explains, "These herbs are found in areas with a height of 3500 metres where the treeline ends, i.e., after where the trees stop growing. When the snow melts in May to July, its breeding cycle begins."

It's not easy to look for. Research associate Kumar Khneja, a member of the FRI team that has been in these difficult areas for this, described his experience, "After trekking about 10 days from Dharchula, we hardly reached there, but the locals had already camped there."

"It is sent to bring it up, which is fast-moving because it is hidden inside the soft grass and can be identified with great difficulty."

enchanting booty

It doesn't make the enchanting-studded limelight if it doesn't get hit in recent times, and it's the first time after a record-breaking performance of Chinese women athletes in the 1500-metre, three thousand metre and ten thousand metre squares at the Stuart World Championships.

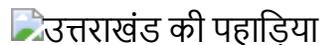


Image caption,

Enchanting herb is found to be high in such high areas of Uttarakhand

His trainer Ma Junren told reporters that he had been regularly consumed by Yarshagumba.

It is said that 3-4 years ago, where the fungus sold at Rs 4 lakh per kilogram, it has now been priced at 8 to 10 lakh per kilogram.

"This fungus contains nutrients such as proteins, peptides, amino acids, vitamin B1, B-2 and B-12," says botanist Dr. An Shukla. They give vigor in immediate form and they are not caught in the doping test conducted by the players."

There are other uses in Chinese-Tibetan traditional systems of medicine. "It has been considered a life-saving drug in the treatment of lungs and kidneys," says Prema Lama, a priest at a Buddhist monastery in Dehradun.

According to sources, worm-studded tonics are now being produced with sexual stimulation, which is in great demand."

For all these reasons, it is so important and a silent business is continuing. "Efforts are being made to legalize its business and the forest department will collect it itself, but it involves so much money that illegal collection and smuggling is going on," says S.S. Rawat, chief conservator of forests, Uttarakhand.

Scientists and environmentalists, on the other hand, are worried that whether illegal or lawful, its indiscriminate exploitation is damaging the fragile biodiversity and ecology of the Himalayas.

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