

**Specific folk taxonomy in sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench) in centre of Diversity, Ethiopia: Rhetoric or reality.** (Oral Presentation)

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**Introduction**

Sorghum is one of the major staple food crops for the poorest and most food insecure people of the world. Ethiopia is the centre of origin and diversity for sorghum; the crop has been cultivated for many thousand years and hence indigenous knowledge based sorghum classification and naming has a long tradition. Farmers maintain a number of varieties on farm for many biological, socio-economic, ecological and cultural reasons. Comprehensive information is lacking on how they name and classify.

**Objectives**

1. To characterise folk taxonomy: classification, naming, criteria, 2. To identify the folk species, subspecies and varieties in the region, 3. To assess the consistency in folk taxonomy and compare it with formal taxonomy, 4. To suggest final implications of folk taxonomy.

**Methods**

In order to assess farmers' classification, naming and grouping for millennia, various research methods were employed. These were focused group with 360 farmers, on farm monitoring and participation with 120 farmers, key informant interview with 60 farmers and development agents and semi-structured interview with 250 farmers. Besides, diversity fair was done with over 1200 farmers. Assessment of folk taxonomy consistency was assessed by 30 farmers' evaluation of 44 folk species.

**Results and Discussion**

Farmers have been growing sorghum for at least 500 years (10 generations). Sorghum is called *B(M)ishinga* in the region. The crop is intimately associated with socio-economic, cultural and biological life of the farmers. Farmers used 25 morphological, 60 biotic and abiotic and 12 use related traits in the sorghum folk taxonomy. Farmers classified their gene-pool by hierarchical classifications into parts which represented distinguishable groups of accessions. Folk taxonomy tree was generated in the highland, intermediate and lowland sorghum ecological regions. Over 78 folk species have been identified. The folk species were named after morphological, use related and breeding methodology used. Relative distribution of folk species over the region, folk taxonomy consistency, and comparison of folk and formal taxonomy are described. Limitation of folk taxonomy is discussed. Finally, new folk taxonomy descriptors have been identified and suggested to be used as formal taxonomy descriptors.

**Conclusion:**

New descriptors of folk taxonomy identified must be scaled up to formal taxonomy. In view of strengths and weaknesses of folk and formal taxonomy, integrated folk-formal taxonomy is imperative for management and utilization of on farm genetic resources.

**Key Words:** folk taxonomy consistency; folk genera; folk species; folk varieties; folk descriptors; sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor* L (Moench); Ethiopia.

**Selected references**

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