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Use of Potential Plant Leaves as Ingredient in Fish Feed-A Review

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Aquaculture, Cost effectiveness, Fish feed, Plant protein, Sustainability

Article Info

Accepted: 04 June 2018 Available Online: 10 July 2018 Fish feed plays an important role in the growth of the aquaculture industry. Use of plant protein source in the feed industry has been in practice for various advantages such as sustainability, availability, cost effectiveness etc. Terrestrial plant leaves of turi, drumstick, ipil-ipil, alfalfa, mulberry, sweet potato, cassava, cucumber, squash, broad bean, papaya, white cowpea, green mung-bean, jackfruit, mexican fire plant, cocoyam, black jack, banana, akee etc. and aquatic plant leaves of azolla, water hyacinth, duckweeds, water lettuce, Indian stargrass, white snow flake, duck lettuce, bur-reed, water fern etc. have been used in the fish feed industry. They are used in the form of fresh and raw, dried, powdered, cooked, fermented, concentrates etc. It is use as direct feed (in case of herbivorous fishes), supplementary or partial replacement to fish meal in formulation of fish feed. The paper is an attempt to make extensive review on potential use of various plant leaves as ingredient in fish feed industry.

Introduction

With the rapid growth in the aquaculture sector in the recent years, the demand for quality fish feed is continuously increasing. Providing quality fish feed became a prime aim of every aquaculturist. Though fish feed devours around 50% of the production cost, yet it plays the pivotal role in the production and yield outcome (Mzengereza *et al.*, 2014). With the increase in demand, the price of feed increased simultaneously. One main reason for

the rise in the cost price of fish feed is due to the rise in demand of fish meal which remains the core of the protein supply of the feed. The demand for fish meal is not just increasing but the supply of it is also dwindling with stagnating marine catches and alternative use of it for livestock and human consumption (Fasakin *et al.*, 1999). So, the quest for possible alternative protein sources to replace (complete/partial) fish meal in the feed became paramount (Magouz *et al.*, 2008). As animal protein sources are mostly expensive

and not easily available, plant sources are considered to be one possible alternative that can be used in fish feed without compromising the nutritional quality of the feed (El-Sayed, 1999; Francis *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, use of cheaper and locally available plant sources to substitute the expensive fish meals would mean reduction in the production cost and thereby enhance the profit (Osman *et al.*, 1996, Munguti *et al.*, 2006).

The prime consideration of selecting a fish feed ingredients and formulation of the feed is the digestibility, palatability and acceptability by the fish, availability and cost of the ingredients (Lovell, 1991; Rodriguez et al., 1996: De Silva and Anderson 1994). Incorporation of plant sources in fish feed generally has its limitation due to low protein content, presences of anti-nutritional factors such as alkaloids, glycosides, oxalic acids, phytates, protease inhibitors, haematoglutinin, saponegin, momosine, cyanoglycosides etc. and their imbalances in some essential amino acids, fatty acids and micronutrients (Wee, 1991; Abowei et al., 2011). The potential of the feedstuffs to be used in fish diets can be established based on their proximate chemical composition (Mzengereza et al., 2014). Efforts are made to remove the anti-nutritional factors in the plant sources (Anderson and Wolf, 1995; Bairagi et al., 2002). Before incorporation into diets and to reduce antinutritional factors the leaf meals were soaked in water, dried, and ground to a small particle size (Lochmann et al., 2011). In fish feed many research has been done on use of soybean, rapeseed (canola) meal, cottonseed meal, sunflower seed meal, wheat and corn gluten, peanut meal, moringa leaves meals etc. (Makkar and Becker, 1996; Francis et al., 2012; Egwui et al., 2013; Mondal and Payra, 2015). The paper attempts an extensive review of the potential of various plant protein sources that can be used as ingredients in formulating fish feed in the aquaculture industry.

Use of alternative plant protein sources in fish feed

Plant products contain huge amount protein, different amino acid and fatty acids which are not available in animal protein (Mondal and Payra, 2015). Use of plant protein in fish feed industry has been tried for various commercial culture fish species as the formulation of feed is specific to species based on their specific requirements. The advantages lie not only in the availability and economic benefits but also that these plant products also have less amount of phosphate and nitrogen than animal protein, therefore. reducing the chances eutrophication of pond. Vhanalakar, (2009) reported that plant source feedstuffs suitable for fish feed formulation are pods, seeds, leaves, fruits of certain plants, grains, oilcakes like linseed, safflower, sunflower, soybean, roots, cereals and cereal by-products, broken rice, rice polish, tubers of sweet potato, wheat bran, maize, cassava, sorghum, etc. In fish feed industry Grasses, vegetables, aquatic weeds, plant's leaves, stems, seeds and seed extracts are commonly used (Mondal and Payra, 2015). Leaf meals for fish feed are often derived from plants of terrestrial as well as of aquatic origins (Bardach et al., 1972). The discussion has been thus grouped into two categories such as:

- 1. leaf meals derived from terrestrial plants
- 2. leaf meals derived from aquatic plants

Leaf meals derived from terrestrial plants

Turi leaf meal

Sesbania grandiflora or turi is a short-lived fodder shrub or small plant belonging widely distributed and cultivated throughout tropical Africa and Asia (Patel, 1966). They grow rapidly and can tolerate wide temperature ranges, waterlogging, acidic and saline soils

(Hansen and Munns, 1985; Gutteridge and Shelton, 1998). The leaves have high protein content and low fibre and often used as fodder, green manure or as a feed ingredient in cattle and aqua feed industry (Onim et al., 1987; Panda et al., 1988). Sesbania is a good source of essential fatty acids but deficient in essential amino acids except for leucine, tryptophan and histidine (Hossain and Becker, 2001). The crude protein content of turi leaf is reported to be higher than other conventional legumes like chickpea, mungbean and cowpea (Francis et al., 2012). Its leaves were reported to contain 22-30% crude protein (Kaitho et al., 1998). Use of its leaf meal in the feed of Labeo rohita reported enhanced growth (Devi et al., 1997). Addition of turi leaf flours in feed ration promoted growth in black tilapia, Orechromis niloticus (Firmani et al., 2015).

Moringa leaf meal

The fresh leaves of Moringa oleifera or 'drumstick' are a highly nutritious supplement to the diet of plant-eating fish such as tilapia, barbs, fancy carps etc. (Yuangsoi and Masumoto, 2012). They harbor rich protein, lipids, vitamins and minerals and hence the leaves, kernel and pods are often used in aquaculture feed industry (Egwui et al., 2013). Makkar and Becker (1997) reported that the leaves of this plant contain 23% crude protein while Egwui et al., (2013) reported 26.4 %. Lochmann et al., (2011) suggested that drying, soaking and grounding the leaf meals into powder could reduce the antinutritional factors. The leaf is free from antinutritional factors except for saponins and phenols (Egwui et al., 2013). Fresh Moringa leaves provide additional protein, vitamins and amino acid such as methionine, cystine, tryptophan that can improve the growth and health of fish (Makkar and Becker, 1996). To partially replace conventional diets Moringa leaves has been successfully used without compromising the growth performance of Nile tilapia (Oreochromis niloticus) (Afuang

et al., 2003; Richter et al., 2003; Tagwireyi et al., 2012), Cyprinus carpio (Yuangsoi and Masumoto, 2012) and Clarias gariepinus (Nsofor et al., 2012). They also reported that the optimum inclusion level of 20% moringa leaves can be used in the formulation diet for catfish C. gariepinus. Afuang and co-workers (2003) also reported that solvent extracts of moringa leaves can replace 30% of fish meal in O. niloticus diets. However, in contrast, Hlophe and Moyo (2014) reported that adding moringa leaf meals to diet of Tilapia rendalli even at the 25 % inclusion level was expensive and resulted in compromised growth and health which may be due to the presence of tannins and polyphenols. To substitute 10% of dietary protein steam heated moringa leaf meal can be used without a reduction in growth performance in Nile tilapia fry (Tagwireyi et al., 2012).

Subabul leaf meal

Leucaena leucocephala, commonly called as ipil-ipil is a fast growing and droughtresistant tropical leguminous plant that is often used in the animal feed industry (Osman et al., 1996). The leaf contains more than 20% crude protein (on a dry matter basis) and seed has α-carotene with rich amino acid profile (Kale, 1987). However, its use has been limited due to the presence of a toxic, nonprotein amino acid, mimosine which retards the growth of animal when consume in high quantity (Sotolu and Faturoti, 2008). However, Pantastico and Baldia (1979) reported improved growth performances in tilapia on inclusion of leucaena leaf meal in diet. Leucaena is a good feed ingredient for small fishes such as mollies, topminnows freshwater (Poecilia spp.) and Macrobrachium rosenbergii (D'Mello and Acamovic, 1989). The inclusion of 33 to 100% leucaena leaf meal in the diet of Oreochromis niloticus fingerlings enhanced fish growth in the cages (Cruz and Laudencia, 1977).

Incorporation of *L. leucaena* leaf meal in the diets of *O. niloticus* at 12.5% inclusion did not affect growth, however, at high levels of inclusion, 25% or more, the growth was adversely affected (Santiago *et al.*, 1988). Moreover, Sotolu and Faturoti (2008) also revealed that the seed has high nutrient content with good protein source that enhanced the growth and survival of *Clarias gariepinus*.

Alfalfa leaf meal

Medicago sativa or alfalfa is a flowering plant grown throughout the world mostly as forage for cattle due to its high protein content and balanced amino acid profile, vitamins, and carotenoids (Olvera-Novoa et al., 1990; Vhanalakar and Muley, 2015). Both fresh and dried leaves have experimented in the feed of (Olvera-Novoa tilapia etal., Chatzifotis et. al., (2006) also reported that incorporating alfalfa protein concentrate in seabream feeds promotes growth. Olvera-Novoa et al., (1990) reported that inclusion of alfalfa leaf protein upto 35% inclusion level can be used in feeds of tilapia without compromising the growth and survival of the fish. It has been reported enhanced growth and survival of common carp and mrigal coupled with an increase in protein and lipid content when alfalfa leaf meals are included upto 40% and 30% respectively in the diet (Vhanalakar, 2009; Vhanalakar and Muley, 2015). Use of dehydrated alfalfa leaves in the diet of tilapia was also reported (Yosif et al., 1994). Most of the researchers recommended low replacement level. Ali et al., (2003) suggested only up to 5% inclusion level. Sklan et. al. (2004) reported that complete may hamper replacement growth the performance.

Mulberry leaf meal

Morus alba or mulberry leaves which are grown for silkworm industry is often used in

fish feed formulations due to high protein content and mineral elements (Bag et al., 2012). The limitation of its use is due to deficiencies in essential amino acids, the presence of anti-nutritional factors and complex carbohydrates (NRC, 1993). Bairagi et al., (2002) recommended that fermentation could be a simple and cheap way to reduce the anti-nutritional factors in it. Mondal et al., (2012) reported that mulberry leaf meal could be a potential protein source in the diet of Labeo bata. Cruz and Laudencia (1978) used mulberry leaf meal for Nile tilapia resulting enhanced growth and lower FCR at 60% inclusion in combination with 40% rice bran. Bag et al., (2012) also reported this leaf meal incorporation in stinging catfish diet enhanced growth and survival, higher acceptance by fish and improved immunity against common disease.

Sweet potato leaves

Ipomoea batatas, sweet potato is widely culture around the world and is also one of the most important food crops in tropical areas (Le Van An, 2004). The leaves have been used as forage for the cattle due to high protein and fibre content (Antia et al., 2006; Adewolu, 2008). Preston (2006) also reported that the crude protein contents ranging from 26.5 to 32.5% in leaves of sweet potato. Adewolu (2008), in his review, mentioned that the leaf meal of the plant has 26-33% crude protein, high amino acid, mineral and vitamin content. He also cited that the advantage of using this plant meal in fish feed is because this plant leaves can be harvested many times a year thereby making the availability easier and cheaper. The presence of anti-nutritional factors such as invertase and protease inhibitors can be removed by oven or sun-drying, boiling or steaming and grinding prior to inclusion in fish feeds thereby increasing the palatability (Oyenuga, 1968; Adewolu, 2008). Experiments on Tilapia zilli resulted that sweet potato leaf meal could be included up to 15% level in diets without compromising the growth and feed efficiency (Adewolu, 2008).

Cassava leaf meal

Manihot esculenta, cassava leaf is widely used as forage for animals due to its palatability and high protein content (Phuc et al., 2000). Ravidran (1991) reported that the leaf meal of cassava has 16.7-39.9% crude protein and mineral content. To reduce the impact of anti-nutritional factors such as cyanogenic glycosides and tannins, the leaves can be soaked and sundried (Hassan et al., 2017). Ng and Wee (1989) suggested that cassava leaf meal can be potentially used in the diet of Nile tilapia without compromising the growth and survival of the fish. Hassan et al., (2017) reported that this leaf meal can be used upto 20% replacement in the diets for African catfish without negatively impacting the growth and nutrient utilization.

Other terrestrial plant leaf meals

Use of other leaf meals from other terrestrial plants such as cucumber, squash and broad bean leaves were experimented by Magouz and co-workers (Magouz et al., 2008). They reported crude protein content level of 26.87%, 21.11% and 27.45% in cucumber, squash and broad bean leaves respectively and can be effectively used in the diet of Nile tilapia. 30% inclusion of duckweed, Spirodela polyrrhiza in the diet of O. niloticus support growth (Fasakin et al., 1999). Eusebio and Coloso (1998) also reported in diet of juvenile Penaeus indicus use of papaya leaf, white cowpea leaf and green mung-bean leaf. They, however, reported that shrimp fed with green mung-bean resulted lower survival. Obwanga (2010) reported that the presence of papain in papaya leaf that helps in protein digestibility promotes fish growth and he further reported that papaya leaf meal may be used to replace

100% fish meal in the diet of O. niloticus. Belal (1999) reported upto 40% replacement of fish meal with sarliconia leaf meal in the diet of Nile Tilapia without compromising its growth. There are also report of using jackfruit leaf, mexican fire plant leaf, cocoyam leaf, black jack leaf, banana leaf, akee leaf as a potential protein source to replace fish meal in the diet of tilapia (Mzengereza *et al.*, 2014).

Leaf meals derived from aquatic plants

Wersal and Madsen (2012) defined aquatic plant as the macrophyte -plants that are visible to the unaided eye. They also reported the various use of macrophytes viz. food for human, medicinal use, livestock fodder, fertilizer, compost, mulch, bioremediation etc. Use of aquatic plant leaves in the fish diet due to high nutrient content is well documented by various authors (Chiayvareesajja et al., 1989; Sheeno and Sahu, 2006; Hasan and Rina, 2009; Wersal and Madsen, 2012). The advantage of usage includes costeffectiveness, ease of availability, nutritional contents etc. (Ray and Das, 1995). Moreover, the aquatic weed that grows in the same water body can be converted into useful feed ingredients (Edwards et al., 1992; Gavina, 1994).

Herbivorous and Omnivorous fish such as grass carps, common carp, tilapia, amur carp etc. are used directly in the weed infested ponds to graze on the weeds (Le Mare, 1952; Ling, 1960; Mehta and Sharma, 1972; Legner, 1975). The cost of production of aqua feed can be reduced using this eco-friendly and sustainable resource (Gangdhar *et al.*, 2014). Ray and Das (1995) also suggested that aquatic which could be used as an alternative protein source in the fish diet. Sheeno and Sahu (2006) used various aquatic weeds as a partial or complete replacement of fish meal protein.

Azolla

Mosquito plant or Azolla is an aquatic freefloating fern that has the ability to fix and assimilate atmospheric nitrogen. It grows rapidly and has the potential to double its weight in 2-3 days. It is also often referred to as "super plant" due to its high nutrient content such as essential amino acids, vitamins (vitamin A, vitamin B12 and Beta-Carotene), growth promoter intermediaries and minerals like calcium, phosphorous, potassium, ferrous, copper, magnesium etc. Azolla contains high protein (19-31%) and low lignin which makes it a desirable ingredient in animal feed industry (Sheeno and Sahu, 2006). Azolla pinnata has been reported to be a potential protein source in fish feed industry (Micha et al., 1988). However, some researchers reported that feeding fresh or dried Azolla directly to the fish may result in poor growth (Antoine et al., 1986; Micha et al., 1988). Gangdhar et al., (2014) gave an account of improved feed utilization in Tilapia mossambica and increased growth in Rohu, Nile tilapia, Common carp, Silver carp and Mrigal when Azolla is incorporated in the diet of the fish. Higher inclusion of Azolla protein concentrate beyond 50% reduced the protein utilization capacity in the diet of Labeo rohita fry (Sheeno and Sahu, 2006). Some researchers are in the view that Azolla powder should be used to replace only upto 25% fishmeal in tilapia (El-Sayeed, 1992), in Etroplus suratensis (Joseph et al., 1994), 45% in Cirrhinus mrigala fry (Gangdhar et al., 2014), 42% in Oreochromis niloticus fry (Santiago et al., 1988), respectively.

Water hyacinth

Water hyacinth, *Eichhornia crassipes* is a rapid growing, herbaceous, free-floating aquatic plant native to amazon basin. This plant is known to be "the world's worst

aquatic weed" due to their invasive nature and the culture of it is restricted in some part of the world. Lareo and Bressani (1982) reported that fresh and composted water hyacinth is used as feed for various animals. They reported 38% protein content in the dry matter of the leaves and 17-26% minerals. Use of water hyacinth as feedstuffs for fish diets for large scale was not recommended by many researchers unless the hyacinths composted or fermented (Liang and Lovell, 1971; Wersal and Madsen, 2012). El-Sayed (2003) reported that fermented water hyacinth can be incorporated into the diet of Nile tilapia upto 25% inclusion level. He suggested fermentation to enhance the palatability and better utilization by the fish. Edwards and his (1985)also co-workers recommended water composting of hyacinth before incorporating into fish diet. They reported that composted water hyacinth can be used to replace fishmeal upto 75% replacement for diet of Nile tilapia. Saint-Paul et al (1981) revealed that inclusion of water hyacinth meal (dried and grounded) upto 18.9% inclusion level does not compromise the growth and survival of Matrincha fish. They, however, suggested that high-level inclusion may not be recommended as the presence of tannin in the plant interferes the protein digestibility.

Duckweeds

Duckweeds or water lens is a floating aquatic plant that grows luxuriantly in freshwater bodies in the tropical and subtropical areas (Majid, 1986). It consists of four genera viz. *Lemna, Spirodela, Wolfilla* and *Wolffiella*. Duckweeds (dry matter) contains 15-43% crude protein, 5-30% fibres, 5% lipids and often used in animal feed industry (Leng *et al.*, 1995; Cheng and Stomp, 2009; Mohapatra and Patra, 2013). They also suggested use of duckweed in fish diet due to presence of high protein, trace minerals, K and P and pigments, particularly carotene and xanthophyll. Fresh

duckweed has been successfully used as feedstuffs for common carp, Thai sharputi, raj puti, silver carp, mrigal and tilapia (Leng *et al.*, 1995; Kabir *et al.*, 2009).

Mohapatra and Patra (2013) experimented on inclusion of duckweed in the diet of common carp. They arrived that fishmeal may not be replaceable by duckweed meal but can be used to supplement the diet upto 15% inclusion level to reduce the cost without compromising the growth. Das and Ray (1989) reported that dried duckweed (Lemna polyrhiza) could be potentially used as a feed ingredient for Labeo rohita fingerlings without affecting the growth and survival of the fish. Yilmaz et al., (2005) recommended fermentation of lemna leaf meal for fish feed formulation. They reported also duckweed can substitute upto 20% commercial fish meal in the feed of common carp. Fasakin et. al.,1999 outline that incorporation of solar-dried duckweed (Spirodela polyrrhiza) upto 30% fish meal replacement in diet of Nile tilapia enhance good growth and is cost effective. Mbagwu et al., (1990) reported that enhanced growth and survival of mango tilapia fingerlings fed with diet containing 10% duckweed (Lemna paucicostata).

Other aquatic plant leaf

Extensive review on literature reveals that aquatic plants are an excellent source of nutrients that can be potentially used in formulation of fish diet (Hillman and Culley, 1978; Bahnasy et al., 2016). Common aquatic plants like water lettuce (Pistia stratiotes), Indian stargrass (Hydrilla verticillata), white snow flake (Nymphoides cristatum), duck-(Ottelia lettuce alismoides), bur-reed (Sparganium spp), Sedges (Carex riparia) and water ferns (Salvinia cuculata) have been experimented in diet of fish (Zolotova and Khromov, 1970; Hajra, 1985; Patnaik et al.,

1991; Ray and Das, 1994). Submerged aquatic plants like chara, hornwort, oxygen weed, water velvet, water milfoil and pondweeds (Elodea) were used to feed the fishes as fresh or in dried powder form incorporated in diet formulation (Stott and Orr, 1970). Use of unicellular microalgae *Chlorella*, *Scendesmus*, *Spirogyra* and *Spirulina* in the fish diet was also reported (Sheeno and Sahu, 2006). Use of hornwort in fish diet reportedly resulted in poor growth which might be due to its poor digestibility (Tantikitti *et al.*, 1988).

In conclusion, aquaculture is one of the fastest growing food sector in the world. With the increase in demand of fish, aquaculture has intensification. into heavy Nutritionally imbalance or poor quality feed would potentially impair the growth and productivity in such highly intensive system. Hence, to ensure that the intensively stocked fishes are fed with nutritional balance diet, the demand for formulated species-specific quality feed escalated in recent years. The cost of fish meal, which has been the chief protein source in feed formulation continues to heightened while the availability declined. Thus, the quest for other alternative protein replace fishmeal to imperative in the sector. However, complete replacement of fishmeal using animal protein source are limited and not cost effective or sustainable, exploration of unconventional sources became paramount plant alternative protein source. Feedstuffs with high carbohydrate can be preferably used as it actuates the protein sparing effect making the feed more cost effective (Hidalgo et al., 1993). It is of the opinion that use of plant protein source could ease the availability of feedstuff and reduce the feed cost (Rumsey, greater 1993). With research experimentation, the limitations of using plant sourced feedstuffs such as the presence of anti-nutritional factors, varying amino acid

contents etc. have been minimized by implying various techniques such as soaking ofthe ingredients, heating, drying, disintegration to finer particles concentrates etc. Hence, many of the plant leaves are used in fish feed formulation as protein source most of which is a partial replacement of fish meal. Use of plant protein source in feed industry is sustainable, environmental friendly and cost effective.

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