# SOME TRADITIONALLY CULTIVATED VEGETABLES OF LEH, LADAKH (JAMMU AND KASHMIR)

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**Abstract:** The present paper enumerates various types of vegetables cultivated by the local people of Leh, Ladakh. Observations show that due to the harsh climate and very short growth season the cultivation of only a few numbers of vegetables is possible in the region.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Cold-desert, Ladakh, Vegetables.

## INTRODUCTION

Ladakh, also known as little Tibet is regarded as the cold desert of India (Singh, 2004) lying between 31º 44'-32º 59' N latitude and 76º 46'- 80º 41' E longitude and covers more than 70, 000 Sq. Km. geographical area of Jammu and Kashmir state (Ballabh and Chaurasia, 2009). More than 85% area of Ladakh is 5000 m or more above the mean sea level (Chaurasia *et al*., 2008). The climate of Ladakh is very unique characterized by prolonged sub zero temperature, low annual precipitation (80-300 mm, mostly in the form of snow), least fertile sandy soils with less water holding capacity, dry humidity (<30%), intense solar radiation, low oxygen content and atmospheric pressure, high wind velocity and rugged terrain (Murugan M *et al*., 2010). The region therefore has a very harsh climate resulting in a short agriculture season (May-September). Farming too is on a very small scale and only a few crops and vegetables are usually grown in the region (Minami *et al*., 1990). The present study was conducted with the aim to enumerate the vegetables traditionally grown in the region.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Extensive field study was conducted by the author during the months of March, 2010 to July, 2010 in the various villages of the Leh district. This period is the peak agricultural time of the region. First hand information about various kinds of vegetables grown in the open fields was collected by visiting the fields and interviewing with the farmers.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The List of vegetables commonly cultivated in Leh district with their common names and families is given in Table 1.

Ladakh is a high altitude desert in the Trans-Himalayan region of India with a farming economy. The people of Ladakh depend primarily on agriculture for their survival. However, in this cold desert of India cultivation is possible only during the summer season which lasts only for a few months and for rest of the year the region is devoid of any type of cultivation. The severe climatic and unfavourable agronomic conditions prevailing in Ladakh restrict both the cultivation period and the available crop/ vegetable species. The major portion of fresh vegetable demand in Ladakh is fulfilled by their import from other parts of the state and the country through surface transport. However both the Srinagar-Leh and the Manali-Leh roads remain closed during the rigorous winter and the region becomes totally cut-off from the rest of the world. These conditions necessitate the storage of excess agriculture produce. People grow and harvest the cultivated vegetables during the summer months and store them for use during winter.

**Table 1.** Vegetables traditionally cultivated in Leh district.

| S.No. | Name of the vegetable | Common Name | Family |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Abelmoschus esculentus* (L.) Moench | Lady's Finger/Okra | Malvaceae |
| 2 | *Allium cepa* L. | Onion | Alliaceae |
| 3 | *Allium sativum* L. | Garlic | Alliaceae |
| 4 | *Brassica oleracea* var.*botrytis* L. | Cauliflower | Brassicaceae |
| 5 | *Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata* L. | Cabbage | Brassicaceae |
| 6 | *Brassica campestris* L. var. *sarson* Prain | Yellow sarson | Brassicaceae |
| 7 | *Brassica oleracea* var. *gongylodes* L. | Knol-khol | Brassicaceae |
| 8 | *Brassica rapa* L. | Turnip | Brassicaceae |
| 9 | *Coriandrum sativum* L. | Coriander | Apiaceae |
| 10 | *Cucumis sativus* L. | Cucumber | Cucurbitaceae |
| 11 | *Cucurbita moschata* (Duch. ex Lam.) Duch. ex Poir. | Pumpkin | Cucurbitaceae |
| 12 | *Daucus carota* L. | Carrot | Apiaceae |
| 13 | *Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standl. | Bottle gourd | Cucurbitaceae |
| 14 | *Mentha arvensis* L. | Mint | Lamiaceae |
| 15 | *Pisum sativum* L. | Pea | Leguminosae |
| 16 | *Raphanus sativus* L. | Radish | Brassicaceae |
| 17 | *Solanum tuberosum* L. | Potato | Solanaceae |
| 18 | *Vicia faba* L. | Broad bean | Leguminosae |
| 19 | *Brassica oleracea* L. var. *acephala* (DC) Alef. | Borecole | Brassicaceae |
| 20 | *Brassica oleracea* L. var.*italica* (Plenck) | Broccoli | Brassicaceae |
| 21 | *Beta vulgaris* L. | Beet root | Chenopodiaceae |
| 22 | *Phaseolus vulgaris* L. | French bean | Fabaceae |
| 23 | *Cucurbita pepo* L. | Summer squash | Cucurbitaceae |
| 24 | *Spinacea oleracea* L. | Spinach | Chenopodiaceae |
| 25 | *Petroselinum crispum* (Mill.) Nym. ex A.W. Hill. | Parsley | Apiaceae |
| 26 | *Capsicum annum* L. | Capsicum | Solanaceae |
| 27 | *Solanum melongena* L. | Brinjal | Solanaceae |
| 28 | *Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill. | Tomato | Solanaceae |

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