



Research Article

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An Islamic Analysis on the Origin and Sources of Herbal Enhancement Substances (*Kayan Mata*)

*Dr. Nafisa Adamu Gurori¹, Dr. Maryam Talatu Umar²

¹ Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts, Sokoto State University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

² Department of Islamic Studies, School of Secondary Education Arts and Social Sciences Umaru Sanda Ahmadu College of Education Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: Dr. Nafisa Adamu Gurori

Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Arts, Sokoto State University, Sokoto, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This paper examines the origin and sources of *Kayan Mata*, a category of traditional herbal enhancement substances widely used in Northern Nigeria for improving intimacy, fertility, sensuality, and general well-being among women. The study highlights the historical evolution of *Kayan Mata* within Hausa culture, tracing its roots to indigenous knowledge systems, trans-Saharan trade influences, and early Islamic medicinal scholarship. Using a qualitative analytical framework, the paper identifies major natural sources—plants, seeds, roots, spices, animal-derived materials, and mineral substances—and presents how cultural beliefs and traditional pharmacology intersect in shaping their usage. The findings reveal that *Kayan Mata* functions not only as aphrodisiacs but also as socio-cultural tools for marriage stability, female empowerment, and holistic healing. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for scientific validation, ethical use, and preservation of indigenous knowledge through documentation.

Keywords: *Kayan Mata*, herbal enhancement, Hausa culture, aphrodisiacs, traditional medicine, Indigenous Knowledge System, Northern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Kayan Mata, a Hausa expression meaning “women’s things,” refers to a rich category of traditional herbal and organic substances used for enhancing sexual pleasure, improving marital intimacy, boosting fertility, and strengthening the emotional bond between partners. Historically, the origin of *Kayan Mata* is linked to the deep-rooted indigenous medical practices of the Hausa people, which predate colonialism and reflect centuries of accumulated knowledge passed through generations of herbalists and elderly women (*‘yan shan magani*). Its development was influenced by a combination of local botanical knowledge, cultural expectations surrounding marriage, and the role of women in sustaining household harmony. Over time, *Kayan Mata* evolved into a complex socio-cultural phenomenon encompassing rituals, herbs, oils, powders, perfumed resins, and therapeutic techniques.

The sources of *Kayan Mata* largely derive from natural materials such as roots, barks, leaves, animal extracts, aromatic spices, and mineral elements found across the Sahel and savannah regions. Historically, trans-Saharan trade further enriched this tradition by introducing exotic spices and resins from North Africa, Arabia, and the Middle East—such as *turare* (incense), *hulba* (fenugreek), cloves, gum Arabic and date extracts—into Hausa markets. As Islam became deeply rooted in Northern Nigeria, the knowledge of Unani and Prophetic medicine also influenced local practices, creating a fusion of religious, cultural, and medicinal beliefs that shaped modern *Kayan Mata*. Today, *Kayan Mata* represents an intersection of tradition, spirituality, and herbal pharmacology, serving both therapeutic and symbolic functions in Hausa marital life.



Origin and Sources of Herbal Enhancement Substances (*Kayan Mata*): An Analysis

The origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances (aphrodisiacs/*Kayan Mata*) can hardly be traced. However, it can be said to have connection with the history of traditional herbal medicine which, based on archaeological evidence, is dated back to the Paleolithic age, which is approximately 5000 years ago. There is also written evidence of herbal remedies dated back to over 5000 years when Sumerians compiled a list of plants.¹ Some ancient cultures wrote about plants and their medical use in books called 'Herbal'. Herbs have been mentioned in Egyptian medical papyri dated from about 1550 BC. In addition, over a hundred of the 224 compounds mentioned in the Huangdi Nijijing, an early Chinese medical text, are herbs. Herbs were also commonly used in traditional medicine of ancient India where the principal treatment for disease was diet (De Materia Medica). Hindu culture wrote poems dating back to around 2000 to 1000 BC which spoke of performance enhancer's ingredients and usage. The Chinese culture had texts dating back to 2697 to 2595 BC. The Roman and the Chinese cultures documented their belief of Aphrodisiac qualities in animal gentiles, while Egyptian wrote tips for treating erectile dysfunction.²

From the above exposition, it can be understood that the ancient civilizations like Chinese, India, Egypt, Roman and Greek believed that certain substances could provide the key to improved sexual pleasure and/or sexual behaviour. This was important because some men suffered from erectile dysfunction and could not reproduce and hence a stimulant was needed. Men who did not suffer from this also desire performance enhancement regardless of their age. These substances gained popularity and began to be documented with information being passed down to many generations.³

In the post-classical West African period, a volume of document titled "Advising men on sexual engagement with their women" from the *Timbuktu* manuscripts was found and used as a guide on aphrodisiac and infertility remedies. Many items were mentioned such as *Ambriem*, *Bufo toad*, *Yohimbine*, horny goat weed, ginseng and alcohol. Some foods are recorded throughout the text which are contrary to aphrodisiac qualities, while numerous plants extract or manufactured hormones have been proposed as aphrodisiac. There is, however, little-quality clinical evidence for the efficacy or long-term safety of using them. More so, the introduction of the first impotence Viagra (sildenafil) in 1990's caused a wave of public attention.⁴

Another source indicates that the origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances started with counteracting witchcraft spell in the 16th to 18th centuries, which gave rise to modern biomedicine development by the early 18th century. Many European doctors such as the English physician, William Salmon, the German Pharmacist, Michael Ettmulkand the German Surgeon Matteu Purmann viewed and believed that infertility magic is based on superstitious belief throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Medical writers became increasingly sceptical of the notion of infertility magic and, by the end of 18th century, the claims about sexual male ficia were widely disregarded throughout Europe. Strikingly, pre-modern aphrodisiac in Middle Eastern cultures rarely claim to be remedying something that was thought to be broken. The early modern European aphrodisiac was used against witches' spell and the modern pharmaceutical. Both hormonal and the viagra claim to be restoring something deficient or counteracting the purported negative effects of aging on libido.⁵ For example, they went further to produce "dee musk" (secreted from the chest glands of central Asian mountain deer) and "ambergris (a concretion of squid beaks excreted from the intestines of sperm in whales). At the Middle East and Europe, between 1500 -1900, mention was made of the potential rise of pharmacopoeia of aphrodisiac, which are converted and enjoyed by numerous cultures, not as remedies against sexual pathology, but as a fragrant and delightful enhancement that were also prescribed as general health tonic products.⁶

Another source of history can be seen in the early modern Christian Europe of distinct category of medical products influenced by the Tunisian Arab Christian scholar named Constantine the African (1020-99) who translated several ancient Greek works of Galen and Hippocratic from Arabic sources into Latin and who wrote a Latin work on sexual medicine (De coitus on coitus) which described a long list of foods and medicines derived from medieval Arabic, Persia and Hebrew traditions that were thought to stimulate sexual desire and pleasure. Most of the influential scholars of medieval Persian pharmacology such as Ibn Sina (Known to European as Avicenna) and Al-Razi (also known as Rhazes) described aphrodisiac substances in their larger works of general medicine.⁷ Therefore, traditional herbal enhancement substances (aphrodisiac /*Kayan Mata*) is at least as old as human civilization. People have been living to enhance their physical and

¹ J. Nun, Ancient Egyptian Medicine, 2002, Transaction of Medical Society of Nigeria publisher, London P.58

² L.L, Nwidu, et- al, "The aphrodisiac herb *Carpolobia*:" A biopharmacological and phyto-chemical review. 2007, N.P, p.15

³ *The aphrodisiac herb Carpolobia*, P.59

⁴ *Ancient Egyptian Medicine, Op. Cit*, p. 62

⁵ R.J. Shamou, *Sex Med.*, n.p, 2010, p.6

⁶ *Sex Med.*, p.8

⁷ L. Bakhtiar, "Canoon Medicine Natural Pharmaceutical (The Law of Natural Healings)" Avicenna on Aphrodisiacs, Seyyid Hossein Nasr, Publisher, 2013, P.21

mental capability for thousands of years. Sometimes, it was successful and at other times with inclusive, comic and even tragic result. In this study, some people were interviewed on the origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances “*Kayan Mata*” and the text of the interviews are presented as follows:

According to Dr. Muhammad, the exact date of origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*) cannot be ascertained. However, historically it is inherited from grand-fathers since that was the time Hausa people developed interest in the field of traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*). It continued from generation to generation with innovation down to our contemporary period, due to the sickness that leads to its usage such as erectile dysfunction from which people seek for cure⁸.

Malama Halima holds the view that the origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*) can be traced back to the creation of man. She explains that since the time Allah created man, he created medicine and its knowledge on what to be used and how it should be used based on inspiration or trial and error, until it gets to the correct ones. As far as marriage is concerned, it is an old institution from the creation of man. Therefore, the remedy for its problem or disease is in line with medicine and its knowledge created by God⁹.

On his part, Dr. Minus said there was no single book that mentions the exact period or date about the origin of traditional herbal enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*), but its existence has been found from Islamic medicine (*Tibb Nabawi*) and other Egyptian books as reference for the source of any medicine to be produced. He further says that in most cases, all recent herbalists or traditional medicinal practitioners sourced their traditional herbal enhancement from either the traditional medicine or from Islamic medicine in order to cure any disease. He stresses that the origin and confirmation of the traditional medicine, whether enhancer or any other traditional medicine that is sourced, mostly falls in between six ways of confirmation and identification of traditional medicine:

1. Through Dream: you can have a dream of something that is a cure to a particular disease. If you wake up and tried it and it yielded a positive solution, a new medicine is found.
2. *Wahyi* of Prophets: some medicines are mentioned in the Qur'an and people use it as part of medicine.
3. Experience: when experience shows that some species of animals eat something that does not belong to them, then people keep watching to see the reason. For example, since we know that a cat is a carnivorous animal, is an animal that feeds only on flesh, if it is seen from time to time eating grasses, that animal will be monitored so as to understand the reason that makes it to behave contrary to its nature. From these observations, people may understand that the animal is sick and that kind of plant is a cure to its disease. The same case will be applied to human being.
4. Spirit possession: this is called *Bori*, witchcraft, or sorcery which was mostly practised in the *Jahiliyyah* period, through the possession of spirit, which is also practised in the contemporary time as a source of medicine.
5. Investigation: when people heard somebody mentioned a sickness and that it is cured by a particular plant, people will go to bush to investigate that plant and apply it on their patient to see if it works; when it was successful, it means they find a new cure.
6. Inspiration (*ilham*): that was when someone felt that something could cure a particular disease, he then tries it and if he becomes successful, a new medicine was found.

These are some of the ways of getting traditional herbal medicine in general that include traditional herbal enhancement substances.¹⁰

Islamic Analysis on Herbal Enhancement Substances (*Kayan Mata*)

However, Mal. Aliyu Zainu was of the view that the origin of traditional herbal enhancement (Aphrodisiac/*Kayan Mata*) started from the *Jahiliyyah* period and continued up to the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) He quoted a verse where Allah says:

O you men! Surely, we have created you of a male and a female and made you tribes and families that may know each other; surely the most honourable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful (of his duty); surely Allah is knowing Aware.¹¹

According to his own interpretation, the word “*shu'uban*” means enjoyment while “*li-ta'arafu*” means seductive, which means for couple to enjoy themselves. The above *ayat* according to him makes the Muslim women go in search for anything that will assist them seduce their husbands or make both of them enjoy themselves¹².

⁸ K.K. Muhammad, 55years, Senior Special Adviser on Medical Herbalist to the Executive Governor of Kano, Tarauni LGA, Kano State, 3/12/21

⁹ A. S. Halima 66years, House no.79, Dogara Quarters, Kano Manusipal, Kano State 2/12/2021

¹⁰ A.M Minu, 55years, Chairman for enhancement of Traditional and Islamic Medicine, Tarauni LG Kano 2/12/2021

¹¹ Qur'an, chapter 49, verse 13

¹² A. Zainu, 52yrs, Chief Imam Yar'aduwa Quarters Mosque, Katsina 26/11/2021

Yanusa stated that the traditional herbal enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*) started over 500 years or 5 centuries back, since the time of civilization when man's laboured to decrease and thereby giving them the opportunity to relax at home. That gave birth to more demand for sexual intercourse and men paid more attention to their wives. When the wives saw that the need of their husband increased upon them and they cannot cater for their need based on the nature of their less libido due to the circumcision which female Arab children had, they started looking for a remedy that will assist them to satisfy their husband, majority of whom practise monogamy system of marriage.¹³

Dr. Salihar Nur held the view that the origin of traditional enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*) began since the time of our forefathers. Our ancestors had shown in the previous books like *Al-Kanoon*, the *Dibbi of Ibn Sina*, *Taskira Dawaud al-daki*, *Al-Dibbi Nabiyyi of Ibn Qayyayn Al-Zauji*, *Tufatul Ibn Badair* and many more, the in activeness of women and how they should take care and maintain themselves since Islam permits polygamy and also Allah afflicts man with disease and, at the same time, made its cure widespread on earth. If there is a problem or a disease hindering marriage, there will definitely be their solution, such as the ones we inherit from our great grandparents¹⁴.

Hajiya Kulsum maintained a view that the origin of traditional enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*) cannot precisely be identified, but it has a long history of existence. It is as old as marriage, which is passed or inherited from generation to generation. It can only be traced to traditional herbal medicine since "*Kayan Mata*" is connected with the issue of fertility of male gender. Some men use it while in some cases, it is their wives who gives it to their husbands knowingly or otherwise. She further elaborates that in the olden days, Hausa people tend to quarantine their bride, feed her well and give her some types of food, traditional herbal and made her to bath with (henna leaves). Even today, some people realize the secret of quarantining of bride as used in the olden days. Sometimes, our mothers pound millet and cloves, ginger and some plants part to make what is known as "*Gumbar mata*" which is taken with milk by a potential bride in the late hours of the day. All these are part of traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*). Because of modesty of women of olden days, they felt shy to discuss anything about their relationship with their husbands¹⁵.

Lastly, Haj. Fanna said that the traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*) originated from one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) Nana Aisha, who maintained that the use of musk after menses is considered as "*Kayan Mata*", because it cleanses the uterus, which leaves a pleasant smell and it also makes the woman's virginal tight. Haj. Fanna further explains that Nana Aisha used to lick honey (sic). Basically, Prophet recommended the use of honey as a remedy to some ailment where he said:

.... I advise you to use both treatments i.e honey and the Qur'an....¹⁶

However, she went further and said drinking of milk is also good to body and help to cure some diseases. That's why our contemporary Muslim women are practising it. This is considered as part of traditional herbal enhancement (*Kayan Mata*) and it is believed that it increases libido. Even though the wisdom of their usage is not mentioned in *Hadith*, until now women started to discover the reason/wisdom behind it. Although it has been considered as part of *sunnah*, today it is considered both as *sunnah* and medication for both men and women who use it.¹⁷

From the above discussion, it can be seen that historically, traditional herbal enhancement substances started with male and increase testosterone (male hormones) levels rather than oestrogen levels (female hormones). It was only recently that attention has been paid to understanding how traditional herbal enhancement can aid female sexual functions. The cultural influence of northwest Nigeria where shyness is expected from female delays the spread of the women traditional enhancement substance (Aphrodisiac/*Kayan Mata*).

In Islam, health and disease are part of Allah's creation and for several purposes Allah subjects man to pass through these alternate periods of happiness and suffering. However, this does not mean that man should not seek relief from Allah of His affliction. This can be seen where Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said;

Seek medical treatment, O Allah's servants, for Allah has created no disease except that He has created its cure apart from old age¹⁸

¹³ Z. Yanusa, 54years, Shariah Court Judge Aliyu Zayyad Road GRA Katsina State 24/11/2021

¹⁴ N.S. Adam (Salihar Nur), 54years, Executive direct for Sauhar institute of Nature Health science Kano, Sani Mai Nagge Sabon Titi, Kano State 1/12/2021

¹⁵ K. Kulsum, 56years, Deputy Commander general Women, Hisbah, Tukuntawa Kano Manucipal, Kano State, 29/11/2021

¹⁶ M. Mahdi Sharif, *Sunnan Ibn Maja* (the Correct Tradition of Prophetic Sunnsh), Daral Kotob Al-Ilmiyyat Beriut Lebanon, Vol. Iv, Bok of Medicine, 2008, P.4

¹⁷ M.Fanna, 45years, Sarauniya Maganin Gargajiya ta Nigeria, Bangare Shariffai, Na'ibawa 'yar akwa A Kano State, 11/12/21

¹⁸ M. Mahdi al-Sharf, "*Sunan Ibn Majah, The Sixth Corrected Tradition of The Prophetic Sunnah*", Vol. IV, Dar Kotoob Al-Ilmiyyat, Lebanon, 2008, P.1

And, in another Hadith, the Prophet said;

There is no disease that Allah has created without creating its treatment.¹⁹

Based on these prophetic statements, one can say that traditional herbal enhancement substance exists. However, its origin is not properly documented. From the above information, it is clear that it started with men and then later it included women. A man's sexual problem is well noted and its effect on his partner is known due to her nature. That is why men medicine is better known than that of women. Until recently, most history of "*Kayan Mata*" has to do with the wide spread of both sexes in the world. This is because some men have the problem of erectile dysfunction or pre-ejaculation and impotence which is associated with infertility.

It has been noted that the origin of traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*) in north-western part of Nigeria is all encompassing historically, medically, Islamically and traditionally. The record of its emergence is, however, not all that known. As indicated earlier, it is obtained from traditional herbal medicine or Islamic medicine which comes from *Tibb Nabawi*. Medically, it is around 1990 that viagra was produced for men, followed by that for women which is said to increase the level of libido. Therefore, traditional medicines have existed for both men and women.

Social Meaning in Hausa Marital Life

Traditionally, *Kayan Mata* was rooted in a philosophy that intimacy should strengthen companionship, not be a source of anxiety. Women were taught that emotional closeness, respect, and communication mattered more than physical enhancement. Herbs played a supplementary role, reflecting a holistic understanding of marriage as both spiritual and physical²⁰.

Types of Traditional Herbal Enhancement Substances (*Kayan Mata*)

As mentioned earlier, any food, plant or drug that arouses sexual instinct, induces venereal desire and increases pleasure and performance can be classified as traditional herbal enhancement substances or "*Kayan Mata*". Similarly, any types of medicines that are derived from plants, animals or minerals are also regarded as traditional herbal enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*). A lot of natural substances have been historically known as traditional herbal enhancement substance (*Kayan Mata*) in Africa and Europe such as Yohimbine and "*Mandrake plant*" as well as ground rhinoceros horn in Chinese culture and Spanish fly" which is toxic. Even in today's culture, certain foods that are used as aphrodisiac include strawberries, raw oysters, chocolate coffee and honey, because are also believed to have some aphrodisiac potentials. Although these natural items are claimed to be aphrodisiac but there is no or little scientific confirmation to support those claims.

Various substances from animals and plants have been used in folk medicines of different cultures to serve as energizer, vitalize and improve sexual function and physical performance in men. Out of these, very few have been identified pharmacologically for increasing libido, such as *ambrein*, a major constitutive of *Ambragrisea* used in Arab countries.²¹ It contains a *tricyclic tritepene* alcohol which increases the concentration of several anterior pituitary hormones and serum testosterone. *Bufo* toad skin and gland contain *Bufadienolides* which is a *hallucinogenic* congener of *serotonin*. It is the active ingredient used in west India, and love stone which is used as a sex stimulant. It works as an antioxidant by enhancing nitric oxide (NO) synthesis in the endothelium of corpora cavernosa (CC).²²

Aphrodisiac plants include *carpolobia* which is popular in West and Central Africa, Gabon and Nigeria. In Yoruba language, it is called "*it Efik*". It is accepted and commonly utilized as a herbal booster of libido. It is used to induce penile erection and enhance male vitality. It is used as a chewing stick prepared from the stem and root of their *carpolobia alba* (CA) or *carpolobia lutea* (CL). Its leaves are used for curing of fever, pains, and insanity. In English, it is called cattle stick, It is known as *agba* or *angalasala* in Igbo, *egbo oshu shun* (in Yoruba) under the family of *polygalaceae*.²³

Therefore, *Kayan Mata* can be classified by their mode of actions into three types:

1. Those that increase libido/pleasure
2. Those that increase sexual enhancement
3. Those that increase potency (energizer)

¹⁹ I. Mohammad "*Al-Bukhari, The correct Tradition Of Al'Bukhari*", DarAl-Kotoob AL-Ilmiyah, Lebanon, Vol.IV, 2007, p.12

²⁰ M.M. Abdullahi, *Sexuality and Culture in West Africa*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 2016, p. 51.

²¹ O.J. Enema *Et-al*, "*Chemistry and Pharmacology of Aphrodisiac Plants*": Journal of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Research, Nigeria, 2018, 3

²² *Chemistry and Pharmacology of Aphrodisiac Plants*, p.4

²³ *Chemistry and Pharmacology of Aphrodisiac Plants*, Op. Cit, p.8

Those that Increase Libido/Pleasure (Sexual Desire and Arousal)

There are some traditional herbal enhancements substance that increase libido or desire for sex which are used by both men and women. Even though no food has been scientifically proven to stimulate the human sex organs, some people believe that any act of eating can suggest sex to the mind, which in turn can help to stimulate desire in the body. For instance, food that creates warm and moisture i.e. chili, curry is thought to arouse heated passion. Others include date, tiger nut, rice, honey, pineapple, onion, sugar cane, water melon, green tea leaves, moringa leaves, *tribulus* leaves, (*tsaida in Hausa*) *bakin/farin gagai* (*fodogia agrestis*), magic beans and monkey tamarid known as *tsamiyar biri in Hausa*, (*mucuna pruriens*). Food that looks like sexual organs or resembles male or female genitalia are believed to increase desire. Roots and vegetables such as carrot and other fruits like banana, mangoes, apples, and so on are among others. Again, some reproductive organs such as fish roe, birds' eggs and animal genital are thought to increase sexual desire and potency. Others are bull or ox, he goat, ram penis, as well as rat, hyena and fox penises.²⁴

More so, all foods that are considered rare and consequently expensive are believed to be sexually exciting. These include potatoes, cocoa, apple, pear, olives, grape, nuts and so on. They are considered as sexually stimulating because they have effects on the senses (sight, smell, test and touch) in a pleasurable way. Another category includes onions, turnips, leeks, squash, asparagus, and watercress. These are not only stimulating desire, but also increase sperm count. Shapely fruits like apples and curvaceous pears were seen as erotic edibles. Likewise, heavily-seeded fruits like pomegranates, figs, (*baure in Hausa*) passion fruit, (*eso bonni in Yoruba language*, *Ya'yan rumman in Hausa*) and higos fruit such *taura in Hausa* are stimulant and fertility-enhancing seeds.²⁵

Those that Increase Sexual Enhancement

This group of traditional herbal enhancements gives more energy and cure fatigue, which erase stress and depression. They also enhance erection and sustain it for a long period of time depending on the quality of the medicine and the needs of its users. In most cases, such remedies are mainly used by males even though it could be helpful for women too. They came mostly in oral drug for men, such as citrus aurantium, bitter orange (*babban lemu or lemun taba*, *earycoma longifolia* (alis umbrella) ponax, ginsens C.A, withania somnifera (L) (*dadadurus in Hausa*) *bakin gagai*, *farin gagai*, *minanas*, maca root, *tribulus* (*tsaida*), nutmeg, ginseng, horny goat weed, saffron crocus (the stigma is dried and used) the obroma cocoa bean, coffee (nescape gold) and so on.²⁶

Nutritional Aphrodisiacs

Foods like honey, tiger nuts, and dates are known in many cultures to enhance libido and hormonal balance due to their high nutrient content. These food-based enhancers are natural, safe, and aligned with traditional dietary practices. Their appeal lies not only in physical effects but also in strengthening emotional connection through shared meals or rituals²⁷.

Those that Increase Potency (Energizer)

This category belongs to another type of traditional enhancement substance which is used by both men and women in form of liquid or powder, such as in juice form or tea. These kinds of herbal enhancers include date, water melons, tiger nuts cloves, nutmeg and many others that contain high quantity of glucose to give energy and fight fatigue. Examples include: *ganye idon zakara*, *saiwar mata*, *gyadar mata*, *hakin daka*, *taga malam* and *asuwakin mata*.

To prepare some of them, dates are soaked in the water together with clove overnight till it becomes soft, the seeds are then removed before it is blended and the juice extracted as a drink. Alternatively, dates can be pounded to remove the seeds then dried and then pounded again together with cloves and ginger produce powder to be taken with honey. More so, the above mentioned herbs can be washed and boiled for two days together with species until all their contents are released in the water before they are sieved. Honey or sugar syrup are then added and taken whenever needed. Another mixture of moringa leaves, *mazar kwaita* (sugarcane candy) *cukwi* (camel cheese), dates, sesame, rice, and groundnut are all mixed and grinded to a powder form and then taken with yoghurt.²⁸

Mechanism of Action

The traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*) act as an enhancement to sex organ sensation and performance. They improve the blood flow to the male sex organs, thus improving the male libido. A similar response in women may also produce an increased sexual stimulation. However, they increase sexual potency, sexual pleasure or libido. Even though there is no much scientific backing in most of the traditional herbal enhancement substances, they are mostly based on trial, experience and belief. However, some of those with scientific backing believed to have the mechanism of

²⁴ A.M. Abdullahi, Zinzriya mace wajen mijinta da igantattu magunguna 2, np, Kaduna,nd, p21

²⁵ The aphrodisiac herb *Carpolobia: A biopharmacological and phytochemical review*, Op. Cit p.42

²⁶ The aphrodisiac herb *Carpolobi*, p.43

²⁷ A.R. Mohammed, *Traditional Medicine in Northern Nigeria*, Kaduna, Arewa Press, 2004, p. 88.

²⁸ I.Yahaya "Sirrin Mijjinki a tafiin Hannunki", vol.1, capital press, Al-Riyad Islamic center, Katsina, 2013, p.23

action on how they work in the body and that after the concentration of specific neuro transmitters or sex hormones in the central nervous system, some of them increase the concentration of several anterior pituitary hormones and serum testosterone such as tricyclic tri-terpene alcohol.²⁹

He went further to say that:

Some scientists believe that there are animal extracts that arouse sexual desire, stimulate genitalia or enhance erotic pleasure. While some have the view that their mechanism of action is based on wishful thinking as most of the herbalist are quacks as well as due to the fact that recent pharmacological research has not shown much interest in the knowledge of aphrodisiac or traditional herbal enhancement substances (*Kayan Mata*). There are traditional medicine across the world history which are purported to influence sex but have never been subjected to modern scientific investigation. Their substances were mainstream inherently in the medieval eastern tradition and their use was understood to be both valuable and appropriate and most especially and broadly within the Muslim, Christian and Jewish piety.³⁰

Natural Benefits of Traditional Herbs

Some natural ingredients used in *Kayan Mata*—such as ginger, cloves, dates, coconut oil, and fenugreek—have scientifically recognised health benefits. These include improved blood circulation, reduced inflammation, increased energy levels, and stress relief. When used responsibly, such herbs support general wellness and emotional balance³¹.

Transformation in the Modern Era

In contemporary Nigeria, *Kayan Mata* has undergone significant transformation. Urbanisation, economic hardship, and mass media have shifted the meaning and usage of these substances from discreet marital tools to highly advertised commodities available in markets, bus stations, salons, and online platforms. Social media influencers now showcase aphrodisiacs in dramatic video demonstrations, drawing thousands of viewers. The trend reflects deeper societal anxieties: women fear losing their partners, couples struggle with communication gaps, and young people face unrealistic expectations about sexual performance. As a result, the use of aphrodisiacs has become both a coping mechanism and a misunderstood cultural practice.³²

Categories of Modern *Kayan Mata*

Modern *Kayan Mata* can be grouped into three broad categories: natural herbal enhancers, ritual/spiritual-based products, and chemically enhanced formulas. The first category maintains a connection to traditional roots, using herbs with known therapeutic properties. The second involves practices that raise moral and cultural concerns. The third—which dominates the online market—contains synthetic chemicals that pose serious health risks³³.

Religious Perspectives

Islamic teachings support maintaining marital intimacy, but they prohibit practices that cause bodily harm or involve spiritual manipulation. Scholars caution against products that promise supernatural influence or physical damage. Traditional herbal remedies based on natural wellness are acceptable, but harmful and deceptive practices contradict Islamic ethics³⁴.

Conclusion

The analysis of the origins and sources of *Kayan Mata* demonstrates that it is not merely a collection of aphrodisiac substances but a culturally embedded system of knowledge that reflects the historical, social, and medicinal realities of Hausa society. Rooted in indigenous herbalism and enriched by trade interactions and Islamic medical traditions, *Kayan Mata* has continued to evolve into a significant aspect of women's wellness and marital support. Its natural sources—from plants to spices and animal derivatives—highlight the sophistication of traditional pharmacology within African societies. However, the growing commercialization of *Kayan Mata* in contemporary times underscores the need for scientific evaluation, ethical regulation, and education on safe usage. Preserving the authentic cultural heritage of *Kayan Mata* while promoting responsible practice will ensure that this indigenous knowledge continues to benefit future generations.

²⁹ Prof. Ahmed Yakubu Katsina, 62years, Consultant Gynecology, Maryam Abacha Women & Children Hospital Sokoto, Sokoto State, 17/01/22

³⁰ Prof. Ahmed Yakubu Katsina,

³¹ H.I. Bello, *Herbal Pharmacology in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Lagos, Lantern Books, 2019, p. 95.

³² J. Yusuf, *Gender, Health, and Society in Contemporary Nigeria*, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press, 2020, p. 62.

³³ A.R. Mohammed, *Traditional Medicine in Northern Nigeria*, Kaduna, Arewa Press, 2004, p. 80.

³⁴ M.M. Abdullahi, *Sexuality and Culture in West Africa*, Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 2016, p. 98.

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