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TRADITIONAL HERBAL REMEDIES AMONG THE BHILALAS OF WEST NIMAR DISTRICT, M.P., INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Traditional herbal remedies common among the Bhilalas of West Nimar district of Madhya Pradesh are reported. In all 29 species belonging to 28 genera and 21 families are recorded. Their correct scientific names, local names, parts used and mode of administration are mentioned for each plant.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnobotany is the study of relationship between man and his ambient vegetation. It has become an important and crucial area of research and development. The state of Madhya Pradesh has the largest population of tribals (12 million) in the country which is almost 23 % of the state's total population. There are 46 sheduled tribes belonging to different districts of the state and these tribal groups are further divided into 161 sub-groups on the basis of lingual, social, economic and ethnic considerations. West Nimar district is the home of tribals and forest dwellers. About 40% of the population consists of tribal people. Bhilala, Tadvi, Mankar, Barela and Banjara are the most common tribes among the tribal communities. Although ethnobotanical work has been done in other parts of India in general and Madhya Pradesh in particular (Jain 1965, 1975; Maheshwari *et al.* 1981; Sahu 1992; Shah 1971; Singh and Maheshwari 1989, and Varma *et al.* 1999) only a little amount of work has been done in West Nimar district (Mahajan 1990, 1995).

In the present study a survey was done to collect information regarding the plants used by the tribals in general and Bhilalas in particular in the treatment of various diseases. Bhilala tribe mainly resides in Satpura mountain ranges especially in Dhulkot and Pipalzopa sectors.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present work was done during 1999-2000 and the plants used by the Bhilalas in the treatment of various diseases were collected and herbarium sheets were prepared. Identification of the plants was done after consulting the standard literature (Chopra *et*

al., 1956; Cooke 1957; Jain 1965, 1975; Kirtikar and Basu, 1935; Maheshwari et al, 1981; Mukherjee, 1991; Oomachan and Masih 1984). Following is the list of plants which are generally less known for their local uses but used by the Bhilala tribe in West Nimar district. The plants are arranged in alphabetical order with their scientific names, local names and the names of families to which they belong. The information regarding the uses of plants is collected from tribal medicineman and old tribal persons residing in the area. The herbarium sheets are deposited in the Botany Deptt., Govt. P.G. College, Khargone for future record.

ENUMERATION OF PLANTS

Acacia nilotica (Babul) Fam.-Mimosaceae. Leaves are used to cure headache and eye inflamation.

Amaranthus spinosus (Chila) Fam.- Amaranthaceae. Roots are used in eczema and colic troubles.

Butea monosperma (Khakra) Fam. Papilionaceae. If one pulvinous leafbase is chewed and juice swallowed daily in morning for a week, then any type of colic trouble is successfully cured for ever.

Cassia tora (Charota) Fam. - Ceasalpiniaceae. Seeds are used to cure joints pain.

Cissus quadrangularis (Harjor) Fam.- Vitaceae. Stem juice is used in scurvy, dried leaves in digestive troubles and externally stem paste is applied for bone fracture.

Cuscuta reflexa (Amarbel) Fam.- Cuscutaceae. Vegetative parts are used as purgative. Its juice is used to cure leucoderma.

Cynodon dactylon (Druba) Fam.- Poaceae. Juice is given in chronic Diarrhoea and dysentery.

Daemia extensa (Utran) Fam.- Asclepiadaceae. Its leaf juice is used in the treatment of dysentery and asthma trouble.

Echinops echinatus (Unt kanta) Fam.- Asteraceae. Its root is used as abortifacient and aphrodisiac.

Euphorbia hirta (Bari Dudhi) Fam. - Euphorbiaceae. Plant decoction is used in dysentery and colic trouble in children.

Ficus religiosa (Peepal) Fam. - Moraceae. Fruit powder is given is asthma.

Gloriosa superba (Kalhari) Fam. - Liliaceae. Leaf juice is used to kill head lice. The warm poultice prepared from its tubers is locally applied in rheumatism and neuralgic pains.

Gynandropsis pentaphylla (Hurera) Fam. - Capparidaceae. Its seeds are used in killing intestinal worms especially for the expulsion of round worms. Warm leaf juice is used in ear diseases.

Heteropogon contortus (Dama Ghas) Fam. - Poaceae. Oil extracted from its awns, when taken in minute quantity with betal, is useful in asthma and cough.

Jatropha gossypifolia (Lal arenda) Fam. Euphorbiaceae. Stem is used as tooth brush and cure dental troubles.

Momordica charantia (Karela) Fam.- Cucurbitaceae. Its fruits are anthelmintic and laxative.

Moringa oleifera (Sarjana) Fam. Moringaceae. Juice of flowers is given in stone trouble.

Merremia umbellata (Undri ka Chara) Fam. Convolvulaceae. Flower juice is used in treatment of eye diseases.

Ocimum basilicum (Tulsi) Fam. Lamiaceae. Its leaves are used in fever, pneumonia, cough and cold.

Psoralia corylifolia-(Bawachi) Fam. Papilionaceae. Seed oil is applied externally to cure leucoderma.

Rhynchosia minima (Tin patia) Fam.- Papilionaceae. Leavas are used in healing wounds.

Ruṇgia parvilflora (Pindi) Fam. -Acanthaceaae. Its leaf juice is used in chicken pox.

Syzygium cumini (Jamun) Fam. Myrtaceae. Its fruits are used to cure diabetes and liver trouble.

Sida cordifolia (Kharenti) Fam. Malvaceae. Its leaves are used as vegetable in the treatment of bleeding piles and to check excessive urination.

Solanum nigrum (Kamnya dhamnya) Fam. Solanaceae. It is used as vegetable or as a decoction in chronic enlargement of liver and jaundice.

Solanum xanthocarpum (Bhui ringni) Fam. Solanaceae. Seed paste is used in pyorrhoea.

Terminalia bellirica (Bahera) Fam. Combretaceae. Its dried fruits are used in dysentery and indigetion.

Tridax procumbens (Kulhara) Fam. Asteraceae. Pest of leaves is applied over cuts and wounds.

Trigonella foenum-graecum (Methi) Fam Papilionaceae. Its leaves are used in rheumatism and joints pain.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the present study in all 29 angiospermic plant species have been recorded which belong to 28 genera under 21 families. These species are commonly used by the tribal people and generally recommended by the tribal medicine man and vaidhyas to cure different diseases. These plant have also received much attention of the pharmacologists.Important medicinal plants species used by the Bhilalas are *Amaranthus spinosus* (Chila), *Daemia extensa* (Utran), *Cassia tora* (Charota), *Heteropogon contortus* (Dama ghas), *Rungia parviflora* (Pindi), *Tridax procumbens* (Kulahara), *Euphorbia hirta* (Bari dhudhi), *Jatropha gossypifolia* (Lal arenda), *Merremia umbellata* (Undri ka chara), *Solanum nigrum* (Kamnya dhamnya), *Cissus quadrangu-laris* (Harjor), and *Psoralia corylifolia* (Bawachi). Further work in this direction is in progresss.

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