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UNREPORTED ETHNOMEDICINAL USES OF PLANTS AS APHRODISIAC FROM THE FOLK-LORES OF UTTAR PRADESH PLAINS, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with unreported medicinal uses of eighteen plant species (belonging to sixteen families) exploited as aphrodisiac among the folk-lores of Uttar Pradesh plains, India. The data are outcome of ethnobotanical survey of more than 300 villages of nine districts *viz.*, Bahraich, Gonda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh, Raebareli, Sidharthnagar and Sultanpur. Local name of plant, part of plant used, mode of drug preparation, administration and doses are given under each species.

INTRODUCTION

Since antiquity man has always been in quest of searching some formulations/herbs in order to rejuvenate the ageing body so that he can have sexual enjoyment for long span in life. In almost all the literature and ethnic groups of folk-lores of the world, there are a number of known formulations which are extensively employed for the purpose. However, a number of such formulations/herbs which are traditionally employed for centuries amongst various ethnic groups have remained secrets amongst them. Although a number of these have been brought to literature and science for proper scientific provings, several of them still remain secrets of folk-lores. While studying the ethnobotany of Uttar Pradesh plains in India, authors recorded some interesting information of plants used as aphrodisiac hitherto unreported in relevant literature (Watt, 1889-1893; Kirtikar and Basu, 1935; Anonymous, 1948-1976; Chopra *et al.* 1956, 1969; Uphof, 1959; Jain, 1968, 1991; Agarwal, 1986; Anonymous, 1986; Caius, 1986; Nayar *et al.* 1989). The present paper provides such information of eighteen plant species gathered from nine districts of Uttar Pradesh *viz.*, Bahraich, Gonda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh, Raebareli, Sidharthanagar and Sultanpur. These information are broadly aphrodisiac, however, in restricted sense, as referred by the tribal and/or rural midicinemen, relate to enhance the sexual desire in man or check the early semen fall during sexual intercourse or check the premature ejaculation due to erotica.

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METHODS

Out of nine districts investigated, two districts *viz.*, Bahraich and Gonda harbour a tribe known as Tharu, one district Mirzapur is inhabited by a number of tribes *viz.*, Bayar, Bind, Chero, Dharkar, Gond, Kol, Musahar, while rest of the districts are inhabited only by a large number of rural population. In all, more than 300 villages were visited and attempt was made to extract the information from knowledgeable persons or medicinemen of the villages through personal communication and influence. Collection of voucher plant specimens and information thereof were made following the method of Jain (1965) and Jain and Rao (1976). All the information have been presented in the paper under the corresponding plant name which have been arranged alphabetically. The data are ordered as follows : botanical name / name of the family / local name / brief description of mode and part of the plant used in medicine alongwith doses / locality of information/ name of collector and collection number (field number) / notes from literature regarding other ethnomedicinal uses of plants in Uttar Pradesh or India. In each collection number the numerical is prefixed by the term

AICRPE, BSI (CC) which has not been provided in the text in order to economise the space. All the specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of Botanical Survey of India, Central Circle, Allahabad (BSA).

RESULTS

1. **Abelmoschus esculentus** (L.) Moench (Malvaceae) *Bhindi.*

About 5gm root powder is taken with cow milk once a day for 3 weeks. (Raebareli, Kasrawa : *Srivastava* 321).

The fruits have been reported to act as abortifacient (Tarafdar, 1983).

2. **Acacia leucophloea** (Roxb.) Willd. (Mimosaceae) *Rewnja.*

About 20 ml of leaf decoction is given once a day with cow milk for a month, (Jalaun, Saidnagar : *Shukla* 841).

The root has been reported to act as abortifacient (Maheswari and Singh, 1987) while the bark as astringent (Sebastian and Bhandari, 1984) and to treat ulcer. (Apparanantham and Chelladurai, 1986).

3. **Achyranthes aspera** L. (Amaranthaceae) *Lahchichra.*

In Raebareli district, about 5gm seed powder is given with water once a day for four months while in Mirzapur district, about 10gm seeds are boiled in one litre of milk till the milk concentrates to 250 ml. It is given in the morning for two months. (Raebareli, Kasrawa and Mirzapur, Rajapur : *Srivastava* 304 and *Khanna* 1061).

Although the plant has been reported to have multifarious medicinal properties but from Uttar Pradesh it has been recorded to treat dysentery (Sexena and Vyas, 1983), leucoderma (Gupta, 1981), piles (Singh, 1988), skin diseases, stomachache, toothache (Rajwar, 1983) and as antifertility (Maheshwari *et al.* 1980, 1981).

4. **Bacopa monnieri** (L.) Pennell, (Scrophulariaceae) *Jalneem.*

About 10gm powder of the whole plant is given twice a day with water for a fortnight. (Jalaun, Saidnagar : *Shukla* 842).

The whole plant has also been described to treat eczema and ringworm (Sexena and Vyas, 1983) and as laxative (Uniyal, 1968).

5 **Clitorea ternatea** L. (Fabaceae) *Aparajita.*

About 20gm of root powder is given once a day with cow milk for two weeks. (Jalaun, Saidnagar : *Shulka* 835).

Sexena and Vyas (1983) have recorded the root of the plant for the treatment of goitre and leprosy.

6. **Convolvulus prostratus** Forssk. (Convolvulaceae) *Safed dudhi.*

Whole plant is dried and powdered. About 10g powder is taken with cow milk for one month (Hamirpur, Rahallia : *Srivastava* 994).

7. **Eclipta alba** (L.) Hassk. (Asteraceae) *Bhangra.*

Leaves and fruits are dried and powdered. About 10gm powder is taken with cow milk for two months. (Raebareli, Dalmau : *Srivastava* 309).

The plant has earlier been reported to treat leucoderma, skin diseases (Purohit *et al.*, 1985), jaundice, wounds, spleen enlargement (Rajwar, 1983), liver complaints (Sharma *et al.*, 1979), malaria (Maheshwari and Singh, 1987), carbuncle (Ved Prakash and Mehrotra, 1988) and swelling (Maheshwari *et al.* 1980).

8. **Emblica officinalis** Gaertn. (Euphorbiaceae) *Aonla.*

About 20 gm dried fruit powder and 25gm sugar candy are given once a day with cow milk for a month. (Raebareli, Unchahar : *Srivastava* 370).

Various parts of the plant have been reported from Uttar Pradesh to treat asthma, bronchitis, indigestion (Sharma *et al.* 1979), constipation (Maheshwari *et al.* 1980), diabetes, dysentery (Negi *et al.*, 1985), eye diseases (Maheshwari *et al.*, 1986), thirst, wounds, antidote to scorpion sting (Maheshwari and Singh, 1987) and as tonic, laxative, diuretic and cooling effect (Rajwar, 1983).

9. **Farsetia jacquemontii** Hook. f. & Thoms. (Brassicaceae) *Faridbooti.*

One teaspoonful of plant decoction is given twice a day for one week. (Gonda, Ramedi : *Khanna*, 255).

10. **Gmelina arborea** Roxb. (Verbenaceae) *Gambhar.*

Usually 3-4 fruits are eaten as such twice a day. (Jalaun, Bohadpura : *Shukla* 843).

Sharma *et al.*, (1979) have reported the treatment of cough and wounds with the leaves of the plant.

11. **Indigofera linifolia** (L. f.) Retz. (Fabaceae) *Ratanjot* or *Vilayati nil.*

In Sultanpur district about 20 ml plant decoction is prescribed with little amount of sugar once a day for a fortnight while in Hamirpur district about 10gm. dried plant powder is referred with a cup of water once a day for a month. (Sultanpur, Kadipur and Hamirpur, Rahallia : *Shukla* 117 and *Srivastava* 995).

The plant has been reported to treat amenorrhoea (Sharma *et al.*, 1979).

12. **Mukia maderaspatana** (L.) Roem. (Cucurbitaceae) *Vankhira.*

About 5 gm leaf powder is taken with cow milk once a day for 21 days (Hamirpur, Girwar : *Srivastava* 969).

Singh and Pandey (1980) have reported the treatment of diabetes, diarrhoea and toothache from eastern Rajasthan.

13. **Oxalis corniculata** L. (Oxalidaceae) *Pati.*

About 10 gm powder of the whole plant is given with water once a day for a fortnight. (Gonda, Inchapur : *Khanna* 244).

The plant has been described to treat wart (Purohit *et al.*, 1985), cuts (Saxena and Vyas, 1983; Shah and Joshi, 1971), swelling (Shah and Joshi, 1971), dysentery (Sharma *et al.*, 1979; Rajwar, 1983), fever (Rajwar, 1983), jaundice (Singh *et al.*, 1980), rickets (Maheshwari *et al.*, 1980, 1981) and stomachache (Maheshwari and Singh, 1984).

14. **Punica granatum** L. (Lythraceae) *Anar.*

Ectocarp of the fruit is dried and powdered. One teaspoonful of the powder is taken twice a day with water for a month (Raebareli, Newazganj : *Srivastava* 412).

Shah and Joshi (1971) have reported the treatment of cough and pimples with the fruits and leaves of the plant respectively.

15. **Ranunculus sceleratus** L. (Ranunculaceae) *Jaldhania.*

Seed oil is massaged over penis. (Jalaun, Bohadpura : *Shukla* 854).

The leaf has been reported to cure eczema. (Sexena and Vyas, 1981).

16. **Syzygium cuminii** (L.) Skeels (Myrtaceae) *Jamun.*

One teaspoonful of seed powder is taken with water twice a day for a fortnight. (Raebareli, Newazganj : *Srivastava* 416).

The bark has been reported to tbe astringent (Rajwar, 1983) and treat piles (Singh, 1988) while fruits for digestive complaints and leaf to treat blisters in mounth. (Maheshwari and Singh, 1984).

17. **Terminalia arjuna** (Roxb.) Wt. & Arn. (Combretaceae) *Arjun.*

About 25gm powder of the dried stem bark is given with 100 ml of cow milk twice a day for a month. (Bahraich, Berdia : *Khanna* 88).

The bark has earlier been reported to treat dysentery (Maheshwari *et al.*, 1986), heart diseases (Saxena and Vyas, 1983) and as tonic (Saxena and Vyas, 1983; Sharma *et al.*, 1979).

18. **Vigna trilobata** (L.) Vardc. (Fabaceae) *Vanmoong.*

About 10gm powder of the whole plant is given with cow milk thrice a day for a month. (Jalaun, Saidnagar : *Shukla* 837).

DISCUSSION

It is apparent from the findings that the tribal and rural people of Uttar Pradesh have vast knowledge about the traditional medicinal uses of plants. While living amidst and near the forest they exploit the available plant wealth of their area even for specific cases such as consummate

married life *in lieu* of other tonic/ fruits available in other areas. Non-availability of such medicinal uses of these plants in literature reveals the distinctiveness of the rural society. Moreover, the findings are significant since the efficacy of these plants have been confidently claimed for the purpose reported in the paper and hence warrant the need of detailed pharmacological investigations.

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