

Use of aquatic and marshy plants in ethno-veterinary practices by tribals and rural people of Jammu province, (J&K), India

SYEEDA MAHMUD AND NAZAK HUSSAIN SHAH

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SUMMARY

Present communication provides information on 21 aquatic and marshy plants used by tribals and rural people of Jammu province for treating livestock diseases. Jammu province is bestowed with rich biodiversity in terms of aquatic and marshy medicinal plants and is also the home of many tribal and ethnic communities. Information on the plants used for veterinary practices was obtained through interviews of herders, shepherds, heads of tribes and others that work with farm animals, during the period of 2007 to 2008. A total of 21 plants belonging to 18 genera and 15 families were identified for treatment of a variety of animal affliction. Out of 21 plants species 15 species belong to dicots, while 6 species belong to monocots, 5 species are used externally where as 16 are administered orally. These plants have been arranged alphabetically with their families, local names, specific preparation and mode of administration.

Key words : Aquatic and marshy plants, Ethno-veterinary practices, Dicots, Monocots, Tribals

Traditional uses of medicinal plants have been continuing since Vedic period and still a large population is dependent on these plants. Before prehistoric period domestic animals had started to act under the direction of man. Since domestication was the first unnatural work of mankind, therefore, the domesticated animals were subjected to various ailments. In due course of this struggle between man and nature, early men developed various skills in the treatment of their pets by plants through life long trial and error and continued from prehistoric age to modern cybernetic age through various phases of history.

India has long history in the use of herbal medicine for animal treatment Sasaki, (1995) and a few studies on traditional veterinary medicine have appeared during the last two decades Baggot (1997), Issar (1981), Pal (1980), Sebastine (1984). Recognising the importance of such traditional medicines for livestock, which includes buffaloes, cows, goats, horses and sheeps, the FAO regional office for Asia and Pacific has printed a series of publications on the development and promotion of the traditional veterinary medicine during the past few years.

In spite of the clinical agents developed by the pharmaceutical industry, traditional indigenous phytotherapy is still practiced in many rural areas for human and livestock ailments, using strictly guarded

treatments handed from generation to generation.

There are a number of lentic and lotic water bodies at different locations in Jammu province harbouring luxuriant growth of aquatic and marshy plants. These plants are potentially rich in terms of medicinal resources, besides catering to the other needs of the inhabitants for food, fodder, fuel, shelter etc. Several earlier accounts regarding the ethno-veterinary use of terrestrial plants of J&K were given by different workers Sharma and Singh (1989), Chaurasia *et al.* (1999), Showkat *et al.* (2003), Faruque (2000), Singh and Kushal (2000) and Rashid *et al.* (2007), but present is the first attempt to explore the potentialities of aquatic and marshy plants in terms of ethno-veterinary practices. The present work aims at scientific cultivation and preservation of the aquatic and marshy plants as well as dissemination of the knowledge about the ethno-veterinary medicines.

Study area :

Jammu, the winter capital of J&K State is situated at a longitude 74° to 76° - 15°E and latitude 30°-30' to 32°-15'N and altitude ranging from 304.8 to 3658.5 mts. above mean sea level. Jammu province exhibit sub-tropical to alpine climatic conditions and divided into 10 districts - viz. Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch, Ramban, Reasi, Samba and Kishtwar, situated at different altitudes. Jammu province is the home of many tribes and pastoral communities including Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis, Sipis and Paharis, mostly living in remote and farflung areas. These tribals, ethnic communities and rural people being the residents of remote and farflung areas, do not have access to modern

Correspondence to:

SYEEDA MAHMUD, Department of Botany, University of Jammu, JAMMU (J&K) INDIA

Authors' affiliations:

NAZAK HUSSAIN SHAH, Department of Botany, University of Jammu, JAMMU (J&K) INDIA