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Some plants in folk medicine of Chhindwara district, Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Hitherto unknown uses of 34 plant species in the treatment of antivenom, eczema, leucorrhoea, piles, pyorrhoea, asthma, ophthalmia, hernia, enteric fever and other diseases by the tribals and rural people of Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh are reported.

Key words : Tribals, Folk medicine, Chhindwara district, Madhya-Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

The people of rural India, by and large, are still dependent on traditional medicines for their healthcare and treatment of diseases. These medicines have been developed through the experience of many generations assimilating the knowledge, in course of time, from fragments of Ayurvedic, Yunani as well as tribal systems of medicine. These may be called 'Folk medicines'.

Chhindwara district not only known for oranges, maize, cotton or coal deposits but its natural and scenic beauty also attract every one who comes here for the first time. The name of the place is derived from the 'Chhind' or date-palm-tree. Chhindwara, in the south-west of Jabalpur Revenue Division, is situated on the Satpura Plateau in the South-Central part of the Madhya Pradesh State and lies between latitudes 21°23' and 22°49' North and the longitudes 78°10' and 79°24' East.

Considerable work has been done on ethno medicinal plants which are used for various ailments by the tribal of Chhindwara District, M.P. (Rai, 1987, 1989) and ethno-medicinal aspects of this area as well as the adjoining region of Chhindwara have been reported by Rai (1987, 1988).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The observations are based on surveys conducted in tribal dominated areas of Chhindwara district during 2008-2009. Group interviews were organized bringing plants from surrounding areas and showing them to tribals of assorted ages into the forest, as suggested by Jain

(1987). The specimens were identified in the herbarium and voucher specimens were deposited in the Department of Botany, Dr. Hari Singh Gour University, Sagar (M.P.) The data gathered were screened with the help of available literature (Jain, 1991). Plant species uses marked with asterisk are new to the existing knowledge. In the enumeration, the botanical names are arranged alphabetically followed by family, local names in inverted commas and locality. In a majority of cases, fresh plants are used for alleviating the complaints.

Enumeration :

Abrus precatorius L. (Fabaceae), 'Gulnchi':

Use: Root and seeds are used for preparing tonic.

Leaf extract is applied on ringworm and also taken orally against snake bite.

Acacia nilotica (L.) Del. (Mimosaceae), 'Babool':

Use: Leaves are given orally to pregnant ladies for birth of beautiful child, although their parents may be ugly.

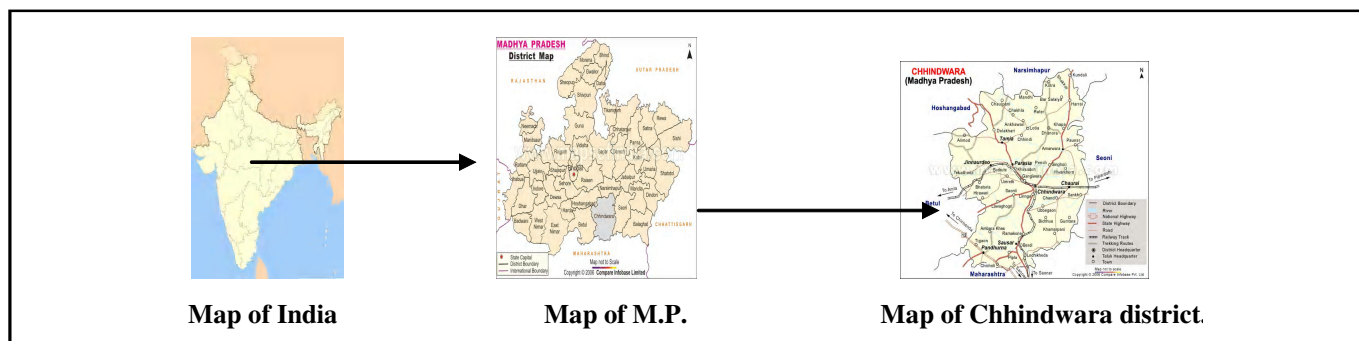
Achyranthus aspera L. (Amaranthiaceae), 'Chirchitta':

Use: Roots are put under the pillow of pregnant lady to accomplish easy delivery and are removed immediately after delivery.

Allium cepa L. (Liliaceae), 'Pyaj':

Use: Fried bulb in butter is given for three days to cure piles. The patient is advised to avoid curd for six days.

Omkar Bawistale, Brajesh Sahu and P. Sahu (2010). Some plants in folk medicine of Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh, *Ann. Pharm. & Pharm. Sci.*, 2 (10) : 106-108



Aloe barbadensis Mill. (Liliaceae), 'Gawarpatha':

Use: Pulp of leaf is applied on swelling, burns and piles. It is also given orally in sunstroke and for improving digestion.

Anethum graveolens L. (Apiaceae), 'Sua':

Use: Seed extract is given orally thrice a day for three days to dissolve kidney stone.

Annona squamosa L. (Annonaceae), 'Setaphal':

Use: Branches are used as tooth brush to cure pyorrhoea.

Arisaema tortuosum (Wall.) Schott (Araceae). 'Kotukand':

Use: Underground bulb of this plant is crushed and given orally in snake-bite.

Bauhinia racemosa Lam. (Caesalpiniaceae), 'Kachnal':

Use: Extract of leaves is given orally to ladies in menstrual disorder after child birth.

Bombax ceiba L. (Bombacaceae), 'Semal':

Use: Sugar is mixed in the infusion of flowers and given orally to cure acidity and urinary problems. Extract of flowers is given in typhoid.

Butea monosperma (Lam.) Taub. (Fabaceae), 'Dhak':

Use: Bark powder is given orally to cure a gastric problem.

Decoction of bark is given orally as antivenom against snake bite.

Calotropis procera R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae), 'Aak':

Use: Honey is mixed in the powder of roasted roots and given orally before meal to cure asthma. The root is used to cure jaundice.

Capparis decidua (Forssk.) Edgew. (Cappareaceae), 'Kair':

Ann. Pharm. & Pharm. Sci.; Vol. 1 (2); (Oct., 2010)

Use: Stem bark and root of old plant are burnt, made into powder and mixed with black sesame and given orally for early cure of old bodyache.

Cissampelos pareira L. (Menispermaceae), 'Kala pata':

Use: Leaf extract is given orally in snake-bite.

Datura innoxia Mill. (Solanaceae). 'Kala Dhatura':

Use: Fresh leaves are tied on the wounds or swollen part of the body for early cure.

Dalbergia sissao Roxb. (Fabaceae), 'Sisum':

Use: Leaves are crushed with curd and given orally in dysentery.

Diplacyclos palmata (L.) Jeffery (Cucurbitaceae), 'Shivling':

Use: Crushed seeds are taken thrice a day for six weeks after pregnancy for birth of male child.

Echinops echinatlls Roxb. (Asteraceae), 'Utkanto':

Use: Flowers are crushed with mustard oil and applied on the warts for early cure.

Root paste is applied on scorpion sting.

Ficus bengalensis L. (Moraceae), 'Bargad':

Use: Whole plant used in the form of decoction, powder and latex to treat diarrhoea, vomiting, thirst and bony growth.

Ficus racemosa L. (Moraceae), 'Umar':

Use: Latex is applied on blanch of mouth.

Gloriosa superba L. (Liliaceae), 'Kalgari':

Use: Paste of tuber is applied on wound for early healing.

Mimosa pudica L. (Mimosaceae), 'Chimuai':

Use: Root extract is given orally to ladies suffering from leucorrhoea.

Moringa longifolia Wall. ex DC. (Moringaceae), 'Hargua', Bhim:

Use: Extract of roots is used as a tonic.

Nerium oleander L. (Apocynaceae), 'Kaner':

Use: Root paste is applied on the body to cure eczema.

Root is considered poisonous, but its paste is used in skin diseases.

Ocimum canum Sims. (Lamiaceae), 'Tulsi':

Use: Crushed seeds are mixed in 250 ml milk and given to patients suffering from leucorrhoea for seven days.

Phoenix dactylifera (L.) Roxb. (Arecaceae), 'Khajur':

Use: Ripe fruits, tender peduncle, sago and terminal leaf buds are edible and are used to cure diabetes.

Polyalthia longifolia (Sonn.) Thwaites (Annonaceae), 'Ashok':

Use: Decoction of bark is given to ladies in menstrual disorder.

Pongamia pinnata (L.) Pierre (Fabaceae), 'Kangia':

Use: Seed oil is externally applied in skin diseases and also taken to encounter the poisoning effect of fish.

Prosopis juliflora (Sw.) DC. (Mimosaceae), 'Bilaytibabul':

Use: Paste of leaves is used externally to cure warts and wounds of the body.

Punica granatum L. (Punicaceae), 'Anar':

Use: Leaves are crushed with salt and boiled and the decoction is given to patients suffering from toothache. Powder of ovary wall is given with cold water in dysentery.

Syzygium cuminii (L.) Skeels (Myrtaceae), 'Jamun':

Use: Seed and bark extract is taken on empty stomach for cure of dysentery.

Tamarindus indica L. (Caesalpiniaceae), 'Imli':

Use: Seed paste is used as an antidote to scorpion sting and snake bite.

Trichosanthes cucurmerina L. (Cucurbitaceae), 'Keehan':

Use: Crushed seeds are mixed with milk and taken on empty stomach in diabetes.

Vitis latifolia L. (Vitaceae), 'Jangli Angoor', Kelwa:

Use: 25 g. crushed roots are mixed with 25 g. jiggery and given orally for three days to cure menstrual bleeding. The patient is advised to avoid curd during the course of treatment.

The present investigation has brought to light some popular and frequently used prescriptions available for minor ailments, such as treatment of anti-venom, eczema, leucorrhoea, piles, pyorrhea, asthma, ophthalmic, hernia, enteric fever and other diseases. In a majority of cases, fresh plants are used for alleviating complaints. A concise list of wild plant resources of the district and their utilization will provide basic data for further studies aimed at conservation, traditional medicine and economic welfare of rural and tribal population of the district.

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