

Sacramental belief prevailing in Valsad district

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Sacramental belief means using particular plants in particular nakshatra or particular time, or just keeping the plants with patient can also cure the patient. There are many sacramental beliefs which are prevailing in this area where people use medicinal plants or other things which they believe can cure the disease.

Humanity, since eternity has lived with different forces of nature, including plants and animals. The only goal of primitive life would have been to survive and proliferate through progeny. The accumulated quantum of knowledge lead humanity towards modernization. The modernization brought in many novelties. The society controlled, resisted, accepted and at times rejected novelties. All the changes had to face the ups and downs in the society. Whenever “new” was accepted the advocates of “new” normally condemned the “old”. The “old” suffered. However, the old also survived because any system would always have at least some minority as its proponent. The system of healing also treaded through such path of ups and downs. The older system was “Ayurveda”. The great science, which served this country for eons. Ayurveda suffered oblivion during the reigns of foreign rulers, almost for 400 years. The modern healers used molecule based medicines either derived from plants or synthesized *in vitro*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During our work we had visited the site several times, especially on Saturday and Sunday, on which generally victims or sufferers from disease go to “Bhuvas” and ‘Bhagats” to be cured. We met many field workers, farmers and senior citizens of the area to collect the information in the field of Ethnobotany. They were proved very rich with the knowledge. They told us many uses of several plants. There are many sacramental beliefs which

are prevailing in this area where people use medicinal plants or other things which they believe can cure the disease like, by plucking the roots, cutting the branches or collecting the leaves at particular time or nakshatra, or just keeping the plant attached to the body can cure many diseases. Many healers prescribed the plants which patients do not have to intake but just tie and the disease is supposed to be cured. The other major sacramental belief is to pluck the parts of the leaves in particular nakshatra but some healers told that by publisising this, the users won't cut the plants at any time or as and when required and we can save the plants.

Sacramental notes:

Fever:

Pluck the roots of *Ipomoea turpethum* (L.) R. Br. (Nasotar) in Pushya Nakshatra and tie it with red thread. Tie it on hand and it will cure fever.

Pluck the roots of *Achyranthes aspera* L. var. *aspera* (Aghedi) in Pushya Nakshatra and tie it with red thread. Tie it on hand and it will cure fever.

Insomnia :

Keep the roots of *Abrus precatorius* L. (Safed chanothi) below head, one will get very long and sound sleep.

Tie the roots of *Hygrophila auriculata* (Schum.) Heine (Ankhro) on the body and go to sleep. One will get better and long sleep.

Easy delivery :

Bring the plant of *Datura metel* L. (Dhatura) on Sunday and tie a small branch to the pregnant lady.

Select and mark the roots of *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd. (Malkakdi) on Sunday before 12.00. O clock in the morning. At 4 inch from bottom of the root tie a black thread, then remove it and tie it to woman's back. Tie it till one gets labour pain. On delivery it should be removed. If one wants second child then one should throw it in sea in full tide, if one throw's in ebb one would not get second child.

Take the roots or nodes of *Ipomoea sinensis* (Desr.) Choisy (Suthaidi) and tie it in pure cotton cloth. Tie this

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cloth for nine months and nine days or till a woman gets normal delivery. Do not remove this till the child is born.

Tie the roots of *Achyranthes aspera* L. var. *aspera* (Aghedi) in the hair or on loins. This facilitates smooth delivery.

Miscarriage:

From the day woman gets pregnant she should sit or sleep on the mat prepared from *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. (Dabhdo).

Galactagogue:

Remove the bark of *Acacia senegal* Willd. (Goradiyo) (It should be removed early in the morning only, not in the afternoon), dry and mix 10 g with 200 ml water. Give it in the morning.

The superstitious procedure is to make the woman stand holding an empty cup near abdomen, the mixture is to be poured on her head allowing it to pass between the breasts and finally it collected in the cup held by a woman. This is then drunk by the woman.

Conjunctivitis :

Take the fibers from the bark of *diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb. (Bedi pan) and banana stem and tie 7 knots on this fiber and wear it on any part of body for a week.

Loose motion :

Take the roots of plant *Vernonia cinerascens* Sch-Bip. Sahdevi, make 7 pieces and wrap them with red thread and tie it to patients back.

Displacement of pechoti:

Put the roots of *Thespesia populnea* L. (Paraspipdo) near the pechoti, it will come to original place.

Make a Diya (lamp) of wheat flour and place it on navel. Little the *diya* and cover it. Pechoti will come back to its original position.

Fill a copper vessel with water and place it on navel for 10 to 15 minutes, tie thread on the right legs first finger. Pechoti will return to its original position.

Migraine :

Tie the roots of *Abrus precatorius* L. (Lal chanothi) on the left ear.

Take the roots of *Achyranthes aspera* L. var. *aspera* (Aghedi) and keep it bellow your head while sleeping.

One can tie a node of *Rubia condifolia*L. (Majeth) on your head.

Toothache :

Tie the roots of black *Abrus precatorius* L. (Chanothi) on ear.

Keep a broken tooth of small child in *taveez* with the roots of *Thespesia populnea* L. (Paras pipdo) and wear this *taveez*.

Cough :

Tie the roots of *Mimosa pudica* L. (Lajamni) in neck.

Elephantitis :

Uproot the plant of *Calotropis gigantea* (L.) R. Br. (Akado) on Sunday and tie it with red thread. Then place it or tie it on affected area. The disease will be cured in 2 to 3 hours. Then remove the plant and place it in side a deep hole in the ground.

Bring the roots of *Calotropis gigantea* (L.) R. Br. (Akado) which is from north side of your residence. Tie a red thread on the root and then tie it to patients back.

Piles :

Take 6 g of roots of black *Datura metel* L. (Dhatura) and tie it on your back

Boils :

Tie the outer skin of snake on the boils.

Convulsions :

Take silk thread and tie 21 *Myristica fragrans* Houtt. (Jaiphal) and make necklace and wear it near throat.

Take 10 g *Ferula asafoetida* L. (Hira hing) in a cloth and sieve it. Tie a thread to it and wear it in the neck.

Bleeding from nose :

If bleeding starts from right nostrils tie a thread in last finger of left leg and if from left nostril tie on right leg.

Brain tonic :

When it is solar or lunar eclipse have a bath and wear clean clothes. Go in east direction and bring *Tephrosia purpurea* (L.) Pers (Sarpankho) and tie it in *taveez* and wear in neck.

In *kartak* month on *chavdash* sow *shankhahulina* plant. On the day of *hastnakshatra* remove this plant with root. Wash it with water and crush the whole plant and make its pills. Dry it in shade and then fill it in a bottle. Eat daily one pill in Shraavan month.

Leucorrhoea :

Bring roots of vyadhrankhi from north direction in *utar falguni nakshatra* and tie it to the back of woman.

Menstrual disorder:

Woman having delayed or lack of menstrual cycle should bring the roots of *Ailanthus excelsa* Roxb. (Arduso) in *Jyeshth nakshatra*, clean it with water and do dhoop. Tie this root on the back. Cycle will be regularized.

Hernia :

Bring the roots of *Mimosa pudica* L.(Lajvanti) on Saturday and tie it on one's back.

Contraceptive :

Dip the cotton plug in *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss. (Limbodi) oil on friday and place it inside the vagina of lady, by doing so she won't get pregnant even if indulged with sexual relationship.

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