

FOLKLORE ABOUT SOME MEDICINAL PLANTS FROM THE TRIBAL AREAS OF JALPAIGURI DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with ethnobotanical uses of 30 plants belonging to 20 families which were reported by the tribals viz. Mech, Rabha, Nepali, Oraon and Munda. The information may be useful for further studies since most of the uses are less known to other societies.

INTRODUCTION

The Jalpaiguri district was taken up for ethnobotanical studies in consideration of its rather large and various types of tribal inhabitants (Mech, Rabha, Oraon, Munda etc.) and for rich vegetational types covering almost all the parts of the district.

During the year 1978-79 three field tours were undertaken by the authors in the tribal concentrated areas of Baikunthapur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar forest divisions and a number of information on folk uses of plants were collected.

The present paper deals with the uses of 30 species which are not mentioned in any well known published literature (Chopra et al, 1956 ; Kirtikar & Basu, 1935 ; Watt, 1879-1893 ; Wealth of India, 1948-1976). They are arranged alphabetically by their botanical names followed by the name of the family, tribal names, locality, field numbers and tribal uses following abbreviations denoting Loc.=Locality, Mun.=Munda, Nep.=Nepali, O.=Oraon and R.=Rabha.

The plant materials collected in the field together with notes on their uses by the tribals of the district are deposited as herbarium sheets in the Economic Botany Section, Central Botanical Laboratory, Botanical Survey of India, Howrah.

***Adhatoda zeylanica* Medic. (Acanthaceae)**

Bakash (R.)

Loc. : Khutimari : CBL 24580.

One teaspoonful of the decoction of the leaf is given once daily for 5 days to a woman after delivery ; a decoction of the leaf is used also for giving her a warm-bath if she suffers from swelling of the limbs (R.).

***Ampelocissus latifolia* (Roxb.) Planch. (Vitaceae)**

Panilahara (Nep.), Panilata (O.)

Loc. : Khairbari : CBL 17964.

The potable water obtained from a cut stem is used as an eye drop in eye-inflammation and in falling of some foreign bodies in the eye (Nep.).

***Callicarpa arborea* Roxb. (Verbenaceae)**

Dudhia-khoksi (O.), Orkhauili (Nep.)

Loc. : North Diana : CBL 17927.

Young branches are made into a paste and small pills are prepared ; it is given three times daily to a mother for improving lactation. Lactating cows fed with young leaves yield more milk (O.).

Root is made into a paste with water and given in pneumonia three times daily (Nep.).

***Clerodendrum viscosum* Vent. (Verbenaceae)**

Ghato (O.)

Loc. : Nathua : CBL 17910.

One teaspoonful juice of fresh roots is

given with common salt three times daily in diarrhoea (O.).

Coccinia cordifolia (L.) Cogn. (Cucurbitaceae)
Kundri (O.)

Loc. : Khutimari : CBL 24558.

The juice of the leaf is used as an ear drop to cure pus in affected ear (O.).

Crotalaria alata Buch.-Ham. ex D. Don
(Fabaceae)

Karatke (R.)

Loc. : Santali : CBL 20833.

The fruits are made into a paste and small pills are prepared which is taken once daily in tuberculosis (R.).

Curcuma aromatica Salisb. (Zingiberaceae)
Kala-halud (Nep. & O.)

Loc. : Khairbari : CBL 17951.

The rhizome is made into a paste and applied on the sores of leprosy (Nep.).

Deeringia amaranthoides (Lamk.) Merrill
(Amaranthaceae)

Ultakanta (Nep.)

Loc. : Khairbari : CBL 17965.

The root is tied to the arm to expedite child birth (Nep.).

Diplazium esculentum (Retz.) Sw. ex Schrad.
(Polypodiaceae)

Bigdhakia (R.)

Loc. : Santali : CBL 20835.

The root is made into a paste and applied on the septic ulcers of the domestic animals (R.).

Dolichos lab lab L. (Fabaceae)

Simi (O.)

Loc. : Khutimari : CBL 24566.

About 2 cm long root is tied to arm to expedite child birth (O.).

Dracaena angustifolia Roxb. (Liliaceae)

Tav-chakar (R.)

Loc. : Chilapata : CBL 20883.

The stem is made into a paste with the muscles of snails or mussel and applied on the broken limbs for healing (R.).

Dumortiera hirsuta (Sw.) R. Bl. et. Nees
(Marchantiaceae)

Siuri (R.)

Loc. : Santali : CBL 20842.

The juice of the plant with cocoanut oil is used as an eye drop in eye inflammation (R.).

Erythrina indica Lamk. (Fabaceae)

Faledo (Nep.)

Loc. : Khairbari : CBL 17959.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of juice of the stem bark is given thrice daily in Jaundice (Nep.).

Ficus religiosa L. (Moraceae)

Pipal (R.)

Loc. : Khutimari : CBL 24579.

The decoction of the stem bark is mixed with a small quantity of molasses. One cup of this mixture is given orally twice daily for 3 days to cure patients suffering from red urine with pain (R.).

Grangea maderaspatana (L.) Poir. (Asteraceae)

Karena (R.)

Loc. : Santali : CBL 20844.

A capitulum (whole inflorescence) is wrapped in betel leaf and taken orally twice daily in empty stomach to cure asthma and hooping cough (R.).

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis L. (Malvaceae)

Joba (O.).

Loc. : Nathua : CBL 17920.

One flower bud is given to a lady after menstruation in empty stomach once daily for 10 days as an antifertility drug (O.).

Leucas lavandulaefolia Sm. (Lamiaceae)

Goma (O.)

Loc. : Nathua : CBL 17912.

The leaf is made into a paste with ginger and given to hen suffering from diarrhoea with white coloured stool and drowsiness (O.).

Meyna laxiflora Robyns (Rubiaceae)

Maon kanta (Mun.)

Loc. : Nathua : 17907.

Root is made into a paste with water and given twice daily for stomach pain (Mun.).

Mezoneuron cucullatum (Roxb.) W. & A.
(Fabaceae)

Kalaram-poan (R.)

Loc.: Chilapata: CBL 24516.

The root is boiled with mustard oil and applied externally to cure cracking of the sole of the foot (R.).

Mimosa pudica L. (Fabaceae)

Buharijhar (Nep.)

Loc.: Khairbari: CBL 17966.

The juice of the root is given every 2 hours for two days in the ulcers of the throat. In case of the ulcers of the tongue the decoction of the root is used for gargling (Nep.).

Orthosiphon rubicundus (D. Don) Benth.
(Lamiaceae)

Chonk-rai (R.)

Loc.: Chilapata: CBL 20872.

About 50 grams of root is made into a paste with common salt and given to cow once daily for 3-days in septic ulcer on the shoulder (R.).

Oryza sativa L. (Poaceae)

Dhan (Mun.)

Loc.: Nathua: CBL 17905.

The rice is burnt with cobweb and the ash is given orally to children in diarrhoea with white stool (Mun.).

Rhamnus nepalensis (Wall.) Lawson (Rhamnaceae)

Kalighas (Nep.)

Loc.: Khairbari: CBL 17955.

Whole plant is made into a paste and applied on the ulcers of cows to keep away the flies from infection (Nep.).

Solanum indicum L. (Solanaceae)

Jangli Bhata (O.)

Loc.: Nathua: CBL 17911.

The stem is worn in fever. In rheumatism the juice of the stem with mustard oil is boiled for a few minutes. This medicated oil is applied on the affected limbs (O.).

Solena heterophylla Lour. (Cucurbitaceae)

Golkakri (Nep.)

Loc.: Khairbari: CBL 17956.

Two teaspoonfuls of juice of the tubers is given to take orally thrice daily in piles (Nep.).

Stephania hernandifolia (Willd.) Walp.
(Menispermaceae)

Batul Pata (Nep.), Bankundri (O.)

Loc.: Nathua: CBL 17908.

The root is made into a paste and given in stomach pain. The root is also worn in fever (Nep.).

One leaf is prescribed to a woman to take orally once daily for seven days after menstruation for antifertility (O.).

Synedrella nodiflora (L.) Gaertn. (Asteraceae)
Sappruno (Nep.)

Loc.: Khairbari: CBL 17957.

The root is made into a paste with water and applied on the gums in toothache (Nep.).

Urginea indica (Roxb.) Kunth (Liliaceae)
Crar-rashun (R.)

Loc.: Barodabri: CBL 20855.

The leaf is made into a paste with common salt and given to cow for improving health.

The bulb is made into a paste with the bark of the stem of *Alstonia scholaris* R. Br. and the fleshy portion of the fruits of *Benincasa hispida* (Thunb.) Cogn. and given to take orally to pregnant woman and animal for abortion (R.).

Vallisneria spiralis (L.) O. Kuntze (Alismaceae)

Mauson (R.)

Loc.: Santali: CBL 20831.

The root is made into a paste and given to take orally with hot water to a pregnant lady for abortion (R.).

Xanthium strumarium L. (Asteraceae)

Virijata (R.)

Loc.: Chilapata: CBL 24519.

The juice of the leaf is used as an ear drop to cure pus in the affected ear (R.).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to Dr. G. Panigrahi, former Joint Director, Central Botanical Laboratory, Botanical Survey of India, for his valuable suggestions and also for providing all facilities during the course of investigation. Thanks are also due to the tribals of this district for giving information about their plant uses and to the Forest authorities of the Government of West Bengal.

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