

MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY TRIBAL INHABITANTS OF SIRMOUR DISTRICT, HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The paper documents ethnomedicinal uses of 32 wild plant species from Sirmour district (H.P.). The plant parts most commonly used in the treatment of various diseases are root, leaves, whole plant and bark. The reliance on folk medicine for healthcare is associated with the traditional belief of effectiveness.

KEYWORDS : Ethnomedicinal Plants, Himachal Pradesh, Sirmour District

The use of the traditional medicine is widely accepted by tribal in Sirmour. Practice of using plants as medicines by human being can be treated since time immemorial. Indigenous healing practices have been culturally accepted during all phases of human culture and environmental evolution. The ethnomedicinal plants are under threat due to deforestation, overgrazing and their reckless utilization. So, it indicates the urgent need of their conservation.

Sirmour (meaning crown of head) district is almost entirely a hilly and mountainous district with an interacting mosaic of mountain ranges, hills and valleys. Covering an area of 2.825Km². The district is situated between latitude 30°-22'-30" and 31°-01'-20" north and longitude 77°-01'-12" and 77°-49'-40" east. The main tribe in this district is Gujjar and language spoken is Hindi and Pahari. District show great diversity of altitude and physical features. Climate varies from hot and dry, to moderate and cold to very cold at higher elevations. Temperature range from 10°c to 40°c and rainfall is about 125cm annual. Previously flora of district were Surveyed by (Sharma and Kaur,1999). This paper has presented enthomedicinal plants of district Sirmour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Several ethnobotanical survey were conducted by me during the period of August, 2007 to March, 2009 in tribal areas of district Sirmour, Himanchal Pradesh An extensive data sheet was prepared regarding the utility of plants and food and medicine, their application, doses and duration. The survey was conducted in district Sirmour. The distribution was obtained by tribal map of Himanchal

District Tribal Welfare Office and Block Development Office regarding their population and location. The ethnobotanical data were obtained from tribal people, vaidyas, Ojhas, Village Pradhan and many other experienced informants having knowledge of Herbal drugs used by different tribal people. The collected plants were preserved and the locality of the collection and information regarding uses were mentioned in the field book.

The collected plants thus pressed, mounted and properly numbered were identified with the help of local floras and other useful works viz. Hooker (1872-1897), Hainess (1921-1924), Mahato and Chaudhary(2005) and Chauhan(1999).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 280 plants species belonging to 96 families the ethnomedicinal value of only 32 plants species from tribal area of district Sirmour are given. It is revealed that a number of plants are of wide application in day to day life of the tribal, especially for medicinal uses.

1. *Abies spectabilis* (Pinaceae): 'Silver fir','Tosh', 'Talispatra'

Part used Leaves

Warm decoction is prepared (about 20-30 fresh leaves boiled in a cup of water) and taken daily for 15 days to relieve chronic bronchitis (Chauhan, 1999)

2. *Abrus precatorius* (Leguminosea): 'Ratti', 'Crabs eye'

Part used Seeds

Fresh seeds taken orally, early in the morning for 45 days to treat nervous disorders poultice of seeds used as suppository to induce abortion (Chauhan,1999). Ground

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seed powder mixed with water, taken orally twice a day for 3 day to treat scorpion bite and wasp bite.

3. *Achyranthes aspera* (Amaranthaceae): 'Puthkanda', 'Latjera' and Chirchita

Part used Leaves, Buds and Whole plant

The juice obtained by crushing the leaves is massaged on the waist twice a day for 3-4 days in case of waist pain. The vegetative buds are crushed and applied as paste on the wound in snake bite. In asthma, the whole plant is crushed and taken with honey twice a day for one month.

4. *Acacia catechu* (Fabaceae): 'Khair',

Part used Bark

Warm decoction of mature wood (about 50 gm boiled in a cup of water) is taken 2-3 times a day for 3-4 days to relieve throat infection and cough paste of fresh root is applied on the joint once a day for seven days to treat rheumatism (Mahato and Chaudhary)

5. *Aconitum deinoorrhizum* (Ranunculaceae): 'Mohra', 'Mouro'

Part used Root

The root are smoked in hooka to relieve acute gastric pain. Root powder mixed with mustard oil is used for massage for 3-4 months in paralytic body parts and rheumatic joints.

6. *Ajuga bracteosa* (Lamiaceae): 'Neel kanthi',

Part used Leaves

Fresh leaf paste is made and applied on the scalp once a week to get rid from lice.

7. *Amaranthus caudatus* (Amaranthaceae): 'Chauli',

Part used Leaves

Fresh juice of leaves mixed with curd is taken orally thrice a day for about 3 days in case of inflammation of intestinal wall.

8. *Arnebia enchroma* (Boraginaceae): 'Ratanjot',

Part used Root

Root powder is taken twice a day for 2 days in case of Toothache and earache.

9. *Argemone maxicana* (Papaveraceae): 'Bharbhand'

Part used Root, Seeds

Root are ground mixed with onions and applied over guinea worms infections, this drives the worm immediately. Tea prepared from roots is given for regulating fertility in women. Yellow sap of plant is used to cure dropsy and jaundice affections.

10. *Asparagus racemosus* (Liliaceae): 'Sataur', 'Satawari'

Part used Root

About 5 teaspoonful powder of dry root is taken thrice a day for a week to cure urinary trouble. About 1 cup of root decoction is taken by women as a tonic thrice a day for 15 days after delivery.

11. *Bauhinia variegata* (Caesalpinaceae): 'Kachnar',

Part used Flower, Root

Dried flowers, ground powdered mixed with mishri and butter is given to the patient for about 15 days in case of piles decoction of root is given twice a day for 3-4 days in case of snake-bite.

12. *Berberis lycium* (Berberidaceae): 'Kashmal', 'Daruhaldi'

Part used Root

Decoction of root with honey is given twice a day for 7-15 days in jaundice root extract is given twice a day for 3-6 month in case of leprosy.

13. *Berberis aristata* (Berberidaceae): 'Rasont', 'Kushmol'

Part used Bark, Root

Rasount (Bark and root bark) mixed with honey is given to the patient twice a day for 5-7 days in urinary tract infection and piles.

14. *Betula utilis* (Betulaceae): 'Bhojpatra'

Part used Papery bark

The decoction of papery bark is prepared and is used as a vaginal douche to avoid conception.

15. *Butea monosperma* (Papilionaceae): 'Dhak Palash'

Part used Leaves and Bark

Fresh leaf juice is taken orally once a day for about 11-13 days in case of glycosuria. Dried powdered bark is taken twice a day for 7 days in case of menstrual disorder.

16. *Calotropis gigantea* (Asclepiadaceae): 'Madar'

Part used Flower and Latex

Dried flower powder are smashed and emerging fumes inhaled deeply at the intervals of 30 sec. for about 3 minutes or thrice a day in case of cough. Fresh milky latex is applied locally twice a day for 7 days to cure scabies and ringworm.

17. *Cassia tora* (Fabaceae): 'Chokar'

Part used Seeds

Seeds with turmeric and mustard oil is made into

paste and applied on the affected area in case of eczema and skin diseases. One teaspoonful of crushed seed is taken with tea 2-3 times daily for a week to cure cough, headache and fever.

18. *Centella asiatica* (Apiaceae): 'Brahmi'

Part used Leaves

Powdered dried leaves are given to cure paramnesia and for improving memory. One or Two leaves are taken every morning to overcome stuttering.

19. *Cedrus deodara* (Pinaceae): 'Devdar'

Part used Wood

The decoction of the bark is prepared and is given with turmeric and guggulu twice a day for 11 days in case of Gonorrhoea and Syphilis.

20. *Cuscuta reflexa* (Convolvulaceae): 'Akashbel'

Part used Stem

One teaspoonful paste of 20 cm long stem with a little lime is given once in the morning for 4-5 days to induce abortion at the early stage of pregnancy.

21. *Dalbergia sissoo* (Fabaceae): 'Shisham'

Part used Leaves

Decoction of leaves serves as a stimulant. It is also used as a blood purifier and to cure urinary tract diseases. Crushed leaves along with lime juice are used for once.

22. *Duchesnea indica* (Rosaceae): 'Kaphal'

Part used Leaves

The leaves are crushed and applied as paste in skin diseases, wounds and cuts.

23. *Eremurus Himalaicus* (Asphodelaceae): 'Tache'

Part used Whole plants

Young leaves are used as vegetables in case of anaemia.

24. *Fagopurum esculentum* (Polygonaceae): 'Ogla'

Part used Root

Decoction of the root is given twice a day for 10 days in case of typhoid.

25. *Fumaria paravijlora* (Fumariaceae): 'Shahtera'

Part used Whole plants

Dried and powdered and taken with water twice a day for 15 days in blood purifying.

26. *Habenaria pectinata* (Orchidaceae): 'Safed Musli'

Part used Tubers

Tuber is mixed with Khoya greater cardamom and jaggery and taken thrice a week for 4 weeks in case of joint pain.

27. *Heliotropium indicum* (Boraginaceae): 'Hathi soond plant'

Part used flowers

The flowers are given in large doze for 5-7 days to induce abortion.

28. *Jatropha curcus* (Euphorbiaceae): 'Biodiesel plant'

Part used Root

The root is introduced into vagina and to be kept over night for 2-3 days to induce abortion.

29. *Pinus roxburghii* (Pinaceae): 'Chir'

Part used Stem

Oil extracted from stem is given twice a day for 5 days in case of constipation.

30. *Putranjiva roxburghii* (Euphorbiaceae): 'Jaiputa'

Part used Nuts

Nuts are taken orally by women (Sterile) to effect conception and attributed with the birth of a male child.

31. *Rhododendron arboreum* (Ericaceae): 'Bras'

Part used Flowers

Dried flower powder is given with water two times a day for 5 days in case of diarrhoea.

32. *Taxus baicata*- (Taxaceae): 'Himalayan Yew'

Part used Bark

Decoction is prepared from bark and then filtered and mixed with jaggery and taken orally twice a day for 14 days in case of hysteria.

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