Traditional medicines knowledge in Dharmabad taluka of Nanded district, Maharashtra, India

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The present paper deals with the observations on ethnomedicinal uses of plant wealth of Dharmabad tehsil of Nanded district. The herbal vendors and rustic people use mainly herbal medicines to cure different ailments and diseases. Altogether 32 plants were recorded which are used by them for curing 38 different types of diseases and ailments. Many of these ethnomedicinal preparations are new. Among the 38 ethnomedicinal preparations, 20 are administered in the form of monoherbal preparations used in curing colic pain, jaundice, scabies, dropsy, etc. while the remaining 18 are polyherbal preparations used to cure cataract, leucorrhoea, eczema, leprosy and debility. Their botanical name, local name, uses, name of ailments and diseases are provided in this paper. Some noteworthy medicinal plants of this area are: Achyranthes aspera Linn., Bombax ceiba Linn., Cynodon dactylon (Linn.) Pers., Plumeria rubra Linn., etc.

Keywords: Dharmabad, Ethnomedicine, Folklore, Medicinal plants, Nanded district, Maharashtra.

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Introduction

Medicine is one of the four basic needs (i.e. food, clothing, shelter and medicine) of humans which are being full-filled to a large extent by the plants and plant products. Plants have been used in medicines since times immemorial. Herbal medicines form an integral part of healing practiced by the traditional healers. India has a rich heritage of using medicinal plants in traditional medicines, as in the Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani systems besides folklore practices. The earliest inscription of the medicinal uses of plants is found in the “Rigveda”, which is one of the oldest repositories of human knowledge. Fairly comprehensive information on the curative properties of some herbs has been found recorded in “Charak Samhita” and “Sushruta Samhita”. The plant kingdom is a virtual goldmine of biologically active compounds and it is estimated that only 10-15% of 250000-750000 of existing species of higher plants have been surveyed. Many plants have been successfully used in the treatment of various diseases.

In Marathwada there are some places which are rich in medicinal plants. The Dharmabad taluka of Nanded district is one of them. This place is located at coordinates 18°.9″ N and 77° 85″ E adjoining the Nizamabad and Adilabad districts of Andhra Pradesh. The rustics of this area have been using various plants and their parts as medicine. The knowledge of the use of the plants has been followed traditionally. Literature survey shows that little ethnomedicinal work has been done from this district in the past. Therefore, present study was planned to explore the medico-botanical knowledge of this area. The present paper is a segment of this study documenting the information on 32 species. These medicinal folkloric uses appeared worth reporting.

Methodology

The present data is an outcome of ethnobotanical studies during 2007 to 2010. The ethnomedicinal information was collected according to standard ethnobotanical methodology. During medicobotanical exploration 11 rustic informers were interviewed who practice and have experience in the use of ethnomedicine. Out of which 9 informers are men and 2 are women whose age ranges between 50 to 75 years. The collected plant specimens were...
One fresh flower is chewed along with betel leaf at night before sleeping for three days to cure asthma and phlegm.


Warmed leaves are tied on head overnight for three days to cure headache, neck and waist pain. One tablespoon of flower powder is mixed with one cup of tea and is given orally twice a day for seven days to cure eczema.


Paste of fresh leaves is applied on head once a day for two days to control cephalalgia. Juice of fresh leaves is applied on head once daily for eight days to cure scabies.


About 10 g of fruit powder is mixed with 10 ml of water. This mixture is given twice a day for three days to cure colic pain.


Half cup of plant extract is given in the morning for five days to reduce abdominal heat.

12. *Cyperus rotundus* Linn. (Cyperaceae), *Nagar motha* (DPG 64).

About 20 ml extract of rhizome is mixed with 10 g of sugar candy and 25 ml of butter milk. This mixture is taken early in the morning for ten days to cure piles.


Juice prepared from 100 g fresh leaves is applied externally on leg twice a day for two days to reduce dropsy.


Oil (50 ml) extracted from the leaves is mixed with 50 ml coconut oil (*Cocos nucifera* Linn.) and applied externally on body or used for massage once a day for eight days to cure skin diseases.


Fresh bark (100 g) is grinded with little water and half cup of this mixture is taken early morning for three days to control leucorhoea. Similarly 100 g of fresh leaves are crushed with water and half cup of this juice is given early morning for three days to cure arthritis. Leaf paste is also applied on waist and knee for arthritis.
Plate 1 — Some important ethnomedicinal plants of Dharmabad tehsil
100 g of bark is crushed with water and the juice is mixed with 50 ml of cow milk and this mixture is given twice a day for three days to control red discharge.


Fresh leaves (20 g) are crushed with water and one tablespoon of this juice is given once a day for two days to cure abdominal pain.


Fresh eight leaves are chewed early morning for five days to cure fever.


Five fresh roasted flowers are taken orally twice a day for five days to cure haemorrhoid.


One teaspoonful juice of leaves is mixed with half cup of cow milk and is taken orally early in the morning for three days to cure dysentery.


A small piece of fruit is chewed along with betel leaf once a day for three days for conception.


Fresh bark (100 g) crushed with water and the extracted juice is mixed with 25 ml of cow’s milk. One cup of this mixture is given twice a day for three days to cure leprosy.

The leaves are warmed along with safflower oil (*Carthamus tinctorius* Linn.) and are tied on head overnight for three days to stop cephalagia.

Leaves (100 g) are boiled with 100 g leaves of *Shankasur* [*Caesalpinia pulcherrima* (Linn.) Swartz] and tied in cloth covers and kept on the body to reducedrops.


A piece of rhizome is consumed early morning for three days to increase lactation in women.


Fresh leaves (50 g) are crushed with little water and extracted juice is mixed with 10 g of sugar candy along with 25 ml of butter milk. One cup of this mixture is given twice a day for ten days to cure piles.


Fresh leaves (20 g) are crushed with water and one tablespoon juice is given orally twice a day for three days to cure abdominal pain. Similarly 50 g of fresh leaves are crushed with water and then add 25 ml cow’s milk. One cup of this mixture is taken early morning for three days to cure jaundice.


About 20 ml decoction of leaves is mixed with 30 ml of cow’s milk. One cup of this mixture is given early morning for six days to cure jaundice. One cup decoction of fresh leaves is taken orally early morning for three days to cure jaundice. Few drops of leaf extract are poured in the ear to get relief from earache. Paste of leaves is applied on the wound to reduce swellings.


Half leaf is chewed along with two betel leaves and clove [*Syzygium aromaticum* (Linn.) Merr. & Perry] once a day for two days to cure ague (fever such as malaria).


A paste of leaves is applied externally once a day for three days to cure swellings.


The leaves are warmed along with Groundnut oil (*Arachis hypogaea* Linn.) and then these leaves are tied on head overnight for three days to cure flu and phlegm.


About one spoonful extract prepared from the fruit is given orally three times a day for three days to regularize menstrual cycle.


A paste of leaves is applied on wound once a day for two days to reduce dropsy.


A paste of leaves is applied on wound once a day for two days to reduce dropsy.

32. *Withania somnifera* (Linn.) Dunal (Solanaceae), *Ashwagandha* (DPG 90).
100 g fresh leaves are grinded with water and one tablespoon is given early morning for three days against asthma. 50 g of fresh leaves are grinded with water and one tablespoon juice of this mixture is given orally twice a day for three days to cure dysentery.

Two tablespoon of root powder is mixed with 5 g of sugar candy, 5 g of Coconut powder \((Cocos nucifera \text{ Linn.})\) and 5 g of Desi badam powder \((Terminalia catappa \text{ Linn.})\). This mixture is given early morning for seven days to reduce waist pain. 100 g of root powder is mixed with 50 g of rhizome of Jatashankar \((Dioscorea bulbifera \text{ Linn.})\), 250 g Gum of Dhawada \([Anogeissus latifolia \text{ (DC.) Wall.}]\), 250 g powder of Desi badam, 250 g seeds of Bibba \((Semicarpus anacardium \text{ Linn. f.})\), 250 g sugar candy and 500 g Kharik \((Phoenix dactylifera \text{ Linn.})\). Then it is baked in cow’s milk and this mixture is eaten early morning for eight days for debility.

Discussion

Present study reveals the ethnomedicinal uses of 32 plant species belonging to 27 families. Some important herbal plants which occur in this region have exhibited remarkable ethnomedicinal properties. Extract of plant, decoction, infusion or powder obtained from different plant parts like root, stem, stem bark, leaf, flower, fruits and seeds are used to treat various ailments related to various diseases. Twenty species are administered in the form of monoherbal preparations used in curing colic pain, jaundice, scabies, dropsy, etc. and remaining 18 are polyherbal preparations used to cure cataract, leucorrhoea, eczema, leprosy, debility, etc. by aborigines of Dharbadab tehsil. Ethnomedicine is safe and less expensive therefore, the rural people of this area still practice the traditional therapy. The enumeration has been compared with important published literature and it was found that many of the usages listed were not recorded earlier. Similar work on medicinal plants in relation to their utilization and conservation has been conducted in many parts of India.

The most noteworthy plants and their usages recorded during this investigation are as follows: the root extract of Argemone mexicana and Triumfetta pentandra used to enhance sperm count; the bark extract of Bombax ceiba is used to treat leucorrhoea; the leaf extract of Achyranthes aspera and Solanum americanum are used to cure jaundice; the fruit of Plumeria rubra is given for conception and the fruit extract of Thespesia populnea is advised to regularize menstrual cycle.

Conclusion

This ethnobotanical study will provide a new data on the application of plants for medicinal purposes. They may be more effective in curing certain diseases than the conventional ones. This folklore should be cited and fully documented. This traditional knowledge will become a recognized utility in the quest for new sources of drugs in future. However, even if plenty has been published already, there is still much more to be done so that the folkloric knowledge can be really used to determine or to find novel agents. The pharmacological, phytochemical and antimicrobial studies should be taken up in medicine to open up new frontiers in the phytomedicine.

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