Folklore claims on some medicinal plants used by Bheel tribe of Guna district
Madhya Pradesh

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The paper deals about some medicinal plants used by tribal communities of Guna district of Madhya Pradesh. A record on 20 plant species belonging to 18 families, used by Bheel tribes for curing various ailments among human beings and animals are given. Uses of plants for other purposes are also mentioned.

**Keywords:** Folklore, Ethnomedicine, Medicinal plants, Bheel tribes, Madhya Pradesh

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The state of Madhya Pradesh comprises of a large population of tribal communities belonging to various ethnic groups. These forest dwellers live in forests and possess a vast knowledge on various aspects of plants. Ethnobotanical studies on different aspects of many tribal communities have been carried out in various districts of the state. Main tribes of the state are Gond, Bheel, Oraon, Sahariya, Bhilala, Sor, etc. Guna district is situated in Gwalior division of northern part of Madhya Pradesh, situated between 24° 19 N latitude and 77° 15 E longitude, at a height of about 476m above msl. Bheel and Sahariya are the major tribal communities of the district of which Bheel tribes comprise larger population. The Bheels move around the forest for their day-to-day requirements, cultural activities and performing rituals. Forest resources are the only means of livelihood for catering to the need of food, fodder, fuel, medicine, etc. They possess a vast knowledge of the treatment of their cattle through herbs. The method of treatment is traditional and drugs are used in crude form only. Besides medicinal uses, they possess a vast knowledge on other ethnobotanical uses of plants. Ethnobotanical studies are continuing in several parts of the state1-4. In Gwalior and Chambal divisions, ethnobotanical studies are concentrated on Sahariya and Gond tribes5-16.

**Methodology**
Several field trips were organized between September 2005 to April 2006 in tribal inhabited localities of Guna district and the information on uses of plants was collected. The herbarium specimens have been deposited in Institute of Ethnobiology, Jiwaji University, Gwalior. Information on plants used for other than medicinal purposes is also given. Information on ailments, parts used, doses prescribed, type of recipe, time and days of administration of dose, efficacy of the drug, etc. gathered from tribals have been enumerated (Table 1).

**Discussion**
A large number of plant species occur in tribal inhabited localities of Guna district. Looking to the intellectual property rights of indigenous people, documentation of such knowledge is necessary now a day. The people of Bheel community possess a vast knowledge regarding multifarious uses of plants. Besides medicinal uses, the tribes of the district also have a vast knowledge about the other uses of plants. Almost all species are commonly available in the area but many people are not aware about their importance. Some species are facing threats due to various reasons and require immediate attention for their conservation. It is clear from observation that some species are also used for curing the cattle of tribals. Such information should be spread among other societies living in urban areas and villages.
Uses of such plants would certainly reduce the pressure on other economically or endangered species of plants.

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