

Medicinal plants used by *Kokani* tribals of Nasik district Maharashtra to cure cuts and wounds

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The *Kokani* tribals reside in Nasik, Dhule and Nandurbar districts of Maharashtra. The field trips in these areas were carried out in June and October 2004. The ethnobotanical study revealed use of 9 plant species belonging to different families to cure cuts and wounds. The method of preparation of crude drugs and their application along with the scientific and local names of the plants is given. The knowledge on the ethnomedicinal uses of the *Kokani* tribals can help to discover new drugs to cure cuts and wounds provided the data given is scientifically evaluated.

Keywords: Ethnomedicine, Ethnobotany, Folklore, *Kokani* tribe, Cuts, Wounds

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As per the 1991 census of India, the total tribal population in Maharashtra is 73.18 lakhs amounting to 9.27% to the total population of the state¹. The *Kokani* tribals amounting 3.53% of total tribal population reside in remote hilly regions of Baglan, Surgana, Kalvan and Peth talukas of Nasik covered with dry deciduous forests². They are located in scrubby jungles of Sakri and Navapur talukas of Dhule and Nandurbar districts, respectively. Poor economic status, malnutrition and unhygienic conditions are the main causes of illness and due to lack of modern healthcare service the tribals depend on the traditional doctor, the *warkari* or *bhagat* and his medicines. The *warkari* treats the patients with plant-based medicines and advises them to behave in a good manner. The ethnomedicinal study was undertaken with a view to find out the plants used by *Kokani* tribals of Maharashtra particularly to cure cuts and wounds.

Methodology

The study was carried out in June and November 2004. The information on plants used to treat various ailments is confined to *warkaries* or *bhagats*. During the studies, the *warkaries* / *bhagats* were interviewed with a view to find out ethnomedicinal plants. The

plants used to cure cuts and wounds were collected from the field, pressed, dried and mounted on the herbarium sheets. The plants were identified and compared with the specimens in Blatter Herbarium, St Xavier's College, Mumbai³⁻⁶.

Enumeration

The study revealed that the *Kokani* tribals use 9 plant species belonging to different families to cure cuts and wounds.

Acampe praemorsa (Roxb.) Blatter & Mc Cann (Orchidaceae)

Local name: *Baguri*

Uses: The fibers from the capsule are tied around the wound and covered with a cloth. The old fibers and the cloth are replaced with new one everyday till the wound is healed. Root paste is applied to fractured organ of the cattle.

Agave sisalana Perr. (Agavaceae)

Local name: *Kekti*

Uses: Root extract is applied on old wounds. The root water extract is given to the patient to drink.

Cissampelos pareira Linn. (Menispermaceae)

Local name: *Tanyal*

Uses: Root extract is applied to wound till the wound is healed.

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Cleome viscosa Linn. (Cleomaceae)

Local name: *Shengalvehadya*

Uses: Leaf paste is applied on the wound twice a day for three days.

Leonotis nepetifolia (L.) R.Br. (Labiatae)

Local name: *Bond*

Uses: Crushed inflorescence mixed with groundnut oil is applied on the wound.

Mangifera indica Linn. (Anacardiaceae)

Local name: *Amba*

Uses: The shade dried stem bark is burnt into ash; ash paste mixed with coconut oil is applied to the wound twice a day till it gets cured.

Synadenium grantii Hook.f. (Euphorbiaceae)

Local name: *Chandrya*

Uses: The latex collected from the cut branch is directly applied on to the wound till it is healed.

Xanthium indicum (L.), Koen. (Asteraceae)

Local name: *Lepadi*

Uses: Leaf paste is applied on the wound twice a day for three days. This is used to treat animal wounds with worms in it.

Ziziphus oenoplia Mill. (Rhamnaceae)

Local name: *Borkati*

Uses: Leaves are chewed and applied on wound; leaves stick to the wound and heal.

Discussion

The tribals mostly depend on the herbs and animals found around them in wild. The knowledge gained about the efficacy of medicinal plants by the tribes for generations is kept secret and is orally communicated to their descendents. It was observed that the tribal people used all these species very carefully. The report accounts for 9 plant species belonging to 9 families, used for cuts and wounds by *Kokani* tribals of Nasik district. Out of these 9 species, three species, viz. *Acampe praemorsa*, *Synadenium grantii* and *Leonotis nepetifolia* are not so far recorded in ethnobotanical literature. However, their other medicinal uses are mentioned⁷. *Agave sisalana*, *Cissampelos pareira*, *Cleome viscosa*, *Mangifera indica*, *Xanthium indicum* and *Ziziphus oenoplia* are reported to have medicinal properties and used for the treatment of ailments other than cuts and wounds⁷⁻¹⁵.

The knowledge on the folklore uses of the medicinal plants lead to open up ways for effective utilization of herbal medicines in future. Further work in this direction may help to discover new drugs to cure cuts and wounds.

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