

Some herbal remedies used by the tribals of Nasik district, Maharashtra

M V Patil¹ and D A Patil^{2*}

¹Department of Botany
Gangamai Education Trust's Arts, Commerce and Science College
Nagaon, Dist. Dhule, Maharashtra, India

²P.G. Department of Botany
S.S.V.P.S's L.K.Dr.P.R.Ghogrey Science College, Dhule-424 005

*Correspondent author

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Abstract

The native phytotherapy prevalent among the tribals and rural populace of Nasik district, Maharashtra, has been studied. The present paper communicates information on 32 species of angiosperms used to cure various ailments by tribals of Nasik district. Recent botanical and local names, parts used, medicinal use(s) and formulation along with doses and duration have been provided.

Keywords : Herbal remedies, Medicinal plants, Mahdeo-Koli, Katkari, Bhils, Kunabi-Kokana, Thakur, Warli, Nasik district, Maharashtra.

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number, part(s) used, medicinal uses and formulation along with dose and duration is given in Table 1. Plants asterixed are new reports. While plants with double asterixed have additional uses of the plant parts used.



Tribal people collecting stem bark and other plant material from the forest

Introduction

Nasik district, a North western district of the state of Maharashtra, lies between North latitude 19°31' and 20°21' and East longitude 73°30' and 74°55' occupying an area of 15582 sq. km. The ranges of Western Ghats extend in the district and is a predominantly tribal district. The aborigines such as *Mahdeo-Koli*, *Katkari*, *Bhils*, *Kunabi-Kokana*, *Thakur* and *Warli* inhabit the rugged terrains of Western Ghats. Although they are forest dwellers, they practice agriculture. The agricultural produce does not suffice their sustenance and, therefore, have to depend on forest resources. Literature survey indicated a very little ethnobotanical work done from this region in the past¹⁻⁵. The present authors, therefore, extended extensive and intensive ethnobotanical observations since June, 1997 to 2004. On comparison

with the important published literature⁶⁻⁹, the information on 32 species of medicinal importance appeared worth reporting.

Methodology

Different tribal hamlets and forest of the district were visited from 1997 to 2004. Senior tribal-men, women and medicine-men were interviewed. The data was verified in subsequent visits, voucher specimens were collected and deposited in the herbarium, Department of Botany, GET's Arts, Commerce and Science College, Nagaon, Dist. Dhule. These were identified by the authors with the help of various floras¹⁰⁻¹². Information on medicinal plants with botanical and common names, families, voucher specimen



A tribal medicine-man having variety of stem bark and bottle of decoction used as medicine

Table 1 : Medicinal plants used by the tribals of Nasik district

S. No.	Botanical Name/ Voucher No./ Family	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Use/ Disease treated	Formulation	Dose & Duration
1.	*<i>Alternanthera tenella</i> Colla MVP-363 Amaranthaceae	<i>Korda-ganja</i>	Inflorescence	Earache	Ash of inflorescence wrapped in leaves of <i>Piliostigma malabaricum</i> (Roxb.) Benth. are smoked	BD till cure
2.	**<i>Ampelocissus latifolia</i> (Roxb.) Planch. / MVP-377 Vitaceae	<i>Bendore</i>	Stem	Easy delivery	Ash	Applied abdominally for a week
3.	<i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> Lam. MVP-341 Moraceae	<i>Phanas</i>	Young fruits	Vomiting	Fruits powdered and mixed with jaggery, and prepared pellets	OD one pellet for 3 days
4.	**<i>Aspidopterys cordata</i> (Heyne ex Wall.) A. Juss. MVP-376 Malphiaceae	<i>Shrivel, Makadvel</i>	Latex	To increase lactation	Latex mixed with rice grains eaten raw	OD consumed about 15 g for a month
5.	<i>Bombax ceiba</i> Linn. syn. <i>Salmaalma malabaricum</i> (DC.) Schott. & Endl. MVP-217 Bombacaceae	<i>Sawar</i>	Root	Injuries, Bleeding	Paste prepared in water	OD till cure
6.	**<i>Brachiaria reptans</i> (Linn.) Gard. & C.E.Hubbard MVP-356 Poaceae	<i>Chopadi</i>	Leaf	Anaemia	Juice obtained by crushing and squeezing	OD for a fortnight
7.	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Taub. / MVP-89 Fabaceae	<i>Palas</i>	Seeds	Intestinal worms in children	Decoction obtained by crushing and boiling	OD for a week
8.	**<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.) R.Br. / MVP-98 Asclepiadaceae	<i>Ruchkin</i>	Tender leaves	Fever and Cold	Lime, catechu and root bark is chewed with leaves	BD for 3 days
9.	**<i>Careya arborea</i> Roxb. MVP-174 Lecythidaceae	<i>Kumbhai</i>	Stem bark	Piles	Infusion or extract prepared in water	OD for 15 days

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S. No.	Botanical Name/ Voucher No./ Family	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Use/ Disease treated	Formulation	Dose & Duration
10.	**Carissa congesta Dalz. MVP-27 Apocynaceae	<i>Karwand</i>	Latex	Burning sensation during urination	Latex dropped on urinogenital opening	OD till cure
11.	**Casearia graveolens Dalz. MVP-38 Flacourtiaceae	<i>Kirmira</i>	Stem pieces	Antidote for snake-bite	Chewed raw	OD for 5-6 days
12.	**Cassia occidentalis Linn. MVP-101 Caesalpiniaceae	<i>Ran-tarota</i>	Root	Leucorrhoea	Infusion or extract prepared in water	BD for 10-15 days
13.	**Catunaregam spinosa (Thunb.) Tirveng. MVP-210 Rubiaceae	<i>Gal</i>	Fruits	Madness	Slurry prepared in water	OD for 2-3 months
14.	**Chrysopogon fulvus (Spreng.) Chiov. MVP 144 Poaceae	<i>Kahandol</i>	Peels of culm and bark	Cough and Chest pain	Decoction prepared in boiling water	BD for 3-4 days
15.	**Cordia dichotoma Forst. f. MVP-63 Cordiaceae	<i>Bhokar</i>	Stem bark	Excessive menstruation	Decoction prepared in boiling water	BD for a week
16.	Crinum defixum Ker-Gawl. MVP-458 Amaryllidaceae	<i>Kumbh</i>	Leaves	Pimples and Body swelling	Smoke passed over body	OD for 3-4 days
17.	Cucumis prophetarum Linn. MVP-150 Cucurbitaceae	<i>Chibbad</i>	Fruits	Eczema	Fruits homo- genized with blue vitriol and paste is prepared	OD applied for 6-7 days
18.	**Dillenia pentagyna Roxb. MVP-279 Dilleniaceae	<i>Karwal</i>	Stem bark	Jaundice and Urinary complaints	Extract in water by crushing and squeezing	OD till cure
19.	**Diospyros melanoxylon Roxb. / MVP-46 Ebenaceae	<i>Tembrun</i>	Wood	Good health and easy delivery	Wood burnt and smoke is passed over the body of woman	OD for 7 days

S. No.	Botanical Name/ Voucher No./ Family	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Use/ Disease treated	Formulation	Dose & Duration
20.	<i>Eclipta alba</i> (Linn.) Hassk. MVP-369 Asteraceae	<i>Kalamaka</i>	Leaf	Injury caused due to continuous contact with mud, call 'Chikhali'	Juice obtained by crushing and squeezing	BD till cure
21.	**<i>Geodorum densiflorum</i> (Lam.) Schlecht. MVP-264 Orchidaceae	<i>Harya-kand</i>	Tuber	To cure impotency	Eaten raw with jaggery	OD for 3 months
22.	*<i>Glossocardia bosvallia</i> (Linn. f.) DC. MVP-250 Asteraceae	<i>Mirgi-kand</i>	Root stalk	Alcohol addicts	Decoction mixed with tea	OD for 3-4 weeks
23.	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i> (Linn.) Schultes MVP-49 Asclepiadaceae	<i>Anantmul, Uparsali</i>	Root	To increase milk flow	Root extracted in water taken orally	BD for 7 days
24.	*<i>Hygrophila schulli</i> (Ham) M.R. Almeida & S.M. Almeida MVP-130 Acanthaceae	<i>Talimkhana, Kaluskanta</i>	Entire plant	Yellow and painful urination	Decoction prepared by boiling all parts in water	OD for 3-4 days
25.	**<i>Miliusa tomentosa</i> (Roxb.) Sinclair / MVP-655 Annonaceae	<i>Humb</i>	Unripe fruits	Post-delivery body swellings	Smoke passed over body	OD for 7-8 days
26.	<i>Pongamia pinnata</i> (Linn.) Pierre MVP-93 Fabaceae	<i>Karanj</i>	Seeds	Ringworm	Oil	OD applied till cure
27.	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> Roxb. var. <i>acuminatus</i> Prain MVP-185 Fabaceae	<i>Bivala</i>	Bark	To regularize menstruation in teenage girls	Infusion	OD for 7 days
28.	**<i>Schleichera oleosa</i> (Lour.) Oken. MVP-109 Sapindaceae	<i>Kusun, Koshimb</i>	Root	Rheumatism	Extracted in water	OD for 15 days

S. No.	Botanical Name/ Voucher No./ Family	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Use/ Disease treated	Formulation	Dose & Duration
29.	** <i>Schrebera swietenoides</i> Roxb. MVP-148 Oleaceae	<i>Mokha</i>	Stem bark	Joint and body pains, Headache, Itching	Decoction prepared in water after crushing	OD till cure
30.	** <i>Tylophora dalzellii</i> Hook. f. MVP-359 Asclepiadaceae	<i>Kawalvel</i>	Stem bark	Throat infection, ulcer	Bark wrapped in leaves of <i>Aegle marmelos</i> Correa ex Roxb. smoked	OD till cure
31.	** <i>Vitex negundo</i> Linn. MVP-134 Verbenaceae	<i>Nirgudi</i>	Leaf	Conjunctivitis	Juice obtained by crushing and squeezing	OD applied around eyes till cure
32.	* <i>Woodfordia fruticosa</i> (Linn.) Kurz Lythraceae	<i>Dhait, Dhaiti</i>	Stem bark	Excessive bleeding after delivery	Infusion prepared in water	OD for a week

OD : Once daily, BD : Twice daily, TDS : Thrice daily

*=New reports; **=Additional uses

Conclusion

The flora of Nasik district (Maharashtra, India) harbours 943 species belonging to 108 families¹⁰ and the forest range from evergreen, semi-evergreen to dry deciduous types. However, it was largely untapped for ethnomedicinal heritage. The information has been compared with classical and ethnobotanical literature⁶⁻⁹. It is worthy to note that out of 32 species, only single species, viz. *Pongamia pinnata* **(Linn.) Pierre** is recorded for similar use in Wealth of India⁷ and Dictionary of Economic Products India⁹. Interestingly 19 species although reported elsewhere but the uses presently reported are

different. Likewise, 4 species, viz. *Alternanthera tenella* **Colla**, *Hygrophila schulli* **(Ham.) M.R. Almeida & S.M. Almeida**, *Glossocardia bosvallia* **(Linn.) DC.** and *Woodfordia fruticosa* **(Linn.) Kurz** find place in ethnobotanical literature⁸ with use of different plant parts.

The remedies used for native healthcare practices in Nasik district are used in the form of decoction, infusion, paste, gum, juice, latex, crude powder, smoke and ash. The aforesaid prescriptions are the ones practiced in daily life of aborigines and rural folks of this region. The plants are used either

singly or in combination with other plants. The chemical and pharmacological investigations on these species and their derived products are required to know their efficacy on modern scientific lines.

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