

ETHNOBOTANY OF CERTAIN MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY TRIBALS OF INDIA AGAINST SKIN INFECTIONS

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ABSTRACT: Tribals of India have been using many plants for curing their ailments since time immemorial. Plants most commonly used by different tribal population in India against skin infections have been listed out in this report. Some of these plants have already been proved scientifically to possess antimicrobial and antiallergic principles. Many more are yet to be surveyed and proven for their known medicinal value. Once the principles underlying the particular activity of the plants described are known, they could safely be recommended for use for the rest of the population of our country, as it would not only be effective but also a cheaper source of drug.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the reference to the Curative properties of some herbs as obtained in Rigveda seems to be the earliest records of medicinal use of plants. Two most important works on Indian system of medicine are *Charak Samhita* and *Susruta Samhita*.

Susruta Samhita deals with about 700 drugs. With the passage of time, more and more plants found recognition in the native system of medicine called Ayurveda totaling to about 1500.

Tribals of India have been using hundreds of thousands of plants for curing different ailments. Skin diseases form a very prominent part of these ailments. The main aim of this review is to present a concise account of the details of these plants used on

being used by the tribals have been experimentally proved to possess healing properties against skin affections with special reference to their antimicrobial efficacy. Plants reviewed have been presented here in a tabular form for perusal at a glance.

During the last few years there has been an increasing interest in the study of the plants used by various aborigines in different parts of the country. Based on the information gathered from different tribes about the utility of the plants in such ailments, experiments and trials have been and are still being carried out by various institutions to assess the efficacy of these plants.

Plants used by various tribals of India have been categorized as under.:

- (a) Plants used by tribals of M. P. Bihar and Chotanagpur.
- (b) Plants used by tribals of Rajasthan
- (c) Plants used by tribals of West Bengal.
- (d) Plants used by tribals of Nilgiris
- (e) Plants used by tribals of Laddakh
- (f) Plants used by tribals of Andhra Pradesh
- (g) Plants used by tribals of U. P. & Eastern Himalayas.

List of Plants used by different tribals in curing skin ailments

Name of the Tribe (1)	S. No. (2)	Botanical name of the plant (3)	Family (4)	English name (5)	Vern. / Hindi name (6)	Distribution (7)	Part/s of the plant used (8)	Mode of preparation (M. O. P.) (9)
A. Bhils, Baigas, Gond etc. of Chotanagpur and Bastar and also Adibasis of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh	1.	<i>Flacourtia¹ Indica</i> (Burm.f.) Merr ¹	Flacourtiaceae	Puneala / Plum tree (H)	Dolla (Vern.) Paniola	Warmer regions Root of India	Root	Paste made up of root applied externally
	2.	<i>Argemone² Mexicanai</i>	Papaveraceae Aceae	Prickly Poppy Kateli	Pili Katai / annual herb in India	Native of Mexico, growras	Leaf	Leaf juice applied in wounds
	3.	<i>Combretum³ decandrum</i>	Combretaceae	Central part of India	Chonk	Central part of India	Stem	M. O. P. not known leaf
	4.	<i>Nyctanthus⁴ arbor tristis</i>	Oleaceae	Coral Jasmine / Night Jasmine	Parijata / Harsingar	Cultivated throughout India	Leaf	Juice applied during ringworm infection
	5.	<i>Psorelea⁵ Corylifolia</i>	Legumino saceae	-	Baoilri / Babchi throughout India	Perennial herb found portion	Whole plant	Juice applied to the infected
	6.	<i>Oroxylum indicumvent</i>	Bignoniaceae	-	Aralu (H)	Moist forests of India	Whole plant	M.O.P. not known
	7.	<i>Abrus⁶ Precatorius</i>	Fabaceae	Indian Liquorice	Gunchea ratti / Chirmi	Warmer parts of the country and China	Seeds	Seeds pounded with water and paste is applied

B. Bhils, Lohars, Sanshi Meena, Raibari Gadarias of Rajasthan	8.	<i>Schleichera</i> ⁷	Sapindaceae	Ceylon Oak	Baruja Kusum	India & Ceylon	Seed	in various skin disorders Seed oil is extracted and used
	9.	<i>Leonotis nepetaefolia</i> R. Br.	Labiatae	-	Tompepuru Hejurchei	An ornamental herb cultivated in hotter parts of India	Inflorescence	Inflorescence paste
	10.	<i>Pongamia glabra</i> Vent	Leguminosaceae	-	Karajo	Grows as shrub in India	Seeds	Seed oil is used
	11.	<i>Bauhinia Variegata</i> ²	Caesalpiniaceae	Casnel's foot tree	Kachnar	Throughout India	Bark	Decoction of Bark given in skin diseases
	12.	<i>Capparis Sepiaria</i> ⁹ Am	Capparidaceae	Kareel (n)	Kather /	-	Leaf	Bath taken with leaf decoction is known to cure itching
	13.	<i>Crotolaria guncea</i> Linn	Fabaceae	Sun temp	Patsan	Throughout warmer parts of India	Seeds	Seed / Paste / Powder
	14.	<i>Cucumis Callosus</i> Rotl. Cogn.	Cucurbitaceae	Cucumber	Kakadi	Cultivated in northern parts of India Annual Vine.	Fruit	A hole is made in the fruit and finger infected by any skin ailment is

								inserted into it at intervals
15.	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	Plumbaginaceae	-	Chitrack	Perennial plant cultivated throughout India.	Root		Root is meshed / powder or decoction is used.
16.	<i>Solanum nigrum</i> Linn	Solanaceae	Black Night	Kama / Makoy shade	Herbaceous, Cosmopoliton in India	Leaf		Crushed leaves and fruits are used in chronic infections
17.	<i>Eclipta alba</i> ¹⁰ Linn Hassk	Compositae	-	Jalmogra (vern) Bhringaraja (Sans)	Distributed (Whole in tropical Plant and subtropical regions of India only			Decoction of plant is prepared
18.	<i>Centella asiatica</i> L.	Umbrelliferae	-	Brahmibuti / Popli	-	Fruit		Decoction of fruits used
19.	<i>Adiantum</i> ¹¹ <i>incisum</i> Forsk	Adiantanceae	Fern	Hansraj	Perennial herb found generally in colder / moist parts of India may be cultivated	Whole plant		M. O. P. not known

C. Santhali and Pahari tribes of W. Bengal	20.	<i>Aerva lanata</i> L ¹⁰ <i>Juss (f)</i>	Amaranthaceae	-	Gorakhbuti (n) / Sadabahar	Throughout India	Whole plant	M.O.P. known	not
	21.	<i>Ageratum Conyzoides</i>	Compositae	-	Patharipuro (vern) Makad mari (H)	Perennial herb, cultivated in warmer parts of India	Leaves	M.O.P known	not
	22.	<i>Cuscutta reflexa</i> Roxb	Convolvulaceae	Dodder	Mararodwaj (Sans) Swarna lata / Amarbel (H)	Perennial herb	Whole plant	M.O.P. known	not
	23.	<i>Dendrophae falcate</i> Linn.	Loranthaceae	Loranthur	Bandia (Santhali)	Throughout India	Leaves /	Decoction used	is
	24.	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	Ascelpediaceae parilla	Indian Saras	Anantamul (H) of India in East Bengal, Assam, Upper gangetic plains	Pound in greater part	Root	M.O.P not Known	
	25.	<i>Hyptis guaveolens</i>	Labiatae	Hyptis	Vilaya Tulsi	Aromatic annual herb, found in whole of India	Whole Plant	M.O.P. known	not
	26.	<i>Pterocarpus marsupium</i> roxb	Fabaceae	Gumfree	Murga asan / bigsal	Peninsular India	Leaves	M.O.P. known	not
27.	<i>Cardiospermum helica cabum</i> ¹³	Sapindaceae	-	Shibphul	Not Known	Whole plant	Decoction of the plant has antibacterial		

								action (Scientifically proved)
	28.	<i>Cassia Sophera</i>	Leguminosae Laburnum	Indian	Kalkasunda	Woody plant found throughout India	Leaf	Leaf juice is applied in ringworm and other skin disease
	29.	<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Laldudhi (H)	Herbaceous plant found in hotter parts of India		Whole plant	Extract of the plant is used. It is proved to have an similar been properties
	30.	<i>Oxalis Corniculata Linn</i>	Oxalidaceae	-	Amrul	-	Whole plant	Plant juice is used for curing skin disease (non-specific)
	31.	<i>Tectona grandis</i> ¹⁴	Verbenaceae	Teak	Sagoan	Woody plant found in Eastern hills of India	Wood	Wood oil used in treating skin infection of cattle
D. Kotta and other tribes of Nilgiris	32.	<i>Curculigo Orchioides Gaerth</i> ¹⁵	Hypoxidaceae	-	Nelnich	-	Root	Paste made of root is applied on wounds
	33.	<i>Lantana Camara</i>	Verbenaceae	Lantana	Thusik Ghaneri	/ Most of the regions (tropical)	Leaf	Leaf paste applied to ringworm &

E. Laddakhi Tribals	34.	<i>Leucas aspera sprang</i>	Labiatae	Laucas (vern)	Thumba out India in cultivated fields waster & Road sides	Through	Leaf	other skin diseases. Leaf paste is applied during ringworm infection
	35.	<i>Ximania Americana vern</i> ¹⁶	Olacineae	Tallow Wood	T. Nakra (Vern).	Grows in tropics &	Leaves Subtropics	M.O.P. not known
	36.	<i>Cynoglossum zeylanicum</i>	Boraginaceae	Hounds tongue	Guntut (vern).	Perennial herb	Leaves	Leaf paste is used
	37.	<i>Siegesbeckia Orientalis L</i>	Compositae	-	Potha- Chedi (vern)	Tropical regions of the world	Leaf	Leaf paste used specially in itching
	38.	<i>Euphorbia thomsoniana</i> ¹⁷ <i>Boisg / Etibetica Boiss</i>	Euphorbiaceae	-	Tharnu Hirvi (Kashmir) height of 7000 ft.	Found in Kashmir at a	Plant Sap	Latex of the plant
	39.	<i>Clematis Orientalis / Linn Cacutifolia</i>	Ranunculaceae	-	Emong	-	Leaves	M.O.P not known & fruits
	40.	<i>Ranunculus hiretellus</i>	Ranunculaceae	Butter cup	Supkha / Chaicha	-	Whole Plant	Plant juice with mustard oil is used
41.	<i>Thymus</i>	Labiatae	Creeping	Tumbra (vern)	Shrub found in	No specific	M.O.P not	

F. Tribals of Andhra Orissa		<i>serphyllum</i>		Rhyme		Himalayan region	part is mentioned	known
	42.	<i>Juniperus Communis</i>	Pinaceae	Common Juniper	Aaraar	Found in Himalayas from Kumaon Westwards at an altitude of 5000 ft.	Berries	M.O.P. not known
	43.	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i> ¹⁸ Swartz	Caesalpinaceae	Paradise flower	Durai Phul	Found in hotter parts of the country especially East India	Seeds	Seed paste & common salt applied during ringworm infection.
	44.	<i>Alstonia</i> ¹⁹ <i>Venenata</i>	Apocynaceae naceae tree	Devil tree	Chatin	Medium size tree found in tropical countries	Bark of the tree	Bark is pounded with Pongamia Pinnara and the oil extracted is applied
	45.	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i>	Caesalpinaceae	Coffee Senna	Pudda Rasivinda	Shrub plant of tropia	Roots & leaves	Juice of roots and leaves used in treating ringworm.
46.	<i>Tragiainvol ucrata</i>	Euphor Linn	Nettle biaeae	Barhanta	Eastern & (vern) parts of India	Fruit northern	Fruit paste + turmeric applied	

G. Tribals of Uttar Pradesh Eastern Himalayas. Garos of Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya	47.	<i>Azadirachta</i> ¹⁶ <i>indica A Juss</i>	Meliaceae	Margosa	Neem	Cosmopolitan tree	Leaves	Young leaves & flowers are eaten as preventive measure & cure for skin diseases.
	48.	<i>Cassia alata</i>	Caesalpiniaceae	Shrub		-		
	49.	<i>Cassiatora</i>	Caesalpiniaceae	Sickleenna	Charota Dadmari	/ Shrub cultivated in northern parts of India	Leaves	Leaves eaten orally seeds pounded and taken as remedy and also as preventive measure against ringworm.
	50.	<i>Drymaria</i> ²⁰ <i>Cordata</i>	Caryophyllaneae	-	Kaha (vern)	Habo	Eastern Himalayas	Leaf

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