

SOME MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE TRIBALS OF KORAPUT, ORISSA

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ABSTRACT: *This paper deals with the ethnobotanical observations of the tribals of Koraput district of Orissa. About 49 species of plants and their mode of usage are mentioned.*

INTRODUCTION

Koraput district is the largest district in Orissa having geographical area of 27,020 Sq. Kms. The average annual rainfall is 1522 mm. The district is rich with tribal people. Out of the total population of 24,84,005 of the district, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes are 1,37,255 i.e 56%.

In Orissa sixty two tribes of tribal people are found. Out of which fifty two tribes of tribals are residing only in Koraput district. They are Bhatora, Bhumia, Godoba, Gond, Kondho, Koya, Kondadora, Ananatya, Paraja, Soura, Kotia Kondho, Jatapu, Didayo and Bonda.

Reports of ethnobotanical studies of the tribals of Koraput are very rare (see Chaudhuri et al., 1985, Das & Ramakant 1988, Das & Mishra 1988). Indeed so far no such detailed work on ethnobotany of Koraput district is available. Although in recent years considerable attention have been paid by authors like Das and Ramakant (1988), Das and Misra (1987 – 1988). The only papers which deal with useful medicinal plants from Orissa were made earlier by Bal (1942). Panigrahi (1963), Pal and Banerjee (1971), Jain (1964 & 1971), Pal and Banerjee (1974), Saxena

and Das (1978), Gantayet and Das (1982), Das and Ramkant (1988), Sharma et al (1985) and Murthy et al (1986).

In this connection it is worth mentioning that even a casual study of the literature on ethnobotanical studies of Koraput district described by various authors shows that it is incomplete. Therefore, it was felt that further work on ethnobotanical studies of Koraput district should attempt to remedy all the shortcomings of previous studies. The author made repeated visits to the localities, made contact with the tribal people, village pradhan and the interesting information collected from them of that area are presented in this paper.

ETHNOLOGY

The custom of using herbs for curing various diseases is prevalent in this region even now.

The tribals in remote areas depend mostly on Gunias for curing various ailments. These Gunias perform Puja to their Gods or Goddesses to drive away the evil spirits like *duma*, *bhuta*, *preta*. But the tribal people who are residing nearby towns avail

allopathic and homeopathic medicine facilities. The herbal doctors who often visit the tribal villages are aware of most of the treatments for various diseases. They usually collect different plant parts and give to patients in the form of decoction, paste or powder along with honey, milk or water to cure the various diseases. Most of the tribals in addition to their language can understand and speak Oriya. The tribals of Gampakonda area speak Telugu language in addition to Oriya. The tribals use bows and arrows mainly for hunting.

METHODS OF STUDY

The material for the present investigation was collected from the villages inhabiting tribals in the Koraput district of Orissa. Several trips were made to the localities from 1988 to 1990 and the mode of uses described in the present paper were gathered from these tribals and the herbal doctor of the region. The important medicinal plants are deposited in the herbarium cabinet of Dept. of Botany, D.A.V. College, Koraput. As far as possible, attempts were made to collect information on various diseases and the methods of their treatment.

The identification of the plant specimens was made with the help of Hains flora. Plants are arranged alphabetically by their botanical names with the family in the brackets followed by their usage for various ailments

OBSERVATIONS:

Acalypha indica Linn. (Euphorbiaceae) : Leaves squeezed and the juice locally applied within the annus region of children in case of constipation.

Acanthus ilicifolius Linn (Acanthaceae): Leaves used as fomentation in rheumatic pains.

Achras sapota Linn (Sapotaceae) : The young fruits ground to a paste with water and internally given in dysentery.

Aegle marmelos Corr. (Rutaceae) : Pulp of ripe of fruit is cooling and also given in diarrhea and promote digestion.

Ageratum convzoicles Linn. (Compositae) : The juice of leaves applied to cuts externally.

Alangium salvifolium Linn. (Alangiaceae) : The tender leaves are bitter which fried with little oil and applied externally to relieve pain and swelling of joints.

Anacardium occidentale Linn. (Anacardiaceae) : Fruit juice antidiarrhoeal.

Argemone Mexicans Linn. (Papaveraceae) : Yellow juice of plant is applied in wounds and the ashes of flower applied to wounds.

Artocarpus heterophyllus Lam. (Moraceae) : The latex of the applied to glandular swellings.

Azadirachta indica A. Juss. (Milliaceae) : Leaves applied to boils and the decoction of leaves taken for curing skin diseases. Tender wings are commonly used as tooth-brushes for making the mouth and teeth clean and to prevent pyorrhea.

Basella rubra Linn. (Basillaceae): Juice of the leaves are given in cases of constipation particularly in children.

Bixa prellana Linn (Bixaceae) : Red colouring matter is obtained from fruits leaves used in snake bite.

Boerhaavia diffusa Linn. (Nyctaginaceae) :
A weed throughout the district. Leaves are taken as leafy vegetable and are considered to be useful in laxation.

Brassica campestris Linn. (Cruciferae) : Oil is rubbed on the chest in bronchitis and in foot for cold.

Cassia occidentalis Linn. (Leguminosae) : Seed along with milk used as vermifuge.

Cardiospermum halicacabum Linn. (Sapindaceae): Leaf juice used as a cure for earache.

Citrullus vulgaris Schrad. (Cucurbitaceae) : Cultivated in few places for its fruits which is used in jaundice.

Citrus aurantifolia (Christm) Swingle (Rutaceae) : Fruit juice given in vomiting and survey. Leaves applied in head-ache.

Clerodendron infortunatum Linn. (Verbenaceae): Leaves employed externally for tumours and skin diseases.

Coccinia indica Wand. A (Cucurbitaceae) : Leafy juice applied externally in skin diseases.

Cuminum cyminum Linn. (Umbelliferae) : Powdered fruit used in stomach disorders and vomiting.

Curcuma longa Linn. (Zingiberaceae) : Rhizome ground and applied externally to wounds and skin diseases. Taken internally as antiparasitic for many skin diseases.

Daemia extensa R. Br. (Asclepidaceae) : Juice of leaves applied to swelling in combination with ginger.

Elephantopus scaber Linn (Compositae) Syn Asteraceae :Roasted powder with pepper applied to tooth ache.

Emblica officinalis. Gaertn (Euphorbiaceae) : Juice of raw fruit with lemon juice taken to check acute dysentery.

Entada phasealoides Merrill (Leguminosae) : Juice of bark externally applied for healing ulcers.

Glossopora orixensis. Roxb (Zinziberaceae) : Rhizomes is remedy for scorpion bite – it is rubbed with water and applied externally in scorpion sting and snake bite.

Guizotia abyssynica Cass (Compositae) : Oil from seeds is applied on the parts to cure rheumatism.

Holarrhena antidysenterica wall. (Apocynaceae) : Bark is given to cure dysentery. Seeds used as vermifuge.

Impompea pestigridis Linn. (Euphorbiaceae) : The latex of the leaves of the plant is useful in eczema and itches.

Leuca saspera Spreng. (Labiatae) : Juice of leaves applied in scabies and skin eruptions.

Melia azadarach Linn (Meliaceae): Fresh juice of leaves taken internally along with rhizome paste of *Curcuma longa* Linn. as a tonic for blood purification, as antiparasitic for many skin affections. The oil extracted from the seeds prescribed for curing scabies and other skin diseases.

Momusops elangi Linn. (Sapotaceae) : Pulp of the ripe fruit used in curing dysentery.

Momordica charantia Linn (Cucurbitaceae) : The juice of the fresh leaves are useful as

purgative and as vermifuge. The fruits are boiled and taken to cure skin diseases.

Murraya keenigi spreng (Rutaceae) : Green leaves are eaten raw as cure of dysentery.

Nerium indicum Mill (Apocynaceae): The leaves are roasted along with mustard oil and used to reduce swelling.

Ocimum sanctum Linn. (Labiatae) : Fresh juice of the leaves given with honey is bronchitis and dropped into the ear as remedy for earache. The plant juice is also applied to the bites of scorpion.

Oxalis corniculata Linn. (Oxalidaceae) : Leaves – cooling leaf paste applied to cure headache.

Pergularia extensa. N.E.Br. (Asclepiadaceae) : The milky latex is applied to cure toothache and also in swellings of the joints.

Plumbago zeylanica Linn. (Plumbaginaceae): Milky juice is applied externally in scabies, ringworm and ulcers.

Rauwolfia serpentina (L) Benth, Ex. Kurz. (Apocynaceae): It is found abundantly in the forest of the district. Roots given to painful affections of the bowels and also to reduce blood pressure.

Ricinus communis Linn. (Euphorbiaceae) : Oil from the seeds used as purgative. Leaf roasted with oil applied to the head to relieve headache.

Santalum album Linn (Santalaceae): Wood paste applied to cure boils which are allay to heat.

Sapindus trifoliatus Linn. (Sapindaceae) : Fruit is given internally as purgative and externally it is used as detergent.

Semecarpus anacardium Linn. (Anacardiaceae) : Oil from the nuts used externally to relieve pain especially in wounds and snake bite. It is also applied to make abortion.

Shorea robusta Gaertn. (Dipterocarpaceae) : The resin used as plaster along with jagery and applied for swelling occurred due to cold in the lower region of the ear.

Stachytarphata indica Vahl. (Verbenaceae): It is a common weed of waste places. The leaf extract used externally for cuts and ulcers.

Syzygium jambos (Linn). Alst : Fruits given in jaundice.

Tamarindus indica Linn (Leguminosae) : The fruit used for digestion and testa of the seed used for extraction of gums and to cure dysentery.

DISCUSSION

This paper provides a report in ethnomedicinal uses of some important plants locally available for curing various diseases. It is interesting that the ethnobotanical studies of tribal belt provide a rewarding experience. In Orissa the medicinal plants available are still not explored well, a thorough investigation may provide remedy for different ailments.

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