

SOME NOVEL FOLK TREATMENTS AMONG THE TRIBES OF UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT: *The paper constitute report on some interesting plant – based fait and belief, and novel treatments practiced by Boxas of Nainital, Bijnor and deharadun districts, tharus of gonad and saharia tribe of lalitpur districts of U.P 23 plant species have been reported to be used against various ailments of mankind, in scorpionsting and snake bite, Root juice of Musa paradisica is used as contraceptive, while seed paste of Abrus precatorius in abortion. Moreover, Boxas of Nainital believe that if a root piece of Achyranthes aspera is worn over the neck of a lad unable to conceive will certainly conceive. Similarly, tharus of baharaich and gonda scattered leaves of putranjiva roxburghii over the maternity room for an easy delivery.*

INTRODUCTION

Each tribal group or any ethnically distinct human society has its peculiar socio-cultural milieu. Due to their close association with forests, surrounding vegetation have been of immense importance in tribal life, as evidenced by their plant based faith, traditional beliefs and folkfore, however it vary from one group to the another and each group has distinct folklore which has been getting passed from area to area, people to people and becoming legendary. Whereas, several plant species associated with folklore faith and belief are still endemic to various ethnic groups, specially to the tribes, although modern medical facilities are now available primitive mode of treatments are still intact n almost all the tribal communities.

In U.P., tribes mainly reside in several pockets of eastern and western districts most of the groups have been living in the vicinity of forests, using several plant species for remedy of various diseases, believe in

supernatural power and have various fait and myths for the ambient vegetation. Unfortunately these precious lore are disappearing day by day due to modernization, and unplanned management, the senior author as been engaged in documentation and preservation of such valuable information form various tribal groups of the state (Maheswari and Singh 1988, 1989, 1990,1992;singh 1988, 1991; Singh and Maheswari, 1992 1993 Singh et al 1990). The present paper constitute reports in interesting and unusual mode of treatments practiced by tribes of nainital, dehradun, Bijnor, gonda bahraich and lalitpur districts.

OBSERVATIONS:

The Boxas of nainital district apply the seed paste of 'Kuda' (Holorrhena antidysentrica (L) Wall. On the penis or vagin and also on lower part of the stomach to cure urinary disorder. Leaves of 'Baigan' (Solanum

melongena L) are wrapped on the forehead to get relief from headache. Stem decoction of 'Guruch' (Tinospora cordifolia Miers) is given in post delivery fever. The leaf paste of 'Chukha' (Oxalis corniculata L) is applied on part stung by scorpion; its juice is also taken as antidote. The petiole of 'Pipal' (Ficus religiosa L) is inserted carefully into the ear, Preventing entry in the inner part for treatment of snake bite. The warmed leaf, coated with mustard oil is used as bandage on boils and blister for suppuration, Leaves of 'Gandhela' (Murraya koengii (L) Spring) are scattered on the floor to keep fleas away. The leaf paste is applied on the uterus for insertion whenever it comes out accidentally. It is believed that if a piece of root of charchita' (Achyranthes aspera L) is worn on the neck of a barren women, she will become pregnant. A piece of its root is also tied over the thigh of pregnant for easy delivery. They tie a dried root piece of 'Bach' (Acorus calamus L) on the neck of both mother and child to keep them away from weevil spirits while traveling on foot.

The Boxas of Bijpur district smear the seed paste of 'Ullu' (Oroxylum indicum (L) Vent.) in mustard oil on the body for the treatment of post delivery fever. The seed paste is also applied on the lower part of the stomach in urinary complaints. The fruit powder of 'Karanjua' (Caesalpinia crista L) is taken as a preventive against malarial fever. Root-knot of 'Siwalu' (Vitex negundo L), locally known as 'Mamira' is burnt and the ash is applied in eyes for the treatment of cataract. Latex of 'Gular' (Ficus racemosa L.) is applied on forehead and also on wrist in conjunctivitis.

The Mehra Boxas of Deharadun believe that if a piece of stem bark of 'Sehun' (Euphorbia nerifolia L) is used as a ring, the fungal infection can be cured. The boil

whole plant of 'Akashbel' (Cuscuta reflexa Roxb) and its extract is used externally for treatment of body swelling.

The tharu tribe of Gonda and Baharaich district use the seed paste of 'Gumachi' (Abrus precatorius L.) as poltice on cotton pad and inserted into the vagina, bring out during abortion. The root juice of 'Kela' (Musa paradisiaca L.) is said to be used as contraceptive. They grow 'Nigdon' (Pedilanthus tithymaloides Poit) nearby their house and believe that snake hardly appear in their surroundings leaves of 'Patjhir' (Putranjiva roxburghii Wall) are scattered over the floor of maternity room for an easy delivery. A garland of its dried seeds are worn to protect red pimples and allergy. In the treatments of piles, they put the leaves of 'Bhang' (Cannabis sativa L.) in a piece of cloth and warmed it slightly. The cloth is then used to press outgrowth masses of piles before sleeping, for complete cure, the decoction of the root is also given as an anti-hellucinogenic agent.

The saharia tribes of Lalitpur district believe that if a dried stick of 'Chakheri' (Sicurinea virosa Ballou) is given on the hand of patient suffering from piles, it would be helpful in curing the diseases. The seed paste of 'Akola' (Alangium salvifolium (L) Wang.) is applied on scorpion sting and it is believed that the paste itself remove from the point after absorbing the poison. They tie root piece of 'Nai' (Enicostema axillare Raynal) on the wrist and claim it to be useful for curing stomachache. A piece of 'Lahsun' (Allium sativum L) is also tied on ear in the treatment of gastric troubles.

Although the folk treatments are largely based on belief and faith, and are no doubt unscientific, yet these are quite effective. The tribal have been practicing it since time immemorial. Same information pertaining a

particular remedy from two or more groups/localities, reflect the accuracy and reliability of the folk medicines. These belief ad folklore may be accepted as a point of information for scientific investigation about the remedial value. Moreover, there is an urgent need to collect such information from ever nook of the country, and attempt should also be made to popularize the

knowledge among the rural as well as urban societies.

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