



Original Article

Traditional herbal remedies among *Bheel* and *Bhilala* tribes of Jhabua District Madhya Pradesh

Vijay V. Wagh and Ashok K. Jain

School of Studies in Botany, Jiwaji University, Gwalior - 474011 (India)

E-mail:- asokjain2003@yahoo.co.in, vijaywagh65@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present paper deals with 20 plant species which are used traditionally since ancient times by *Bheel* and *Bhilala* for the treatment of various ailments, such as mouth ulcer, constipation, earache, headache, asthma, ringworm, jaundice, snake bite, etc. A total of 20 plant species belonging to 17 families are used in day to day life of the *Bheel* and *Bhilala* tribes. The present observation puts into record some novel traditional uses of certain plants as medicines. Folklore medicinal plants are arranged alphabetically which represents their botanical names followed by the family, local name and medicinal uses.

Key words: Traditional, Herbal remedies, Jhabua, *Bheel* and *Bhilala*

Introduction

Jhabua district is situated in the western-most part of Madhya Pradesh state. It is bounded by Banswara district of Rajasthan in North-West, Panchmahal and Vadodara districts of Gujarat in West. Dhulia district of Maharashtra and West Nimar of Madhya Pradesh in south, Dhar district in east and Ratlam district in north, river Narmada flanks on its southern boundary. Most of the village habitants of Jhabua belong to tribal communities. Major part of the district is covered by dense forest area in which various tribes, like *Bheel*, *Bhilala* and *Pataya* are in majority. Out of these tribes *Bheel* and *Bhilala* stand high in strength scattered in most of the villages of the district.

Bheels are the one of the oldest tribal community not only of India but of the world. Also, they are the third largest tribal community in India. This is the only existing tribal community having compact core and periphery since ages they are forest dwellers, inhabiting very close to nature therefore well acquainted with the "Mother Nature" Being close to nature they inherited from their ancestors the knowledge regarding the herbs, shrubs, trees and other flora and fauna existing in the therapeutics and medicinal properties of plants. They constantly use lots plant and plants parts for various preparations and purposes. This ancestral knowledge about uses and preparations of these plants is transferred orally from one generation to another.

A review of literature reveals that though much work has been done on ethno-medicinal plants in India (Kirtikar and Basu 1935; Jain 1965, 1991; Maheshwari and Singh 1965; Agarwal 1986; Jain 1988; Sikarwar and Maheshwari 1992; Kadel and Jain 2006 ; Jain and Vairale 2007 and 2010) still there are some interior areas which need to be surveyed intensively like Jhabua district for searching new traditional medicines.

Materials and Methods

Intensive explorations were conducted in the study area during May 2007-April 2010. Knowledgeable persons and medicinemen were interviewed for recording medicinal uses, parts used, method of drug preparation, dosage and local name. Voucher specimens and ethno-medicinal information were collected following the methods described by Jain and Rao (1976). The collected plant specimens were identified taxonomically with the help of regional flora and other authentic published literature. All the specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of School of Studies in Botany, Jiwaji University, Gwalior (M.P.). Under enumeration, plant names have been arranged alphabetically followed by family within parentheses, local names and medicinal uses.

Enumeration of plant species:

Abrus precatorius L. (Fabaceae)

Local name: Ratti



10-15 fresh leaves chewed thrice a day in mouth ulcers.

Achyranthes aspera L. (Amaranthaceae)

Local name: Chirchita

Root paste is applied on a bitten area in scorpion bite.

Alangium salvifolium (L.F.) Wang ((Cornaceae)

Local name: Okali

2-4 gm root powder is mixed with water and given orally twice a day in constipation.

Alstonia scholaris (L.) R.Br. (Apocynaceae)

Local name: Saptaparni

A glassful stem bark decoction is given twice a day in tuberculosis.

Borassus flabellifer L. (Arecaceae)

Local name: Tad

Leaf base is burned and squashed and the formed juice is put in ear in earache.

Caesalpinia bonduc (L.) Roxb. (Caesalpinaceae)

Local name: Ghatar

One teaspoonful seed powder is given twice a day in burning sensation during urination.

Celastrus paniculatus Willd. (Celastraceae)

Local name: Kangan

Seed oil is applied on forehead in half headache.

Costus speciosus (J. Koeing) Sm. (Costaceae)

Local name: Jangali Aadu

Rhizome paste is applied on the forehead in chronic headache.

Desmodium gangeticum (L.) DC. (Fabaceae)

Local name: Rinzado

Fresh leaves juice is applied externally on scabies and ringworm.

Euphorbia nerrifolia L. (Euphorbiaceae)

Local name: Hathlo thubar

Latex of plant is given in Pan (*Piper betel*) leaf in asthma.

Ficus benghalensis L. (Moraceae)

Local name: Bargad

Latex of the plant is applied in mouth ulcers.

Haldinia cordifoila (Roxb.) Ridsd. (Rubiaceae)

Local name: Haldu

Stem bark pounded overnight and the decoction is given twice a day in Jaundice.

Lannea coromandelica (Houtt.) Merr. (Anacardiaceae)

Local name: Moyan

Stem bark is crushed with 500 ml water and heated gently for 5-20 minutes and the decoction is given twice a day to treat rheumatism.

Momordica dioica Roxb. ex Willd. (Cucurbitaceae)

Local name: - Kakuda

Root tuber paste is applied on bitten area in snakebite.

Ocimum basilicum L. (Lamiaceae)

Local name: - Safed Bhabdi,

Seed pounded in water overnight, and the extract is given orally in pimple and blemishes.

Pterocarpus marsupium Roxb. (Fabaceae)

Local name: - Rangatroeda

Decoction of stem bark is given orally twice a day in kidney stone.

Syzygium cumini (L.) Skeels (Myrtaceae)

Local name: - Jamun

One teaspoonful seed powder is given orally twice a day for blood purification.

Tamarindus indica L. (Mimosaceae)

Local name: - Aamli,

2 gm seed powder mixed with honey and the made pills are given twice a day in diabetes.

Urginea indica (Roxb.) Kunth (Liliaceae)

Local name: - Jangali pyaz

Bulb paste is bandaged on the swelling in rheumatism.

Wrightia tinctoria R. Br. (Euphorbiaceae)

Local name: - Kueda

One teaspoonful seed powder is given orally thrice a day for one week in Malaria.

Results and Discussion

In this study, we focused mainly on plant species reported by the local people in and around the study area for their medicinal uses. In the present investigation 20 medicinal plants are used for the treatment of various ailments. Folklore medicinal plants are arranged alphabetically which represents their botanical names followed by the family, local name and medicinal uses.

The Traditional knowledge of tribal communities of Jhabua district has high ethnobotanical importance. They utilize numerous plants and their various parts, viz., roots, leaves, plant latex, bark, tubers and seeds in various ways. A total of 20 species belonging to 17 families are used in day to day life of the Bheel and Bhilala tribes. The present observation puts into record some novel traditional uses of certain plants as medicines, e.g. root of *Momordica dioica*, used antidote against snake bite, use of *Lannea coromandelica* stem bark and bulb of *Urginea indica* in rheumatism, *Syzygium cumini* seeds in diabetes, *Alstonia scholaris* stem bark in tuberculosis. Some plants are appreciably effective in curing

mouth ulcer, earache, skin diseases, scorpion bite, malaria, kidney stone, constipation, headache, pimple and blemishes, headache, asthma and jaundice.



Plate.1: Tribal family and researcher interaction with tribal medicine- man



Plate-2: *Costus speciosus*; *Desmodium gangeticum*; *Wrightia tinctoria* *Urginea indica*;
Alangium salvifolium; *Pterocarpus marsupium*; *Borassus flabellifer*; *Caesalpinia bonduc*



Due to the growing importance of ethnobotanical studies, it is necessary to collect the informations about the knowledge of folklore medicinal plants, preserved in local communities of various parts of Jhabua district before it is permanently lost. Having the above facts in mind, an attempt was made to explore the medical remedies of some medicinal plants used by the local people of Jhabua district for the treatment of various ailments.

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