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Curative Practices Adopted by the Tribals of South-West Rajasthan

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Abstract: India is blessed with various climatic zones rich in its flora and fauna. In India, Rajasthan is a state with mixed climatic conditions rich in medicinal plants diversity.

Plants have been in use as medicines since time immemorial. In a society at various layers everybody bears his own personalized belief in practices concerned with health and diseases. Curative practices adopted in any section of population find support in terms of age old practices and customs which control community's health seeking attitude. Most of the tribal people of South-West Rajasthan have faith on local plants for curing various ailments. Plant based medicines are cost-effective and also have no side effects.

Much work has been also been carried out on ethno-medicinal plants of South-West Rajasthan used for treatment of various ailments by different tribal communities and researchers in Rajasthan. Present research article highlights some of the important medicinal plants used by tribal communities of Girwa tehsil of district Udaipur, South-West Rajasthan with their therapeutic use in day-to-day life.

Keywords: Ethno-medicinal plants, Tribal, South-West Rajasthan, Ailments, Curative practices

I. INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan is the largest state of India by area which covers about 10.4 per cent of India's total geographical area. It lies between 23°3' to 30°12' North latitude and 69°30' to 78°17' East longitude. The Aravalli Range and the lands to the East and South-East of the range are generally more fertile and better watered. The Northwestern portion of Rajasthan is generally sandy and dry while the western part of Rajasthan is dry and infertile and the South-western part is hilly and wet. The climate of Rajasthan keeps varying throughout the state.

South-West region of Rajasthan is rich in traditional medicinal plants. Traditional medicine flourished in India for a quite long time but with chemical revolution and boom in synthetic medicines, the faith in and use of traditional medicines has gradually declined. But, after facing COVID pandemic, faith and belief on traditional medicinal plants have revived and gained importance. In rural areas, many communities like Kathodi, Bhil, Garasia, Damor, etc., are still dependent on indigenous folk practitioners for remedy of their ailments.

In many studies conducted so far it has been indicated that disease and health ideology among tribes of South-West Rajasthan specially in Udaipur division have little faith in established systems of professional medicine wherein, treatment for a variety of ailments involve strong cultural and social dimensions. In present investigation focus has been be on prevalent local plants used by tribal communities of Udaipur district. The traditional healers of Rajasthan have commendable knowledge of the medicinal virtues of plants that grow around them. The information about medicinal properties of plants is being carried from generation to generation in the tribal communities.

They know from their experience that which plant part or extract is useful as a drug and this knowledge is passed orally to the descendants. Due to modernization, the knowledge of tribal and rural people with traditional healing practices using wild plants is disappearing fast. So, there is a need to conserve the knowledge through study, research and documentation of precious medicinal plants used by tribal and rural people.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Tehsil Girwa of Udaipur district was visited several times and met with local people of tribal communities to know about the medicinal system they follow for various ailments. Sometimes, tribal people hesitate to talk but some of them have good knowledge about the plants used as medicines by them. During surveys personal interview were conducted with them and other traditional healers. The information was collected from different sects of tribal communities and documented further.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vast literature consulted show that plants have been used as medicines from the age of Vedas. Early people were depending on forest resources for food, fodder, wood, timber, non-timber products, as well as, medicines [10]. Modern man has become dependent on allopathic medicines due to quick results but it has unwanted side effects also. Now, people have inclined towards plant-based medicines in their natural and processed forms [4]. According to some earlier workers plants have been used as traditional medicines for many years [3], [6], [8], [1]. In India, 2500 plant species have been reported to be used by traditional healers [9]. Medicinal plants play an important role in conventional healthcare system, as various allopathic drugs are derived from medicinal plants [7]. Scientific investigations on medicinal plants have been underway in various countries due to their vast therapeutic potential and are also used as an alternative therapy in various healthcare systems [2].

As is today tribal people of South-West Rajasthan also are unaware of modern medicines or we can say that they have no or little faith on allopathic medicines. For most of their ailments like fever, cough and cold, asthma, injuries, wounds, swellings, bone fractures, skin diseases, burns, ringworms, toothache, etc. They use local medicinal plants in the form of dried powder of plant part, extract, paste or plants which are taken orally as decoction or chewed to get relief without having side effects. These ethno-medicinal plants contain different types of alkaloids, terpenoids, phenols, phyto-sterols, flavonoids, tannin, etc. The tribals and rural folk follow herbal curative practices and have deep faith in their old treatise and traditions.

In present paper widely used species of the plants by tribals of South-West Rajasthan have been indexed which are used by tribals as curative agents of various ailments. The high diversity of plant families in the study area can be deduced from the presence of approximately 35 different families.

Locals utilize different plant parts like bark, fruits, root bark, leaves, pulp, seeds, rhizome, decoction of pods, latex of fruits, husk, corm and in few species whole plant is useful, e.g., *Leucas aspera* of family Asteraceae. Plant parts, modes of preparation and application play a significant role in herbal medicine [11]. While extraction from fresh material is considered more useful to avoid microbial fermentation [12]. Following plants mentioned in the table no.1 have been proved to be useful in treatment of varied ailments like general body pain, chest pain, cough and cold, cuts and wounds, diabetes, digestive disorders, skin diseases, child delivery pain, insomnia, kidney stone, mental issues, muscular ache, bronchitis, menstrual disorders, amoebic disorders, etc. Some plants parts have anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and blood clotting properties. Leaves and seeds of *Withania somnifera* are used as an effective nerve tonic.

The use of medicinal plants belonging to the families Rutaceae, Lamiaceae, Zingiberaceae, Leguminosae, Asteraceae, etc. in the tehsil Girwa of Udaipur suggests that the plant species are well known to tribal communities for their medicinal properties. The knowledge acquired by tribal communities need wide propagation among general population of the region, as well as, throughout the country.

Table 1. List of important medicinal plants used in South-West Rajasthan, Udaipur District tribal area villagers for various ailments on all times.

Sl. No.	Disease/disorder	Vernacular name of the plant	Scientific name (Family)	Useful part of the plant
1.	General body pain	Bel patra	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (Rutaceae)	Bark, fruit
		Timru	<i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i> (Ebenaceae)	Root bark
2.	Chest pain	Arjun	<i>Terminalia arjuna</i> (Combretaceae)	Bark
		Hiran khuri	<i>Leucas aspera</i> (Asteraceae)	Whole plant
3.	Cough and cold symptoms	Pilikateli	<i>Aregemone mexicana</i> (Papaveraceae)	Flower
		Bor	<i>Ziziphus jujube</i> (Rhamnaceae)	Bark
		Adusa	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i> (Acanthaceae)	
				Leaves

4.	Cuts and wounds	Guar patha	<i>Aloe vera</i> (Asphodeliaceae)	Pulp
		Belot	<i>Semicarpus anacardium</i> (Anacardiaceae)	Bark
		Kemach	<i>Mucuna prioritis</i> (Leguminosae) <i>Abutilon indicum</i> (Malvaceae)	Leaves
		Kanghi		Roots
5.	Diabetes	Dhawra	<i>Anogeissus latifolia</i> (Combretaceae)	Bark
		Jamun	<i>Syzygium cumini</i> (Myrtaceae) <i>Ficus glomerata</i> (Moraceae)	Seeds
		Gular	<i>Gymnema sylvestre</i> (Asclepiadaceae)	Fruit and bark
		Gudmar		Stem and leaves
6.	Child delivery problems, digestive disorders	Rasna	<i>Blepharisprium subsessile</i> (Asteraceae) <i>Acorus calamus</i> (Acoraceae)	Fresh milk and Roots Leaves and rhizome
		Buch		
7.	Post-natal stomach problems of infants	Amaltas	<i>Cassia fistula</i> (Caesalpiniaceae)	Decoction of pods
8.	Skin disease, psoriasis, tooth ache	Neem	<i>Melia indica</i> (Meliaceae)	Leaves, bark, seeds
9.	Insomnia, loose motion.	Amal	<i>Papaver somniferum</i> (Papaveraceae)	Seeds, latex of fruits, leaves,
10.	Cold, cough, lung congestion	Adrak	<i>Zingiber officinale</i> (Zingiberaceae)	Rhizome,
		Tulsi	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> (Lamiaceae)	Leaves
11.	Sciatic pain, knee pain	Harsingar	<i>Nyctanthes arbor-tristis</i> (Nyctaginaceae)	Flowers, leaves
12.	Kidney stone,	Bijora	<i>Citrus medica</i> (Rutaceae)	Fruit pulp
13.	Stomach issues	Isabgol	<i>Plantago ovata</i> (Plantaginaceae)	Husk
14.	Stomach ache, gas, constipation	Ajwain	<i>Carum copticum</i>	Seeds, leaves
		Pudina	<i>Mentha viridis</i>	Leaves
		Jeera	<i>Cuminum cyminum</i> (Apiaceae)	Seeds
15.	Mental issues	Brahmi	<i>Centella asiatica</i> (Apiaceae)	Leaves
16.	Internal Pain in limbs	Ambi haldi	<i>Curcuma longa</i> (Zingiberaceae)	Corm
17.	Muscular pain	Lahsun	<i>Allium cepa</i> (Liliaceae)	Leaves
18.	Blood clotting	Ghamra	<i>Tridax procumbens</i> (Asteraceae)	Leaves
19.	Fertility, milk producing, knee pain, constipation	Sahanjana	<i>Moringa oleifera</i> (Moringaceae)	Seeds, leaves

20.	Bronchitis	Antamool	<i>Tylophora indica</i> (Asclepiadaceae)	Leaves
21.	Nerve tonic	Ashwagandha	<i>Withania somnifera</i> (Solanaceae)	Leaves , seeds
22.	Prolectin production increasing, menstrual disorder	Satavari	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> (Asparagaceae)	Leaves, seeds
23.	Menstrual disorder, jaundice, gonorrhoea	Bhumi-amla	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i> (Euphorbiaceae)	Leaves
24.	Antipyretic,	Guduchi, Nneem giloy	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Menispermaceae)	Leaves, twigs
25.	Anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, skin & STD	Hathilata	<i>Argyrea speciosa</i> (Convolvulaceae)	Leaves
26.	Amoebic and other infections of gastric tract	Kachnar	<i>Bauhinia variegata</i> (Caesalpiniaceae)	Bark juice, leaves
27.	Antipyretic	Kalmegh	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i> (Acanthaceae)	Leaves and seed
28.	Anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant & anti cancer	Nirgundi	<i>Vitex negundo</i> (Lamiaceae)	Seeds
29.	Cramps, fever, toothache, wound healing, blood clotting	Gandana	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> (Asteraceae)	Leaves
30.	Gastric problems, body building painful menstruation, appetizer	Methi	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i> (Fabaceae)	Seeds, leaves

IV. CONCLUSION

The current study reported important ethno-medicinal plants practiced in human healthcare by the tribal people of tehsil Girwa of Udaipur, South-West Rajasthan. Like other rural people they also rely on ethno-medicinal plants to cure their diseases. It is due to their traditional culture, easy availability and cheaper sources. The above information on the various ethno-medicinal plants would definitely prove to be useful for general population, researchers, scientists and pharmacologists. Tribals have abundant knowledge about local plants of medicinal value which needs to be preserved and forwarded for the beneficence of society. These plants have been screened for their phytochemicals and other active compounds present therein but it still needs deeper investigations which will prove utmost exploitation at commercial level in modern systems of medicine. Their clinical trials for therapeutic action will help greatly human race with target attack on specific and newer diseases.

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