

LOCAL HERBAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE JABALPUR REGION: HEALING WITH PLANTS

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with 25 plants ranging from herbs to trees, commonly used by local healers with authority for curing various ailments. The current botanical and local names, of Jabalpur region brief description, claims, preparation, administration are provided for creating awareness among common people and also to facilitate their easy identification in the field. These plants belong to 22 genera and 17 families.

Keywords : Local healers, Jabalpur, Administrator

INTRODUCTION

The Ayurvedic system of medicine has been in use for over three thousand years. The medicines mentioned in *Charaka Samhita* and *Susrutha Samhita* are esteemed even today as treasures of literature on indigenous medicines. From the beginning of the earlier physician botanists, the study of drugs and drug plants have developed into modern pharmacognosy which deals with the knowledge of history, botany, preservation and commerce of crude drugs. Even today, the system of allopathy is still unknown to the people inhabiting the interior areas. Most of the people depend on Ayurvedic or traditional folk medicines to cure various diseases, they suffer from. The importance of traditional medicines which provide health service to 70-80% of world population has been emphasized by Marini-Bettalo (1980).

In India, we have a rich tradition of medicine and health care Ayurveda is an ancient medical science even now recognized for safety and efficacy. Our cultural heritage is amply enriched with the presence of Unani and Suddha systems of medicine. Yoga and other allied systems provide an excellent basis of preventive health care. Traditional systems of medicines take an approach that since disease or prone to disease is due to imbalance in the equilibrium, restoration of the equilibrium eliminates the disease. The treatment aims not only curing the

disease but also enhancing the body vitality to combat the disease and minimize the chance of relapse.

In the present paper authors deal with 25 plants ranging from herbs to trees commonly used by local people with authority for curing various ailments, the current botanical names, family names, brief description, claims, preparation, administration are provided for creating awareness among common people and also to facilitate their easy identification in the field.

ENUMERATION

***Adhatoda zeylanica* Medik. (Acanthaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Vasaka

Local Name : Adusa

Description : Evergreen shrubs, leaves elliptic to lanceolate, acuminate, glabrous. Inflorescence spike. Flowers white, blipped, nectar gland present.

Claim : Cough, Bronchitis and Asthma.

Preparations : Juice extract of leaves mixed with honey and ginger.

Administration : Decoction of leaves with 20 grams of honey provides relief in cough, bronchitis and asthma.

***Aegle marmelos* (L) Correa (Rutaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Bilva

Local Name : Bel

Description : Medium sized thorny tree, bark whitish grey, Leaves trifoliate. Flowers white. Fruit berry, stony hard.

Claim : Cooling & Laxative, Diarrhea & Dysentery.

Preparations : Rise bel fruits or jam.

Administration : The unripe or half ripe fruit is the most effective remedy for chronic diarrhea and dysentery where there is no fever. The pulp of the ripe fruit can also be taken without the addition of milk or sugar. About 70 grams of the fruit will be sufficient for an adult.

***Allium cepa* L. (Liliaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Palandu

Local Name : Piyaz

Description : Herb with bulbous rootstock; bulbs scaly, large, leaves radical, fistular. Inflorescence umbel, flower white. Stamen exerted, sub globose.

Claim : Cholera, urinary and ear disorders,

Preparations : Fresh bulbs with black peppers. Decoction of bulbs, juice of bulbs.

Administration : About 30 grams of onion and seven black peppers can be finely pounded and given to the patient in cholera. About 60 grams of onion should be boiled in 500 ml of water when the water is reduced to half it should be cooled, strained and given in urinary disorder. Cotton or wool dipped in onion juice and put into the ear and heated juice dropped in the ear relieves earache.

***Allium sativum* L. (Liliaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Arishtha

Local Name : Lahsun

Description : Bulbs short with bulbets enclosed in a white or pink envelope. Leaves flat. Flowers often displaced by bulbils, pinkish, in lax umbels on a long, terete scape exceeding the leaves. Anthers and style exerted.

Claim : Heart tonic, appetizer, digestive disorders.

Preparations : Raw or pulp.

Administration : Two to four pieces of garlic every morning may be taken to modify heart rhythm besides relieving symptoms of dizziness, shortness of breath and formation of gas within the digestive tract.

***Boerhavia diffusa* L. (Nyctaginaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Shothagni

Local Name : Purnanava

Description : Diffusely branched herb. Leaves linear-ovate, oblong or rounded, acute or obtuse, rounded or cordate bases. Flowers pink, Fruits ribbed.

Claim : Fever, liver and spleen disorders.

Preparations : Crushed fresh roots or decoction with sugar.

Administration : Crushed fresh roots or decoction given in doses of 4 to 16 grams thrice a day.

***Cissus quadrangularis* L. (Vitaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Asthisanhara

Local Name : Hadjor

Description : Perennial, succulent, twining herbs: rooting at nodes. stems green and quadrangular. Leaves ovate to cordate.

Claim : For treatment of fractures.

Preparations : Powdered stem along with rock salt.

Administration : Poultice of powdered stem along with rock salt used for the treatment of fractures.

***Commiphora wightii* (Arn.) Bhandari (Burseraceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Gaggulu

Local Name : Guggul

Description : Shrubs with papery bark Leaves sessile, alternate or fascicled, 1-3 foliated; leaflets glabrous, ovate, serrate. Flowers red or pinkish-white.

Claim : Spleen and heart disorders.

Preparations : Gum-resin of plant.

Administration : The tablets and injections are prepared from the gum resin and given to reduce cholesterol level in blood.

***Curcuma domestica* Valetton (Zingiberaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Haridra

Local Name : Haldi

Description : Aromatic Herb, rootstock large, tubers cylindric, yellowish. Leaves oblong lanceolate. Flowers in few flowered spikes, bracts of coma tinged with pink.

Claim : Sprains, skin disease.

Preparations : Rhizome paste with lime and salt, juice of rhizomes with or without honey.

Administration : Turmeric paste mixed with lime applied on swellings caused by sprains. Juice of raw turmeric is externally applied to the affected parts of skin like ring worm and scabies. Turmeric juice mixed with honey should be taken orally in skin disease.

***Eclipta prostrate* (L.) (Asteraceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Bhringaraj

Local Name : Bhangra, Mochkand

Description : Prostrate, pubescent herb. Leaves elliptic-oblong or lanceolate, entire or serrate, Heads white. Achene turbinate, tubercled

Claim : Skin disorders, premature graying of hairs

Preparations : Juice or paste of leaves. Plant extract, sesame oil with Indian gooseberry (Amla).

Administration : A paste of leaves is applied to chronic glandular swellings, skin disease and to wounds as a styptic or astringent. One part of herb extract, two part of sesame oil and two part of amla (dried) boiled and filtered. Extract may be applied on premature graying of hairs.

***Gloriosa superba* L. (Liliaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Langli, Kalihari.

Local Name : Kalihari

Description : Twining branched herb with tuberous rootstock. Leaves lanceolate with spiral apex Flowers showy, peduncled, drooping, lower half yellow, upper half red, finely becoming deep red.

Claim : Treatment of gout and rheumatism, abortifacient.

Preparations : Tubers paste.

Administration : Tuber paste fried in mustard oil and applied externally to cure gout and rheumatism. Tuber paste is applied to navel, super pubic region and vagina with the object of promoting labour. In retaining placental a paste of root is applied to the palms and soles.

***Gymnema sylvestris* (Retz.) R.Br. ex Schult. (Asclepiadaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Madhunasini: Meshash-ringi.

Local Name : Gurmar
Description : Twining, pubescent or hirsute herb. Leaves ovate or oblong, acuminate with milky latex. Follicles tapering from base.
Claim : Diabetes
Preparations : Leaves raw eaten by patient.
Administration : At least ten leaves are advised to take three to four times a day to check blood sugar.

***Hemidesmus indicus* (L.) R.Br. (Asclepiadaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Anantamulah
Local Name : Anantmul
Description : Twining herb. Leaves Linear, to linear-lanceolate, elliptic oblong or ovate oblong, apiculate with milky latex, white nerved. Flowers axillary, fascicled. Follicles slender, straight
Claim : Blood purifier; Genito-urinary disorders.
Preparations : Decoction of roots.
Administration : Decoction of roots used as blood purifier and in syphilis, leucorrhoea and other Genito-urinary diseases. The doses may be given 60-100 ml thrice a day.

***Holarrhena pubescens* (Buch.-Ham.) Wallich ex G. Don (Apocynaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Kutaja
Local Name : Kurchi
Description : Medium sized tree. Leaves broadly ovate to elliptic-oblong with milky latex. Inflorescence terminal cymes, corymbose. Flowers white, sweet-scented. Follicles green, cylindrical.
Claim : Dysentery and diarrhea.
Preparations : Decoction of bark.
Administration : Decoction of bark about 10 ml (3-4 times a day), is an effective remedy to cure dysentery or diarrhea.

***Ocimum tenuiflorum* L. (Labiatae)**

Sanskrit Name : Patrapushpa

Local Name : Tulsi
Description : Perennial aromatic herbs, stem purplish green, Leaves ovate or ovate – oblong, serrate, obtuse. Flower purplish. Seeds reddish- yellow.
Claim : Expectorant, diuretic, Antipyretic
Preparations : Decoction of leaves with honey and ginger.
Administration : Tender leaves boiled with tea act preventive against fever. Decoction of leaves with honey and ginger is an effective remedy for bronchitis, asthma, influenza, cough and cold.

***Phyllanthus amarus* Schumanch & Thonn. (Euphorbiaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Bhumyamalaki
Local Name : Bhui-amla
Description : Herbs Stem glabrous. Leaves oblong, glabrous. Flowers whitish – yellow. Male flowers 1-3, female solitary. Fruits obovate. Seeds brown longitudinally ribbed on back.
Claim : Jaundice
Preparations : Decoction of whole plant
Administration : Decoction of whole plant about 10 ml is to be given thrice a day to cure jaundice.

***Ricinus communis* L. (Euphorbiaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Eranda
Local Name : Rendi
Description : Shrubs. Leaves simple palmately lobed, margins toothed. Flowers in bunches. Capsule prickly marked into six parts. Seeds oblong, smooth, black dotted
Claim : Purgative; Seed oil (Castor oil) and warm leaves.
Preparations : -
Administration : Castor oil (20 ml) can be given to clear stomach in constipation. Warm leaves along with turmeric and mustard oil can be applied over boils and swellings.

***Saraca asoca* (Roxb.) de Wilde (Caesalpiniaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Ashoka

Local Name : *Sita – ashok*

Description : Evergreen tree. Leaves compound, leaflets sub-coriaceous. Bracts showy and bright orange coloured. Pods 6-8 seeded, flat.

Claim : Arresting bleeding or secretion and as a uterine sedative

Preparations : Decoction of bark in milk and water.

Administration : About 100 grams of the bark is boiled in 30 ml of milk and 350 ml of water till the total quantity is reduced to about 100 ml. This divided in 2 or 3 doses to be given a day. The treatment should commence from the fourth day of the menstruation and continue till the bleeding is checked. Fresh decoction is to be made every day.

***Strychnos nux-vomica* L. (Loganiaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Vishamushti

Local Name : Nux vomica

Description : Tree, leaves ovate or elliptic, acuminate, petioles long. Inflorescence an axillary branchlets many flowered. Fruits globular, red when ripe.

Claim : Dysentery: Fever and Cholera.

Preparations : Seeds used in Homoeopathy; decoction of bark is used to cure dysentery, fever and cholera

Administration : Aqueous and 50% ethanolic extract of nux vomica

***Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb. ex DC.) Eight & Arn.(Combretaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Arjuna

Local Name : Arjun.

Description : Tree, Leaves elliptic – oblong. Inflorescence paniced- spikes. Flowers white. Fruits winged

Claim : Heart tonic and cardiac stimulant

Preparations : Decoction of the thick portion of the bark.

Administration : Decoction should be taken every morning on an empty stomach or its powder in 1 to 2 grams doses. It should be used with milk or jaggery.

***Terminalia bellirica* (Gaertn.) Roxb. (Combretaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Bahira

Local Name : Bahera

Description : Deciduous tree. Leaves crowded towards the ends of branchlets. Inflorescence spike. Fruits globose, ovoid drupes grey colored.

Claim : It is a tonic, laxative and arrest secretion or bleeding.

Preparations : The bahera fruit is one of the three constituents of the famous Indian preparation triphala and used in the form of powder.

Administration : The herb is extremely useful in stomach disorders such as indigestion and diarrhea. a decoction or infusion of 1-3 grams of the pulp of the fruits should be administered in these disorders.

***Terminalia chebula* Retz. (Combretaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Harra

Local Name : Harad

Description : Deciduous tree. Leaves ovate or elliptic. Inflorescence paniced spikes. Flowers whitish yellow, aromatic. Fruits ovoid or obovoid, faintly 5-ribbed drupe.

Claim : Diarrhea, dysentery, heart-burn, flatulence, dyspepsia and liver and spleen disorders.

Preparations : Raw or powdered form of fruits

Administration : Pulp of 2 or 3 fruits with a little rock salt or a decoction of 6 fruits and 4 grams of cloves or cinnamon should be taken daily at bed time to relieve constipation. Four grams pulp of unripe fruits is given with honey, clove and cinnamon twice a day in diarrhea and dysentery.

***Tinospora cordifolia* (Wild.) Miers. (Menispermaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Amrita

Local Name : Guruch

Description : A succulent twiner with corky bark. Leaves petiolate, cordate, acute, glabrous. Flowers small yellow. Male fascicled, female solitary. Fruit and berries when ripe.

Claim : Antipyretic and urinary problems.

Preparations : Decoction of stem.

Administration : Decoction of stem (about 10 ml) can be given in all types of fever and urinary problems also.

***Trachyspermum ammi* (L.) Sprague (Apiaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Ajmoda

Local Name : Ajwain

Description : Annual herb. Leaves 2-3 pinnate, segments linear. Inflorescence umbels. Flowers white. Fruits ovoid, muricate ridges.

Claim : Diarrhoea, dysentery, dyspepsia, cholera, colic, flatulence and indigestion.

Preparations : Used raw or powdered seeds.

Administration : For relieving flatulence, dyspepsia or spasmodic disorders, the seeds may be eaten with betel leaves. A teaspoonful of these seeds with a little rock salt is a household remedy for indigestion. In case of colic ajwain, dry ginger and black salt in the proportion of 1:1/2:1/4:1 should be ground together and taken in three grams doses with warm water.

***Tylophora indica* (Burm.f.) Merrill (Asclepiadaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Antamul

Local Name : Antamool

Description : Twining perennial herb. Leaves opposite, ovate, acute, fleshy. Flowers yellow, purple within, in clusters. Fruits ridged with many fine ridges, pointed at tip.

Claim : Asthma and bronchitis

Preparations : Leaves (raw).

Administration : Three to five leaves are advised to take empty stomach during morning. if cause vomiting tendency, do not take.

***Zingiber officinale* Rosc. (Zingiberaceae)**

Sanskrit Name : Ardraka

Local Name : Adrak

- Description* : Aromatic herb. Rootstock large. Tubers cylindric, brown scaly. Stem leafy Leaves linear-lanceolate to lanceolate. Flowers yellowish-white.
- Claim* : Carminative and aphrodisiac
- Preparations* : Raw or juice
- Administration* : Chewing a piece of fresh ginger regularly after meals prevents dyspepsia flatulence, colic, vomiting and other painful affections of the stomach not accompanied by fever. Half a teaspoonful of ginger juice, honey with a half-boiled egg is taken at night for a month. It tones up the sex organs and cures impotency, premature ejaculation and spermatorrhoea or involuntary seminal discharge.

Conclusion

Based on these results, it is evident that the Jabalpur region's traditional plant-based healing holds a wealth of knowledge and potential for the local community as well as the larger scientific and medical community. In light of the significance of cultural preservation, the sustainability of healthcare, and the possibility for novel solutions to urgent health issues, it is crucial that we advance the preservation and responsible application of this knowledge. To ensure that this priceless legacy survives and keeps helping society as a whole, traditional healers, researchers, and medical professionals can work together to bridge the gap between the old and the new.

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