

Traditional Home Remedies for Common Ailments from Himayatnagar Taluka of Nanded District

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Abstract- Medicinal plants form the largest segment of the biodiversity used by indigenous people. The objective of this study was to preserve the perishing knowledge of traditional home remedies for health care in villages of Maharashtra state of India. Men and women from nineteen villages were interviewed and information collected were documented. Crude drug samples were collected. The rural people used medicinal plants available locally for health care. Plants were used as raw, cooked or decoction forms. All the plants used were identified upto species level. Digital and written documentation were made as well as herbaria are prepared. This study gives scope for use of their time tested remedies by the future generation. In addition it gives scope for reverse pharmacological studies.

Index Terms- traditional knowledge; health care; home remedies; medicinal plants

I. INTRODUCTION

Plants for health care form the largest segment of the biodiversity used by indigenous people for basic needs. The local uses of plants as a cure are common particularly in those areas, which have little or no access to modern health services such as the innumerable villages in India [1, 2]. Their knowledge about home remedies was handed down from one generation to the next by an oral tradition that is part of our social heritage [3, 4]. This work concentrates on ethno medicinal value of plants and herbs commonly used by common village people to cure their health problems they generally face. The ethnomedicinal use of barks of some plants is reported for certain health disorders [5]. In South Kerala, medicinal plants are used for pre and post natal care, specially focusing on the health care management in the form of nutraceuticals [6]. In Jalgaon district of Maharashtra ethnomedicinal uses of tree bark is common for ailments [5]. Indian Council for Medical Research task force reported that still in rural parts of India, people seek traditional medicine practitioners or follow some home remedies to get rid of various ailments because they feel that these therapies are time tested and mainly they have no side effects like modern medicine [7]. In China, there is a long history of treating common disorders with traditional home remedies [9]. In Northern Peru, Asteraceae family plants are more commonly used to treat many diseases [10]. Luke warm extracts of Boraginaceae family members are reported to be used to increase lactation in Kashmir [11].

Even though Western medicine is readily available in Japan, 60-70% of population believes in their traditional

medicinal plants. In China, this accounts for about 40-50 % [12]. In Africa, up to 80% of population use traditional medicinal knowledge for various health problems, which they have learnt from their forefathers. [8, 13]. In Pakistan this number is even high [14].

Many ethnobotanical studies are done on the medicinal use of herbals but very few studies are available on home remedies for health care from Marathwada region. Fortunately, the tradition of using home remedies for health is still alive. However these home remedies are not documented. The creation of nuclear families where grand mothers are absent, migration to cities, easy availability of synthetic drugs and access to primary health centers are some of the reasons which are accelerating the loss of traditional knowledge on home remedies. In this study, we have documented the traditional knowledge related to common health problems from villages of Himayatnagar taluka of Nanded district of Maharashtra state of India.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The study area at Himayatnagar is about 80 km east of Nanded, the district head quarters and positioned on latitude 19° 38'026" and longitude 77° 9'868".

Ethnobotanical Survey

A questionnaire survey method was employed in thirty eight villages of Himayatnagar taluka of Nanded District of Maharashtra State of India, to collect information on traditionally practiced home remedies by rural people for health care. We have not interviewed any traditional medicine practitioners in this study. One hundred and twenty persons were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had prompts for the source of information, identity of the plant materials, methods of preparation, prescription and administration. People were interviewed from the age group of 25 to 70 years over a period of three months. In most cases they were interviewed twice. The people interviewed include Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and believers of local spiritual traditions and other non religious groups. Out of 120 men and women only fifty were literate upto senior secondary level. Few were having formal education of primary school level and the rest were illiterate.

Identification of medicinal plants

The medicinal plants were collected and identified according to their habit, habitat and floral characteristics

following the guidelines described in Flora of Marathwada [15]. The data were recorded and then the plants were identified [Table 1] by the help of village people who were interviewed. Digital photographs were taken. Herbariums were prepared.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Plants used in this study

Plant name	Family name	Ailment	Method of administration
<i>Aloe barbadensis</i>	Xanthorrhoeaceae	Stomach ache	Crushed aloe leaves mixed in curd is given twice daily.
<i>Acacia catechu</i>	Fabaceae	Bleeding gum Throat and mouth ulcers	Paste of heart wood is eaten with leaves of <i>Piper bettle</i> (Pan) for treatment of bleeding gum, throat and mouth ulcers.
<i>Achyranthus aspera</i>	Amaranthaceae	Whooping cough	Seeds decoction is used.
<i>Aegle marmelos</i>	Rutaceae	Stomach ache Anti diarrhoeal Enteric infections	Ripe fruit juice prepared with water or milk is taken orally.
<i>Alium sativum</i>	Liliaceae	Skin infections	Bulblets are crushed and paste is applied on skin.
<i>Arachis hypogaea</i>	Fabaceae	Drying of skin	Ground nut oil is heated slightly and applied on the body.
<i>Colocasia esculanta</i>	Araceae	Blood coagulation	Leaf paste is used for blood coagulation in small injuries
<i>Coriander sativum</i>	Apiaceae	Vomitting	Powdered coriander seeds are boiled in a glass of milk/water for about 5 minutes, sugar is added and given once a day.
<i>Carum carvi</i>	Apiaceae	Stomach ache and Gastric problem	Powdered cumin seeds are taken with a glass of lemon juice.
<i>Citrus aurantifolia</i>	Rutaceae	Diarrhea	(1)Black tea is prepared to which lime juice is added and given once.
		Vomiting	(2)Lemon juice with sugar is given once per day.
<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Asclepiadeceae	Asthma and cough	Powder of flowers with black pepper is taken orally
<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Solanaceae	Tooth ache	Root paste is applied on gums overnight.
<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>	Zingiberaceae	Urinary calculi	Eliaichi and seeds of melon are made into powder and consumed with waterfor one month.
<i>Citrus vulgaris</i>	Cucurbitaceae		
<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>	Zingiberaceae	Stomach ache	Powdered and burnt banyan leaves are mixed in

			a glass of water and taken once a day.
<i>Ficus recemosa</i>	Moraceae	Urinary calculi	Five gm of leaf ash of Umber is taken orally with water regularly for fifteen days.
<i>Lawsonia inermis</i>	Lythraceae	Coloring of hair	Dried heena leaf powder is soaked in tea decoction overnight and applied on hair.
<i>Ferula assafoetida</i>	Apiaceae	Gastric and acidity	consumed in hot milk without sugar in empty stomach.
<i>Glycerrhiza glabra</i>	Fabaceae	Diarrhea	Paste of liquorice, sandal and a few drops of water by rubbing on a stone is mixed with 1 tsp of honey and given twice daily.
<i>Santalum album</i>	Santalaceae		
<i>Punica granatum</i>	Lythraceae	Diarrhea	Pomegranate leaf juice added to a glass of butter milk is given three times a day.
<i>Solanum indicum</i>	Solanaceae	Cold and Cough	Root juice is consumed with honey
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Solanaceae	Whooping cough	Root juice is consumed morning in empty stomach.
<i>Terminalia bellerica</i>	Combretaceae	Dandruff	seed powder in the form of paste is also applied on scalp.
<i>Mimosa pudica</i>	Fabaceae	Piles	Leaf juice with milk is used as a good remedy for piles.
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae	Cracked heels	Mango tree gum is applied on cracked heels.
<i>Nyctanthes arborristis</i>	Oleaceae	Dandruff	seeds in the form of a paste is applied on the head for 2 to 3 hrs and then washed.
<i>Myristica fragrans</i>	Myristicaceae	Stomach ache	Powdered nutmeg mixed with ghee is given once a day.
		Sleeplessness	A pinch of jaifal powder is mixed in luke warm milk and consumed in the night.
<i>Musa paradisiaca</i>	Musaceae	Loose motion	Mashed banana mixed with roasted Bengal gram (Chick pea) powder is given twice a day.
<i>Cicer arietinum</i>	Fabaceae		

<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	Lamiaceae	Cold and cough	Leaf juice is mixed with equal amount of honey and given twice daily.
<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>	Zingiberaceae	Cold	One tea spoon of ginger juice is mixed with two to three drops of honey and consumed at bed time.

* All the reported plants used for home remedies of common ailments by respondents are presented here with informations like botanical name, family name, and mode of preparation and administration.

IV. DISCUSSION

In India, 70 % of its population resides in villages. In spite of the accessibility to western medicine, people in these villages still continue to depend on herbal remedies, for treatment of their health problems. Plant species have long been the principal ingredients of traditional medicine, and their use dates back to the beginning of human civilization. Traditional medicine has clearly recognizable therapeutic benefits [16, 17].

From the collected data a list of 32 plants distributed into 21 families with their traditional uses and mode of administration is given in Table 1. Among the major findings use of *Colocasia esculanta* leaves for blood coagulation, *Mimosa pudica* leaf juice for piles relief, use of *Acacia catechu* heart wood paste for treatment of bleeding gums, throat and mouth ulcers are prominent and interesting to note. The medicinal plant preparations were applied through different routes of administration like oral, topical or dermal etc. However oral application was the highest and most commonly used route followed by topical or dermal applications. The formulations are mostly paste, powder and decoctions.

The respondents in the study have expressed several reasons for non-usage of indigenous medicinal plants as home remedies. Among those, a majority have mentioned about the easy accessibility to Primary Health Centers, migration to cities, higher level of education, easy availability of synthetic drugs, break down of joint families, and absence of elders in the family. One of the major drawbacks of indigenous medicines is that they are not documented, although Ayurvedic texts do mention the healing properties the old texts are not accessible to common man for easy reference. So it is high time to document these age old traditional home remedies which consist of a major part of our cultural and societal structure.

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FOOTNOTES

Table 1: All the reported plants used for home remedies of common ailments by respondents are presented here with information's like botanical name, family name, and mode of preparation and administration.

Table legends

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