



REGULAR ARTICLE

# ON IDENTITIES AND ETHNOMEDICINAL CLAIMS OF SOME COMMON BOTANICALS SOLD BY VENDORS IN NORTH MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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## SUMMARY

The present paper deals with the botanicals sold by the vendors in Nasik, Dhule Nandurbar Jalgaon and Buldhana districts of North Maharashtra (India). An ethnobotanical survey was carried out since June 2008 and information was obtained through open discussions and interviews with tradipractitioners. Presently, 32 plant species of 29 genera belonging to 24 families are communicated. Of these 26 species are being noted for the first time from Indian region. These are administered in the form of decoction, infusion, paste, oil, ash, juice, powder, extract, slurry or in the form of particular recipes. Even they are used raw or sometimes simply warmed. In many cases, they use them as a sole drug or occasionally supplemented by other botanicals or substances like lump sugar, honey, oil, cow ghee, cow urine, etc. These are used to combat common diseases such as rheumatism, arthritis, acidity, scabies, wounds, jaundice constipation, diarrhea, dysentery, cough, menstrual complaints, stomach-ache, tooth-ache, ear-ache, paralysis diabetes, piles, impotency, kidney-stone, dropsy, nocturnal emission, goiter, leucorrhoea, abortion, fever etc. The data accrued is assessed by cross-cultural comparisons with other Indian claims to bring out veracity and uniqueness of the claims made. The objective of investigation was to gather and document information on utilization of botanicals by the tradipractitioners in the region.

**Key words:** Ethnomedicine, Vendors, North Maharashtra

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## 1. Introduction

Medicinal plants have been crucial in sustaining the health and well-being of mankind. It is generally agreed that major section of population especially in developing and underdeveloped countries seek healthcare from sources other than conventional medicines. They also seek help of some organized systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha etc., Apart from these every community or village had a wealth of herbal folklore. Our ancestors possessed a profound understanding of healing powers of plants. They used to try and test local plants for a range of common health problems. These ancient healing practices are still in vogue in a period when

different well-thought and organized systems of medicine are in practice all over the world. Their knowledge has been passed orally generation-to-generation from past. India is one such country having the oldest system of healing in the world. Moreover, tribal and rural societies in India still have their choices of indigenous drug selection and application. A review of literature indicates the 'Herbal Vendors' (Jadibutiwalas) and their traditional knowledge about plant drugs has remained untapped. They have been always ignored in our country. The present paper is an attempt to tap their knowledge and experiences. In India Sinha (1998) has attempted on this line, studied

Delhi, and surrounding areas. Authors have investigated, some districts of north-western part of Maharashtra. viz., Dhule, Nandurbar, Nasik, Jalgaon and Buldhana. Information of 25 plants used for various human ailments are being communicated in this paper.

## 2. Methodology

Herbal vendors wandering in north Maharashtra are tapped and enquiries w.r.t. plant drug, recipe, administration, plant names, precautionary tips and diseases treated are noted. Plants samples or products are purchased/collected and presented scientifically. They are identified by using various regional, state and national floras in India. (Cooke, 1958; Naik, 1998; Sharma et al 1996 Singh et al 2000; Patil 2003 and Kshirsagar 2008) Repeated surveys were conducted in different villages, towns and cities of North Maharashtra. Information regarding remedies related especially to the human diseases was recorded. The data adduced is based on personal interviews, observations and experiences of vendors in the region. The data is compared with the classical literature (Anonymous 1948-1976; Ambasta 1986; Jain, 1991; Watt 1889-1893; Prajapati 2006 etc.) Asterisk to the plant indicate reports in classical literature. these are presented in the following.

## Enumeration

*Abelmoschus manihot* (L.) Medik. ssp. *tetraphyllus* (Roxb. ex Horn.) Borssum (Malvaceae) Ran-bhendi :

Root paste is mixed with 100 gm. of cardamon seeds and black pepper (25gm.) they are mixed thoroughly. Half teaspoon of it along with water, after lunch and dinner is advised twice a day to regularize menstruation.

\**Acalypha indica* L. (Euphorbiaceae) Tankhalan :

Fresh leaves are crushed and extract is mixed with groundnut oil in equal ratio, It is boiled, A spoonful of decoction daily for 15 days is administered to a person suffering from rheumatism.

\**Achyranthes aspera* L. (Amaranthaceae) Aghada :

Fresh Roots are rubbed with water on a rough stone; Half cup of slurry mixed with honey is advised for 2-3 days to a person of dog-bite.

*Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr. (Rutaceae) Bel :

Fruit pulp is added in cow urine and *Sesamum* oil, It is mixed thoroughly and boiled, after cooling, 2-3 drops of it are dropped in ears for 3 days in morning and evening to cure ear-ache.

*Biophytum sensitivum* (L.) DC. (Oxalidaceae) Lajalu, Lajvanti :

Leaf powder one spoon is added in half cup cow milk and it is advised in morning and evening for 7 days to a person suffering from acidity.

*Cassia auriculata* L. (Caesalpiniaceae), Awali :

Fresh leaves of this plant and cumin seeds are mixed with cow's butter the paste is applied on place of white spots on skin. It is applied till it cures.

\**Cassia fistula* L. (Caesalpiniaceae) Bahava :

Pods are dried pounded and sieved to remove seeds, fine powder obtained is mixed with groundnut oil, and paste is applied on legs as a treatment against rheumatism.

*Cassia senna* L. (Caesalpiniaceae) Sonamakhi :

Leaves are boiled along with tea powder and one cup of decoction is administered twice daily in morning and evening for 7 days to cure stomach-ache.

*Cocculus hirsutus* (L.) Diels (Menispermaceae), Wasan :

Fresh leaves are crushed and mixed with water, one spoonful of the filtrate is administered to a person 4-5 nights to reduce body heat.

*Corallocarpus epigaeus* (Rottl. & Willd.) Hook. f. (Cucurbitaceae) Mungus-kand:

Extract of bulb is mixed with coconut oil, paste obtained is applied to a paralysed person till he is cured.

***Corchorus depressus* L. (Tiliaceae)**

Harankhuri :

Two spoons of leaf powder is mixed in half cup of water. It is mixed thoroughly An infusion is administered daily for seven nights as a treatment against leucorrhoea.

***Crinum latifolium* L. (Amaryllidaceae) Ran-**  
**kanda :**

Paste of one bulb is mixed with 250 gm. of cow ghee, One spoon paste twice a day with curd is advised for 6 days to a person suffering from piles.

***Cynadon dactylon* L. (Poaceae) Durva :**

Juice of fresh leaves is advised daily at morning for 7 days to cure tooth-ache.

***Dalbergia sisso* Roxb. ex DC. (Fabaceae)**  
**Sisam :**

Leaf juice is mixed with cows milk, Half cup of it is given once for 16 days to treat Impotency.

***Enicostemma axillare* (Lam.) Ranyal**  
**(Gentianaceae) Nay, Nai :**

Leaf paste is mixed in water two spoons of it is advised twice a day at morning and evening to cure stomach complaints.

***Ensete superbum* (Roxb.)Cheesm. ( Musaceae)**  
**Jungli-kel, Rankel :**

Seed powder is chewed with betel leaves for 5-7 days it is administered against kidney stones.

***Entada scanden* Benth. (Mimosaceae)**  
**Garambhi :**

One seed is rubbed on stone with limewater, juice of one lemon is added to it paste obtained is applied on waist as a treatment for abdominal pains.

***Eulophia herbacea* Lindl. (Orchidaceae)**  
**Kukudkand :**

Roasted tubers are advised for 7 days to increase sperm count. Extract of tuber is advised for 7 days to reduce liver swelling.

***Ficus benghalensis* L. (Moraceae) Vad,**  
**Bargad :**

One-cup leaf juice and equal ratio of lump sugar is mixed thoroughly, slurry is advised orally for 10 nights promotes abortion.

***Ficus glomerata* Roxb. (Moraceae) Umbar :**

Stem bark paste two spoons with water is advised for 45 days at morning and evening to control diabetes.

***Helicteres isora* L. (Sterculiaceae) Murud-**  
**sheng :**

Dried follicles are powdered; 2-4 gm. powder is mixed with honey. Two spoons of it is administered 5-7 days to children against abdominal pains.

***Kedrostis rostrata* (Rottl.) Cogn.**  
**(Cucurbitaceae) Mirchikand :**

One bulb is crushed 100gm. extract is mixed with 100gm. honey, Two spoons of it is advised daily to reduce body heat.

***Kirgenelia reticulata* (Poir.)Baill.**  
**(Euphorbiaceae) Pithori :**

A cup of leaf juice and equal ratio of lump sugar is administered daily in morning for 7-10 days to treat impotency.

***Limonia acidissima* L. (Rutaceae) Kaith :**

One kg. leaves are grounded to powder. Three spoons of powder with water for 45 days is advised to cure diabetes and kidney stone.

***Ludwigia perennis* L. (Onagraceae)**  
**Ranlavang :**

Fruits are boiled, Half cup of decoction is given 2-4 days to cure leucorrhoea. It also regulates menstruation.

**\**Martynia annua* L. (Martyniaceae),**  
**Waghnakhi :**

Seed powder is mixed in coconut oil. Paste is applied to treat scabies.

***Momordica dioica* Roxb. ex Willd.**  
**(Cucurbitaceae) Katurle :**

Leaf juice half cup is advised orally for 30 days to cure hydrosis.

**\**Punica granatum* L. (Punicaceae) Dalimb :**

Dried rind of fruits is boiled, Decoction half cup is advised twice for 3-5 days to control diarrhoea.

*Ricinus communis* L. (Euphorbiaceae)

Erandi :

Fresh leaves are crushed with cow milk half cup of it daily for seven days to cure jaundice.

\**Terminalia arjuna* L. (Combretaceae),

Arjun-sadada :

Bark powder is added in water, filtrate about half cup twice a day after lunch is advised to treat leucorrhoea.

*Tribulus terrestris* L. (Zygophyllaceae)

Gokharu :

Leaves, fruits of same plant and 50gm. of *Coriandrum sativum* L. fruits water is added to it and slurry obtained is twice for three days to treat nocturnal emission

*Xeromphis spinosa* (Thunb.) Keay

(Rubiaceae) Ghel, Ulava :

Fruit paste is applied on swellings and to treat goiter until it cures.

### 3. Discussion

The present authors came across some botanicals used by vendors to treat various human diseases in north Maharashtra. Presently, botanicals belonging to 32 plant species, of 29 genera belonging to 24 families are communicated. Comparative of ethnomedicinal claims indicated that 26 species form the first reports for India. These are administered in the form of decoction, infusion, paste, oil, ash, juice, powder, extract, slurry or in the form of particular recipes. Even they are used raw or sometimes simply warmed. In many cases, they use them as a sole drug or occasionally supplemented by other botanicals or substances like lump sugar, honey, oil, cow ghee, cow urine, etc. They used these to combat common diseases such as rheumatism, arthritis, acidity, scabies, wounds, jaundice constipation, diarrhea, dysentery, cough, menstrual complaints, stomach-ache, tooth-ache, ear-ache, paralysis diabetes, piles, impotency, kidney-stone, dropsy, nocturnal emission, goiter,

leucorrhoea, abortion, fever, etc. Medicinal plants are arranged alphabetically with their botanical names family common names, parts used, disease treated along with the formulations, doses and duration.

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