

Botanicals Sold by Herbal Vendors Employed for Skin Diseases in North Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

Ethnomedicinal Plants traditionally occupy an important position in socio-cultural and socio-economic arena of rural and tribal societies. The present authors surveyed Nasik, Nandurbar, Dhule, Jalgaon and Buldhana districts of North Maharashtra for the traditional knowledge of herbal vendors since July 2009. This paper particularly reports drugs sold by vendors to combat various skin diseases such as mouth sores, itching, boils-with pus, pimples, ringworms, black spots, leucoderma, eczema, scabies, herpes, burns, hair blisters etc. Total 26 species belonging 25 genera and 23 angiospermic families are included. They employ various plants parts like rhizome, stem bark, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds or entire plants and some domestic substances. The paper informs correct botanical names, local names, parts used, type of medicinal recipes and doses prescribed by the herbal vendors. These drugs, if studied on scientific lines, may yield valuable lead molecules and serve as additional sources of medicine.

Key words: Herbal Vendors, Ethnomedicine, North Maharashtra.

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

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some organized systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha etc. Apart from every community or village has 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 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 since long 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 called (Jadibutiwalas) and their traditional knowledge about plant drugs has remained untapped. They have been always ignored in our country. In India, Sinha (1998) has attempted on this line and studied Delhi and surrounding areas. The present authors investigated some districts of north-western part of Maharashtra. viz. Dhule, Nandurbar, Nashik, Jalgaon and Buldhana districts. Information of 26 plants species 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; Hookar, 1872-1897; Naik, 1998; Sharma *et al.*, 1996 Singh *et al.*, 2000; Patil 2003 and 2003; and Kshirsagar and Patil 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; etc.). Asterisk to the plant species indicate reports in classical literature.

3. OBSERVATIONS

Table 1

Enumeration of identified botanicals and utilities

Sr. No	Botanical Name and Family	Vernacular Name	Part Used	Recipe and Administration	Coll. No.
1.	*<i>Ailanthus excelsa</i> Roxb. Simaroubiaceae	Rukhado Maharukh	Leaves	Leaf Juice is applied daily on body to treat leucoderma. It is applied till cure.	310 YAP
2.	<i>Aristolochiabracteolata</i> Lamk. Aristolochiaceae	Gidhad	Leaves	Two fistful of leaves are washed and Juice is extracted. Peacocks feather is burnt and the ashe is mixed with extract along with one teaspoon of coconut oil (<i>Cocosnucifera</i> L.) The mixture is applied on eczema till it cures.	280 YAP
3.	*<i>Buchanialanza</i> Spreng. Anacardiaceae	ChironjiCharoliChar	Seeds	Seed powder is mixed in cow milk and applied on face at night to reduce pimples and to render the skin soft and glowing.	251 YAP
4.	**<i>Cassia auriculata</i> L. Caesalpinaceae	AwaliTarwad	Leaves	Leaf juice and seeds powder of (<i>Cuminumcyminum</i> L.) and cow butter is mixed thoroughly and the paste is applied daily for six nights to reduce black spots on skin.	105 YAP
5.	<i>Cassia tora</i> L. Caesalpinaceae	Raj tarota	Leaves	1. Leaf paste is applied on affected parts at night for four days relieving worm and eczema.	233 YAP
6.	<i>Colocasiaesculenta</i> (L.) Schott. Palmae	Ran-Alu	Fruit	Fruit paste is applied on face to remove black spots on skin. It is advised for three days till it cures.	22 YAP

7.	*Crataevanurvala Buch.-Ham. Capparidaceae	WayvarnaVaruna	Stem bark	1.Stem bark is rubbed on a stone with few drops of water to prepare a paste. It is applied daily for seven nights on infected part to cure boils with pus. 2. A piece of bark is rubbed on stone with a few drops of water and the slurry is applied every morning for four days to cure watery boils on face and scalp of babies.	162 YAP
8.	*Cressacretica L. Convolvulaceae	RanharbaraJangalichana	Entire dried plants	Dried plants are burnt and the ash is mixed with coconut oil (<i>Cocosnucifera</i> L.) and applied on affected skin against scabies once a day till it cures.	271 YAP
9	*Cullencorylifolia (L.) Medik. Fabaceae	BawanchiBapachi	Leaves Entire plant	1. Leaves are dried in the shade then kept in sunlight for one day and fine powder is prepared. It is applied on skin to cure scabies. 2. Four to five plants are uprooted washed and ground into a fine paste. It is applied for ten to fifteen days daily at night to remove white spots on skin.	179 YAP
10	**Curcuma domestica Valet. Zingiberaceae	Ran-haldi	Rhizome	Paste of rhizome is mixed in cow dung at equal ratio. It is applied at evening for one month to cure herpes (Nagin) diseases.	79 YAP
11	DalbergiasissoRoxb. ex DC. Fabaceae	Sisam	Leaves	A cup of leaf decoction is administered for seven days at night to a person suffering from pimples.	152 YAP
12	*Delphinium denudatum Wall. ex. Hook. f.&Thomson. Ranunculaceae	NirbisiJadwar	Entire plant	Entire plant is dried and ground into powder. This is mixed with two to three drops of vinegar and is applied on face for one month. It removes facial wrinkles and white spots.	350 YAP
13	**EmblicaofficinalisGaertn. Euphorbiaceae	Avala	Seeds	Seed ash is mixed with coconut oil (<i>Cocosnucifera</i> L.) and applied on scabies for four days till it cures.	248 YAP
14	**Euphorbia nerifolia L. Euphorbiaceae	NivdungThuorSabarkand	Leaves, latex	Latex of the plant is applied on the mole, wart and boils for 3 nights till cure.	316 YAP
15.	*Fumariaparviflora Wight&Arn. Fumariaceae	Pittapapada	Leaf	Leaf juice is applied on hand palm and foot sole to get relief from burning sensation.	330 YAP
16.	**Madhuca longifolia (Koen.) Macbr. var. latifolia (Roxb.) Chevalier Sapotaceae	Mahu	Leaves	Jaggery is applied on three tender leaves at night. One leaf is chewed at morning, one at noon and one at the evening. It helps to cure mouth sores.	2 YAP
17.	Melia azadirach L. Meliaceae	Bakayan. Nim	Flowers	Flowers are ground and paste obtained is applied on skin for 3 days to cure boils.	315 YAP
18	**Musa paradisiaca L. Musaceae	Kela	Fruit pulp	Pulp of raw fruit is applied daily on infected skin part and wrapped by cloth to treat eczema. It is applied till cure.	129 YAP

19.	*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis L. Oleaceae	Parijat	Leaves	Leaf juice is applied against itching and ringworms till cure.	94 YAP
20	**Piper nigrum L. Piperaceae	Kali-miri	Seeds	1. Seed powder is mixed with coconut oil (<i>Cocos nucifera</i> L.) It is applied on suppurating tumours or boils. 2. Seeds are rubbed in water. The paste is applied on pimples daily for three consecutive nights.	83 YAP
21.	**Phyllanthus amarus Schumach. & Thonn. Euphorbiaceae	Bhuiawala	Leaves	Leaves are crushed with salt and this paste is applied for four nights on scabies till it cures.	202 YAP
22	**Plumbago indica L. Plumbaginaceae	Lalcitra Raktacitra	Stem bark	1. Stem bark is dried and powdered. It is mixed with cow milk and the paste is applied on skin for three days at night to cure white spots on skin. 2. Stem bark powder is mixed in cow's milk and the paste is applied on skin at night for two nights against bile.	289 YAP
23	*Sphaeranthus senegalensis DC. Asteraceae	Gorakhamundi	Fruits	1. Decoction of fruits about two teaspoonful is advised twice daily for fifteen days to treat itching of skin. 2. Dried fruit powder is consumed with water at night for one month to reduce bile.	50 YAP
24	**Terminalia bellirica (Gaertn.) Roxb. Combretaceae	Beheda	Fruits	Acup of decoction is prepared from fruits and given in morning and then swallowed. This is prepared for 2-3 days to cure sores in mouth	195 YAP
25	*Thevetia peruviana (Pers.) K. Schumach Apocynaceae	Kaner Karavi Bitti	Leaves	Leaves are boiled with olive oil (<i>Olea europaea</i> L.) and the paste is applied on skin at night for fifteen days against skin itching.	49 YAP
26	**Vitis vinifera L. Vitaceae	Angur Draksha	Fruits, Leaves	1. Fruits are dried and ten seeds are crushed with leaves of <i>Syzygium cumini</i> L. and the decoction is gargled two to three times to cure sores in mouth. 2. Cow ghee is applied on leaves. Then it is applied on hair blisters till cure.	157 YAP

4. DISCUSSION

The present authors came across some botanicals used by vendors to treat various human skin diseases in North Maharashtra. Presently, botanicals belonging to 26 plant species of 25 genera belonging to 23 families are communicated. All are angiosperms. Of these, 06 plant species are cultivated ones. Only 01 species is exotic and 08 species are used as supplementary source. These are administered in the form of decoction (03), powder (06), juice (05), paste (09), pulp (01), ash (02), latex (1) and slurry (1). 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 jiggery, butter, cow-ghee, cow-milk, peacock, feather, vinegar, etc. Comparative study of ethnomedicinal claims indicated that 21 species which on comparison with classical literature, are being reported useful for the first time from India. There are eleven species viz. *Cassia auriculata*, *Curcuma domestica*, *Euphorbia nerifolia*, *Madhuca longifolia*, *Musa paradisiaca*, *Piper nigrum*, *Phyllanthus amarus*, *Plumbago indica*, *Terminalia bellirica*, and *Vitis vinifera*. Which are reported earlier useful for the affliction under study but the parts used are different. They used these to combat common diseases such as sores in mouth, skin itching, biles, boils with pus, pimples, ringworm, black spots, eczema, scabies, white spots, laceration, burn, hair blister, etc. The herbal vendors carry on their business traditionally especially in public places like, railway stations, bus-stations, weekly bazaar, famous temples, pilgrims, special gatherings, courts, government offices, main roads, etc. Even in modern period,

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many people purchase medicines from them. It is not scientifically verified by the vendors and hence it is advisable to testify these bioresources in laboratories. Such attempts will authenticate these claims and may add new or additional source of medicines

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