

Ethnomedicinal plants used for treatment of gynaecological disorders with reference to Panhala taluka of Maharashtra

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Abstract

Panhala taluka lies in the Sahyadri ranges of Western Ghats of Maharashtra state 16°48'o" N and 78°8'o" E. It is characterized by black rocky basalt to reddish yellow coloured soil, with dense dry semi evergreen to moist deciduous type of forest. It is enriched with lush green hills, diversified flora and fauna. There are 130 villages situated within the taluka, most of them in remote rural areas. The local people dwelling there make use of traditional knowledge to cure local ailments. The paper deals with medicinal plants used by these locals for treatment of gynaecological disorders. The data on ethnomedicinal plants is on the verge of extinction and special efforts are required for documentation, conservation and sustainable utilization of these plants. So a survey was carried out to collect valuable information on traditional medicinal plants. The information regarding use of plants, their botanical names and local names is described in this paper.

Ethnobotany is a branch of economic botany which deals with the role of plants in the life of tribal people. A number of tribal communities live in the remote areas of our country. In the dense forest pockets nature has been so kind that for thousands of years it has been possible for these tribals to live and rely on plants and plant products. They are dependent on plants for their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and essential amenity including medicines⁴. The tribals are using traditional medicine system for centuries. This branch of ethnobotany is termed as Ethnomedicine².

Ethnomedicine has become an

interdisciplinary science. Ethnomedicinal claims may aid in finding novel lead molecules for welfare of mankind and the data can be useful for further scientific investigations⁵. Scientist are now well convinced that ethnomedicinal claims can be successfully utilized as focal points for development of new resources in medical sciences.

India is endowed with rich wealth of medicinal plants¹. The indigenous traditional knowledge transmitted orally for generations is rapidly disappearing due to advent of modern technology and transformation of traditional culture botany in the process of urbanization³. That is the significant reason why research in

this field should be undertaken, other wise there is every possibility that the valuable data on ethnomedicine will be lost in near future.

Area under study :

Panhala is a famous hill fort village taluka/ town 3127 ft above sea level in the Sahyadri ranges. It is located 16° 48' North and 74° 8' East, 20 km from Kolhapur, in Maharashtra, India. It is characterized by dense dry semi evergreen to moist deciduous type of forest. The average rainfall is 75" to 80" per year. The temperature ranges from 34.4°C maximum to 18°C minimum in winter. It is enriched with lush green hills, beautiful landscape, fauna and flora. There are more than three thousand trees including fruits, flower, foliage, ornamental garden plants, grasses and medicinal plants. Panhala has not only been gifted with lush green cool nature, birds, fresh air and calm atmosphere but a place with great history blessed by Shivaji Maharaj. It is endowed by natural beauty with many lakes like Someshwar, Sadhoba, Shivrth, Nimajaja and gardens like Mayur Garden, Gopaltirth Garden, Tabak Van Udayan Teen Darwaja Udyan etc. Its historical importance coupled with being a hill station made it to be established and a taluka place. There are 130 villages situated within this taluka with a total area of 56,867.35 sq.kms. It includes many rural areas and many villages are impassable and remote. Because of rich fertile soil and good rainfall farming is the main occupation. Not only for food but they (local villagers) rely heavily on plants for their health care. Most of the local people make use of traditional knowledge and use different parts and products of the medicinal plants to cure local ailments such as skin infections, diseases,

cold, cough fever, jaundice, snake and scorpion bites, cuts wounds, feminine or gynaecological disorders etc.

The following paper deals with plants used for gynaecological disorders.

Several surveys were conducted through regular field trips in different villages and padas in the area under study. A prior consent was obtained from the knowledge providers at each location. The information on medicinal plants was collected through frequent interviews with the local physician practicing indigenous medicine (vaidus) villagers and local elderly women folk.

The field observations included local names, uses, habitats and supportive specimens of female folklore claims. The data obtained during these excursions is documented and compiled in a systematic study.

The list of ethnomedicinal plants with their local name, botanical name, family, mode of administration and medicinal uses are given below : -

Plants used for gynaecological disorders –

- 1 Local name -Ranvangi
Botanical name- *Solanum verbascifolium* Linn.
Family-Solanaceae
Mode and use- 3 fruits are dried-powder- 1 tea spoon of powder given orally twice a day-7 days- for treatment of sterility
- 2 Local name- Durva
Botanical name- *Cynodon dactylon* (L). Pers.
Family-Gramineae

- Mode and use-Entire grass mixed with 2 tea spoons of cow ghee-boiled-cooled-taken twice a day -9 months- to prevent abortion
- 3 Local name Bhokar
Botanical name- *Cordia dichotoma* (G). Forst.
Family – Boraginaceae
Mode and use-Juice of the bark with coconut milk is used- to relive labour pains-applied locally
- 4 Local name- Hirankhuri
Botanical name- *Corchorus fascicularis* Lam.
Family-Tiliaceae
Mode and use-Entire plant is dried in shade-powder-2 teaspoons of powder given twice a day- in case of reduced lactation
- 5 Local name-Bhaadli
Botanical name- *Panicum pilosum* Linn.
Family-Graminae
Mode and use-Seeds crushed-boiled-cooled-powder, giventwice a day for 7 days to reduce weakness after delivery
- 6 Local name- Shalmali
Botanical name- *Bombax cebia* Linn.
Family – Bombacaceae
Dahadhaman
Mode and use-Fine grinded powder 1 teaspoon is taken with glass of water to cure Irregular Menstruation
- 6 Local name- Gokhru
Botanical name- *Tribulus terrestris* Linn.
Family-Zygophyllaceae Mode and use- Entire plant dried abdpowdered, 1 teaspoon of powder given with water twice a day for 7 days to cure Irregular menstruation
- 7 Local name- *Jambul*
Botanical name- *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels.
- Family – *Myrtaceae*
Mode and use—Decoction of the bark – one cup in the morning and evening is given to cure – excessive menstruation
- 8 Local name- *Jaswand*
Botanical name- *Hibiscus rosasinensis* Linn.
Family-Malvaceae
Mode and use-Flowers dried and powdered- 1 tea spoon of powder is given with water- 2 times a day for 7 days in treatment of Leucorrhoea
- 9 Local Name Aghada
Botanical Name *Achyranthus aspera* Linn.
Family Amaranthaceae
Mode and use- Fresh and dried root is ground and decoction is made with water and given to pregnant women for relief in painful delivery.
- 10 Local Name- Shatavari
Botanical Name- *Asparagus racemosus* Willd
Family Liliaceae
Mode and use- Fresh and dried root or stem is soaked in a glass of water for one hour, taken orally early morning in empty stomach- in case of burning sensation of urine.
- 11 Local Name Palas
Botanical Name *Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.
Family Fabaceae
Mode and use- Half spoon of powder of dried flower is mixed with honey and taken orally to treat leucorrhoea
- 12 Local Name Punarnava
Botanical Name *Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.
Family Nyctaginaceae
Mode and use - extract from the roots

is mixed with a little bit of oil of Til (*Sesamum indicum*) Application of this preparation in the vagina ensures smooth delivery.

The rapid intrusion of modern civilization into forest areas due to urbanization is leading to deforestation. Therefore special efforts should be made to collect, record and store the valuable data on Ethnomedicine before its extinction.

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