



Ethnomedicinal Wisdom of Tribes of Latur District (Sanjivani Bet) Maharashtra

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Abstract

The Sanjivani Bet also called as Wadwal Nagnath Bet is very famous among tourists and scientists because of its biodiversity and producing a very rare species of medicinal plants. The rare plants grow in the month July to September (Uttara Nakshatra). In this period Ayurvedic practitioners, and researchers from various places visit this place in search of rare plants. Hence, it is also beneficial to the local tribes as there is sharing of rich traditional knowledge. But still the ethno-medicinal wisdom of the tribes of Latur is unexplored. So this study was undertaken to discover traditional knowledge of tribes. In this paper information of 52 plant species that are used by the Kunbhi, Gawali, Gond, and other tribes is given with their botanical names, local names and family, and the parts of the plants used.

Keywords: ethanomedicine, tribes, Sanjivani Bet, Latur district, Maharashtra

1. Introduction

Latur district is in the south-eastern part of the Maharashtra state, and is situated on the Maharashtra-Karnataka boundary. Latur is situated on the 18.7° latitude and 73.25° longitude. The total area of Latur district is 7,372 sq.km. There are 943 villages and 10 Talukas in Latur district and the population is 2,080,285. This is the land of 11 sugar factories, and 2,283 small-scale industries. The percentage land under agriculture is 91%. The major crops include sugarcane, edible oils, soyabeans, wheat, jowar, bajara, grapes and mangoes. Latur is now famous for some best-known brands like Tinna Oils, Kirti Gold, Videocon, and Kalantry Group's Agro Processing Industries.

The Sanjivani Bet (Wadwal Nagnath Bet) is known for rare species of Ayurvedic bushes and plants. This place is 16.5 km away from Chakur and 39 Km from

Latur city. The height of this hill is of 600-700 feet height from the ground and it is 3 km away from Wadwal-Nagnath village. The rare plants grow in the month July to September (Uttara Nakshatra). In this period Ayurvedic practitioner, researchers from various places visit this place in search of rare plants. The Government of Maharashtra organises Vaidya Sannam (conference) for various Ayurvedic doctors and, local practitioners who use traditional remedies for primary healthcare. As there is a tremendous response from the practitioners and local people of this region, this conference provides a platform for sharing of rich traditional knowledge which is also beneficial to the local tribes.

The government has established a research centre for the study of medicinal plants, but till now, no documents are available on any ethno-medicinal study among the tribes of Latur district. The aim of this study was to evaluate the use of plants for medicinal purpose by the

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Fig. 1. The actual view of Sanjivani Bet

Kunbhi, Gawali, Gond, and other tribes of this district. Hence this study was undertaken to record the traditional usage of plants by the tribal people of this district.

This paper will provide a strong base for developing an attitude for research in use of plants for medicinal purposes.

2. Methodology

A survey was carried out during 2010-11 in the months of August and September to collect ethnobotanical information, especially on medicinal plants used by the Kunbhi, Gawali, Gond, and other tribes. During field visits, elderly persons, tribal heads, and local medicine men called, *Mukhia* or *Vaidu* were contacted and interviewed and ethnobotanical data was recorded in a specially formatted questionnaire. The questions were mainly about identification of plant species, their parts used, traditional uses and the form and mode of administration. The questionnaires were specially formatted in Marathi, the local language and the questions were explained to the local people to help them collect accurate information. After collecting the information, the questionnaires were thoroughly analysed and the results were tabulated.

The information was collected using following questionnaire:

- Q.1 Identification, collection and uses of plants
- Q.2 Which parts of the plant are used?
- Q.3 How is it used, either in natural form, or any processed form?
- Q.4 Is a single plant used for a treatment or a combination of different plants is used?

- Q.5 Any precautions, suggestions or special advice about the use of plant species?
- Q.6 About the preservation and storage conditions of plants
- Q.7 Directions for use
- Q.8 Detailed information about topically applied plant species
- Q.9 Is the Vaidya Sammelan useful for you?
- Q.10 Do you get satisfactory response from the patients?

Around 120-150 common people and 50 practitioners were interviewed based on random sampling. The proportion of males to females present during field visits was 80:20. Most of the people in this area are farmers and the others do their traditional jobs. The people in this area use medicinal plants for their primary health care.

The plants, plant families and plant parts used have been documented in Table 1. The specimens were collected manually, placed in gunny bags, and covered with polythene. All the specimens were stored in cool, dry, and rodent-proof areas to avoid deterioration due to microbial attack or moisture content. Plant specimens were identified with the help of tribal people and were confirmed with the help of local floras/scientific publications (1-5). The plant specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of Botany Department of Dayanand College of Science, Latur.

3. Results and Discussion

Plant species used by the tribes are mentioned in Table 1 along with the common name, botanical name and name of the family. The parts used and the uses of each plant are also mentioned. The drugs are ingested with different vehicles like honey, milk, rice water, buttermilk, and lemon juice etc. The most commonly used part is the leaf (15%), followed by roots (14%), and then barks and fruits. The drugs are given in the form of decoctions, pastes and powders. The most frequently used plants in this area are *Dryopteris cochleata* (Jatashankar), *Centella asiatica* (Mandukaparni), *Mangifera indica* (Aumba), *Ocimum basilicum* (Kali Tulsi), *Datura stramonium* (Datura), *Curcuma aromatica* (Jangli Haldi), *Azadirachta indica* (Kaduneem), *Baliospermum montanum* (Danti), *Asparagus abscondens* (Musali Safed), *Asparagus officinalis* (Shatavari), *Adhatoda vasika*



Fig. 2. The photo of plant *Centella asiatica*



Fig. 4. The photo of plant *Vitex negundo*



Fig. 3. The photo of plant *Adhatoda vasika*



Fig. 5. The photo of plant *Gynmema sylvestre*.

(Adulsa), *Acacia arabica* (Babul) etc. The tribals use all parts of plants like *Clerodendron serratum* (Baharangi), *Cuscuta reflexa* (Amarvela), *Butea parviflora* (Phaisan) and *Andrographis peniculata* (Kalmegh) for treating various disorders. Single plants like *Azadirachta indica* (Neem), *Baliospermum montanum* (Danti), and *Caesalpinia bonducella* (Sagargota) are used for treating many ailments.

The major ailments treated using the plants in the study area are fever, joint pain, gastric disorders, inflammatory reactions, and skin diseases. The ailments were equated with the medical terms after consultation with volunteers from the medical profession present at the time of the interaction, a few medical practitioners,



Fig. 6. The photo of plant *Asparagus officinalis*



Fig. 7. The photo of plant *Dryopteris cochleata*



Fig. 8. Photograph of Field Visit

and through literature survey. About 80% remedies used by the tribals were polyherbal.

The perusal of literature indicates that the Latur district of Maharashtra is botanically unexplored. Even

today, most tribes and certain communities practise herbal medicine to cure a variety of diseases and disorders. They are not at all aware of the importance of such rare species. The use of traditional medicine is widespread in this region. In all 52 plant species of ethnomedicinal interest have been recorded after critical screening with the available literature. Though some of the plants mentioned in the present study are common medicinal plants, the occurrence and uses of some potential plant species have been recorded for the first time. It highlights the need for scientific assessment of these herbal medicines based on pharmacognosy, phytochemistry, and pharmacological studies. This would be helpful in the development of new molecules for treatment of various disorders.

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