

Folklore claims on some medicinal plants used by *Bheel* tribe of Guna district Madhya Pradesh

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The paper deals about some medicinal plants used by tribal communities of Guna district of Madhya Pradesh. A record on 20 plant species belonging to 18 families, used by *Bheel* tribes for curing various ailments among human beings and animals are given. Uses of plants for other purposes are also mentioned.

Keywords: Folklore, Ethnomedicine, Medicinal plants, *Bheel* tribes, Madhya Pradesh

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The state of Madhya Pradesh comprises of a large population of tribal communities belonging to various ethnic groups. These forest dwellers live in forests and possess a vast knowledge on various aspects of plants. Ethnobotanical studies on different aspects of many tribal communities have been carried out in various districts of the state. Main tribes of the state are *Gond*, *Bheel*, *Oraon*, *Sahariya*, *Bhilala*, *Sor*, etc. Guna district is situated in Gwalior division of northern part of Madhya Pradesh, situated between 24° 19' N latitude and 77° 15' E longitude, at a height of about 476m above msl. *Bheel* and *Sahariya* are the major tribal communities of the district of which *Bheel* tribes comprise larger population. The *Bheels* move around the forest for their day-to-day requirements, cultural activities and performing rituals. Forest resources are the only means of livelihood for catering to the need of food, fodder, fuel, medicine, etc. They possess a vast knowledge of the treatment of their cattle through herbs. The method of treatment is traditional and drugs are used in crude form only. Besides medicinal uses, they possess a vast knowledge on other ethnobotanical uses of plants. Ethnobotanical studies are continuing in several parts of the state¹⁻⁴. In Gwalior and Chambal divisions, ethnobotanical studies are concentrated on *Sahariya* and *Gond* tribes⁵⁻¹⁶.

Methodology

Several field trips were organized between September 2005 to April 2006 in tribal inhabited localities of Guna district and the information on uses of plants was collected. The herbarium specimens have been deposited in Institute of Ethnobiology, Jiwaji University, Gwalior. Information on plants used for other than medicinal purposes is also given. Information on ailments, parts used, doses prescribed, type of recipe, time and days of administration of dose, efficacy of the drug, etc. gathered from tribals have been enumerated (Table 1).

Discussion

A large number of plant species occur in tribal inhabited localities of Guna district. Looking to the intellectual property rights of indigenous people, documentation of such knowledge is necessary now a day. The people of *Bheel* community possess a vast knowledge regarding multifarious uses of plants. Besides medicinal uses, the tribes of the district also have a vast knowledge about the other uses of plants. Almost all species are commonly available in the area but many people are not aware about their importance. Some species are facing threats due to various reasons and require immediate attention for their conservation. It is clear from observation that some species are also used for curing the cattle of tribals. Such information should be spread among other societies living in urban areas and villages.

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Table-1— Medicinal plants used against various ailments

Plant name (Family)	Local name	Uses
<i>Aegle marmelos</i> (L.) Correa (Rutaceae)	<i>Bel, Belpatra</i>	Pulp of unripe or half ripe fruit mixed in water is given in diarrhoea; pulp of ripe fruit mixed with water for making <i>sharbat</i> , acts as soothing agent. Pulp mixed with water and kept for 7-8 days is applied on roof for plastering and checking seepage of water.
<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd. (Liliaceae)	<i>Satavar</i>	Fresh tuberous roots considered good tonic. Roots are mixed with cow fodder for increasing lactation.
<i>Atylosia scarabaeoides</i> (L.) Benth. (Fabaceae)		Fresh roots are chewed daily for 3 days to get relief from throat pain.
<i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> (L.) Delile (Balanitaceae)	<i>Hingot</i>	Pulp of ripe fruit mixed with mother's milk is given twice a day for 3-4 days for children suffering from pneumonia.
<i>Boswellia serrata</i> Roxb. ex Colebr. (Burseraceae)	<i>Sala, Salai</i>	Leaf paste is applied on eyes against eye infection.
<i>Catunaregum spinosa</i> (Thunb.) Tirrvengadam (Rubiaceae)	<i>Chamar karera</i>	Fruits or leaves are boiled in water, cooled and applied on swelling of cattle.
<i>Diospyros melanoxylon</i> Roxb. (Ebenaceae)	<i>Tendu, Tenu</i>	Pulp of unripe fruit is applied externally in cracked or inflamed soles of feet. Ripe fruits are edible.
<i>Elytraria acaulis</i> (L.f.) Lindau (Acanthaceae)	<i>Pathar chata</i>	Roots are tied on forehead during cholera.
<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L. (Moraceae)	<i>Bad, Bargad</i>	Milky latex is massaged externally on scalp to prevent loss of hair.
<i>Helicteres isora</i> L. (Sterculiaceae)	<i>Maror phali</i>	Seeds pounded in water are given during gripping of bowels.
<i>Holarrhena pubescens</i> (Buch- Ham) Wallich ex G. Don (Apocynaceae)	<i>Kuretha, Kulentha, Dudhi</i>	Flowers and fruits are used as vegetable, specifically consumed in joints pain.
<i>Hyptis suaveolens</i> (L.) Poit. (Lamiaceae)	<i>Bantulsi</i>	Seeds soaked in water are given as soothing agent.
<i>Maytenus emarginata</i> (Willd.) Ding Hou (Celastraceae)	<i>Bekal</i>	Leaves are eaten once a day to get relief from cold and cough.
<i>Merremia emarginata</i> (Burm.f.) Hall.f. (Convolvulaceae)	<i>Phopshina</i>	Whole plant is used as an antidote against snakebite.
<i>Solanum virginianum</i> L. (Solanaceae)	<i>Bhatkatiya, Phalkatiya</i>	Roots are boiled in water, cooled and given to children twice a day in cold and cough.
<i>Sphaeranthus indicus</i> L. (Asteraceae)	<i>Gorakhmundi</i>	Children suffering from dysentery are exposed to fumes of whole plant.
<i>Terminalia alata</i> Heyne ex Roth. (Combretaceae)	<i>Saja, Sajad</i>	Gum is edible and leaves are used as fodder.
<i>Vicia hirsuta</i> (L.) S. F. Gray (Fabaceae)	<i>Churingli</i>	Leaves are eaten as vegetable and also used as fodder.
<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i> Lamk. (Rhamnaceae)	<i>Ber, Beri</i>	Cooled decoction of dried fruits is given during cold and cough.
<i>Ziziphus xylopyrus</i> (Retz.) Willd. (Rhamnaceae)	<i>Ghont, Ghuter</i>	Dye yielded from fruits is used in tanning of leather.

Uses of such plants would certainly reduce the pressure on other economically or endangered species of plants.

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