Observation of Medicinal Importance of Sacred Plants of Chitrakoot Region Satna (M.P.)

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Abstract: The present paper deals 13 sacred plants species which are medicinally used by the tribes of Chitrakoot region district Satna Madhya Pradesh. The local people believe in the efficacy of these herbs along with some divine power, but the knowledge is restricted to very few elderly folks only. Therefore, this valuable information needs to be systematically collected, documented and preserved so that it can serve the mankind in generation to come and will also act as an important tool in conserving and preserving the traditional usages of these precious plant resources of high economic value. The collected information has been documented and presented in the current study.

Keywords: Medicinal importance, Sacred plants, Chitrakoot, Satna

1. Introduction

The traditional worship practices show the symbiotic relation of human beings and nature. Indigenous communities all over the world lived in harmony with the nature and conserved its valuable biodiversity. Plant have a vital role in human welfare and are continued to be valued industrial, economic, commercial and medicinal resources and some subcontinent with its wealth and variety of medicinal, many of which are even today in common uses much of which is steadily being eroded (Dastur, 1951, Mitra, 1922 and Schulted, 1960). Ethno-botanical exploration in biosphere reserve of central India was based on traditional knowledge of tribes (Sahu, 2010, Wagh and Jain, 2015). Sacred groves are the tracts of virgin forest that were left untouched by the local inhabitants, harbour rich biodiversity, and are protected by the local people due to their cultural and religious beliefs and taboo that the deities reside in them. The man is using plants in various ways since existence of his life on the earth. They use it in many ways including worshipping gods and goddess for the protection and betterment of human life (Ghate, 1998). About two thousand plants are mentioned in the Ayurvedis, Unani and Tibbi systems of medicine. People rendered divine honour and worship trees and plants. Probably, tree worship is one of the earliest forms of religion in Ancient India. Sacred valued of plants has been well documented (Gadgil, 1976a, 1976b and Issar, 1981).

Chitrakoot is a prominent religious place of Hindus, located across the border lines of Madhya Pradesh, is known for its dense forests indigenous people rich biodiversity and holy serenes. It is spreaded over the Majhagawn block which is 35 km. far from here and to the Karbi block of U.P. Satna the district head quarter of M.P. side is 78 km. from Chitrakoot. Chitrakoot lies at latitude 25°-10’N and longitude 80°-52’ E between the hills of Vindhyanchal ranges. The twonship is situated on both the banks of holy river Mandakini.
Topography is quite undulated at several places. Rocks and boulders are out cropped and there is good cover of alluvial soils between the hills. Lot of reviness have developed due to deforestation. However, there is dense forests near by the town and on the hills. It is connected by road from blocks, tehsil and district head quarters.

The nearest railway station is Chitrakoot Dham (Karvi) which is situated at a distance of 10 km. from Chitrakoot on the broad gauge section of Central railway between Jhansi junction and Manikpur section. Another great religious place Allahabad is 130 kms from Chitrakoot and connected from road. Chitrakoot is connected to district Banda of Uttar Pradesh by road which is 80 kms from here. The religious and tourist places are irregularly devided in both the states. The hill of Kamatgiri is partly in M.P. and U.P. and main religious ghat of river Mandakini known as Ram ghat located within the area of Uttar Pradesh. A high level bridge over the bank of river is connecting settlements on both the sides. The administrative arrangements are being made from both the states.

2. Methodology

The present study was conducted for the duration of July 2014-June-2015. The seasonal visits were made and plants and Sacred plants of Chitrakoot were collected. These are identified with the help of standard floras and the personal help renderd by authorities of BSI Allahabad (U.P.). The vaucher specimens were deposited in the herbarium of Botany Deptt. MGCGV, Chitrakoot, Satna (M.P.). The information’s about Sacred of plants were noted from the resident of study area. The methods of study was carried out as suggested by Gadgil and Vartak (1976) and Gha](t (1998).

3. Observations and Discussion

Present works deals with identify folklore medicinally important plants frequently used by rural communities of sacred groves in Chiterakoot, Satna (M.P.). A total of thirteen sacred groves and medicinal importance of thirteen genera and thirteen families were enumerated.

1. Aegle marmelos L.
   Family - Rutaceae
   Local Name - Bel; Sanskrit-Sriphla, Bilva; English- the Bengal Quince or the Bel tree

   Sacred value: Plant is generally cultivated near to temples and cherishes this tree and it is sacrilege to cut it down. The tree is sacred to the trimurti (a representative of Shiva) and Parvati (wife of Lord Shiva). The leaves are used in enchantments and twigs are used for sacred fire during Samidhas. Leaves and fruits are used in the worship of Lord Shiva.

   Medicinal value: Fruits fleshy part is dried, powdered and given/used to children as anastigmatic for diarrhoea while Fruits pulp used for stomach ache. Juice is prepared from ripe fruit used as mild laxative. Leaves chewed and swallowed every morning help in healing stomach ulcer and also to reduced sugar of diabetes patient.
2. Areca cactus L. 
Family - Areaceae
Local Name - Supari; Sanskrit-Puga, Phulari; English - Betel – Nut palm

Sacred value: The nut is used in many religious ceremonies and offered to Lord Vishnu in Satyanarayan Katha.

Medicinal Value: Nut powder with charcoal powder (3:1) used as tooth powder. Nut paste is with milk or water given to children for curing anthelminthic.

3. Azadirachta indica L. 
Family - Meliaceae
Local Name - Neem; Sanskrit-Nimba; English- Margosa or Neem tree

Sacred value: The tree is held sacred by the Hindus and used in many religious ceremonies. It is said that when nectar was being taken to heaven from the world below for the use of Gods, a few drops fell on the neem. Thus on New Year days of Shak Samvat, Hindus eat its leaves in the hopes that they will acquire freedom from disease.

Medicinal values: Seeds oil used for manufacturing soap like margosa. Neem oil cake used as repellent for termites. Plant twigs are used to clean the teeth and in toothache. Water boiled along with leaves used for washing eyes and skin diseases.

4. Butea monosperma (Lam.) Taubert
Family - Fabaceae
Local Name - Palas; Sanskrit-Kinsuka, Palasa; English-Flame of the Forest

Sacred values: This beautiful tree is sacred to Soma (Moon). The flowers are offered to Gods mentioned in the Vedas that at the time of Samidhas, the dry twigs are used in the ceremonies which goes under the name of nava grahas (i.e. celebrated to secure the pacification of the nine planets), also on the occasion of Vastu shanti (i.e. entrance into a newly built house). The flowers are used for making a dye used during Holi and Rang panchmi.

Medicinal value: The bark and seeds are given for snake bite as antidote. Leaves powder is given with honey to children for curing ring worm.

5. Calotropis procera (Aiton) Aiton
Family- Asclepiadaceae
Local Name - Madar, Safed Aak; Sanskrit-Svaytaukum

Sacred values: Also called Aak (wedge) as the ancient name in the vedic literature. Its leaves are used in sacrificed rites. The flowers are used in the worship of Mahadevo and Hanuman. The Plant is regarded to be the transformation of Surya (Sun), as mentioned in Skand Purana. The leaves are as patri in the worship of Ganpati, Haritalika etc. On every Saturday leaves are made into garland and offered to Maruti (Hanuman). The twigs are used as a substitute for tooth brushes in the Smritisar Granth. The twigs are also employed in sacred fires as Samidhas (Hawan).

Medicinal value: Latex applied on boil and to the wound after scorpion sting for pain relief also. Oil smeared leaves warmed and tied to rope boil.

6. Cannabis sativus L. 
Family - Cannabaceae
Local Name- Bhang, Ganja; Sanskrit- Vijaya, Jaya; English- Hemp

Sacred value: Plants leaves with milk are used at time of mahashivratri festival offered for Lord Shiva by hindu as well other religion.

Medicinal values: Oil mixed with camphor applied to small boils. Plant with coconut water is taken for a week for curing diarrhoea.

7. Curcuma domestica L.
Family- Zingiberaceae
Local Name - Haldi; Sanskrit- Haridra; English- Turmeric

Sacred value: The rubbing of turmeric and oil is and essential part of the Hindu marriage festival as well as some religious ceremonies. The rhizome used in many religious ceremonies of the Hindus. Haldi pastes with water applied before wearing clothes, dyed with it are deemed to be a protection against fever.

Medicinal value: Rhizome powder with boiled milk is taken at bed time during cough, cold and also used in healing injuries.

Family - Poaceae
Local Name - Doob; Sanskrit- Durva; English-Bermunda grass

Sacred value: The plant is sacred for Hindus and niche in the temple of Hindu. Its offers for Lord Ganesh who is said to remove all obstacles in life. It is that the gram grass made its appearance when the sea of milk was churned by the gods and demons with the help of mountain Mandera as the remover of all sins as the three gods- Brahmans, Vishnu, and Mahesh reside in the three parts of its body- root, plant body and tips of leaves. The plant is worshipped on Durga Ashtami in the month of Bhadrapad Shukla Ashtami. This plant has a.

Medicinal value: The whole plant decoction used as Sharbat, it gives cooling effect. Washed leaves paste applied on cuts help in quick healing and its decoction (300 ml) taken orally in empty stomach early in the morning to control blood pressure. Whole plant juice is effective against cobra bite as antidote.

9. Phyllanthus emblica L.
Family- Euphorbiaceae
Local Name- Amla; Sanskrit-Umrital Amal, Amalki; English- Emblic Myrobalan

Sacred values: The Amla is worshipped by the women folk on Amla navmi in the month of Kartik Shukla Navmi and also worshipped as Akshay Navmi. Kartik Mahatma orders...
to worship the tree and a Brahmin couple should feed under
it whereby all their sins are washed, in Vrat Kaumudi, the
Vrat (Fast) and worship of the tree are ordered.

Medicinal Value: Powdered fruits of *Phyllanthus emblica*,
*Terminalia chebula* and *Terminalia bellirica* are taken in
equal proportion (known as ‘triphala’) with warm water or
milk acts a mild laxative. Triphala soaked in water and used
for washing eyes.

10. *Ficus benghalensis L.*
Family- Moraceae
Local Name - Bar, Bargad; Sanskrit- Vata; English-Banyan

Sacred values: Hindu mythology says that Brahma was
transformed into a V at tree and it is
Sacred & medicinal plants to provide

Medicinal Value: Bark powder (50 mg) with cumin used for
preventing conception. Leaf ash with honey used to cures
the cough and cold. Unripe fruits boiled, given with rice and
curd gives from diarrhoea and dysentery. Person bitten by
coobra is laid on leaves, juice of the stem pith given orally
and also applied externally as an effective treatment.

13. *Ocimum tenuiflorum L.*
Family- Lamiaceae
Local Name - Tulsi, Vranda; Sanskrit-Tulsi, Manjarika;
English- the sacred basil

Sacred value: Most sacred plant in the Hindu religion,
Brahmins held it sacred to Vishnu found in near every Hindu
house and it’s said that it protects from misfortunes,
sanctifies and guides to heaven all who cultivate it. The
mythological story narrates that the plant is a transformed
nymph called Tulsi a beloved of Krishna and for this reason
near every house it is cultivated, daily watered and
worshipped by all members of the family. The leaves make
one of the constituents of Charnamrit offered to Lord
Vishnu.

Medicinal value: Tea with ginger or black pepper and tulsi
cures cough and cold. Decoction of Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*), Adarak (*Zingiber officinalis*) with little salt is good for malaria.

4. Conclusion

The herbal medicines are mostly administered in the form of
juice, decoction, paste or powder, prepared in a crude
method from different plant parts such as root, bark, leaves,
flowers, fruits, seeds and whole plant. In Madhya Pradesh of
central India 265 sacred grove reported (Srivastava, 1994)
and plant worship in a way maintains local bio-diversity and
plays an important role in its management and conservation.
Women particularly, in both rural and urban areas, have
developed faith in the number of plants by protection of the
plant species.

The sacred plants of bundelkhand are actually worshipped
throughout the areas to its mythological significance. Sacred
groves homes of mother goddesses abound and some types
of trees have attained great importance in *Hinduism*. In India
out of 3000 communities 1/3, i.e. 1000 are endogenous
group practice totemism (Malhotra, 2005). Among many
tribal communities, numbers of clans are named after plants
and animals which are conserved (Jain and Sharma, 1996).
Work on traditional knowledge and indigenous medicinal
plants used by tribal and local old age peoples of
Amarkantak region and central India reported (Kumar et al.
2004 and Sahu, 2010). These plants also play a vital role in
the life of the people in the form of medicines treating
various ailments. In the present context for natural
conservation of sacred & medicinal plants to provide

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incentives to local people participation for the same and also necessary action to preserved sacred groves of the forests conserved by indigenous people.

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References


