

Ethnomedicinal Practices among Gond & Halba Tribe of Chhattisgarh, India

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Abstract: *This study presents the findings of an investigation on ethnomedicinal practices of various diseases among Gond & Halba tribe of Chhattisgarh, India. The main aim of the study was to understand the dependency of Halba tribe on herbal plant resources for their health care practices. Primary data were collected through Anthropological tools and techniques like non-participant observation, in-depth interview, interview-cum-schedule, case study technique. 29 medicinal plants were identified with relevant information and documented with regard to their botanical name, family, local name & plant parts used and utilization for treatment of 18 types diseases. The Halba tribe use many medicinal plant species for the treatment of common skin ailments, wounds, eczema as well as gastro-intestinal problems such as diarrhea, dysentery, constipation, jaundice, cardio vascular disease, paralysis, cold and cough, asthma, tuberculosis, malaria, arthritis and also for snake bite, scorpion bite, dog bite, fracture of bone, etc.*

Keywords: Ethnomedicinal Practices, Medicinal Plant, Gond Tribe, Halba Tribe, Chhattisgarh.

1. Introduction

World Intellectual Property office International Government Committee defines traditional knowledge as indigenous knowledge related to agriculture, medicine, bio-diversity & as expressions of folklore in form of music, dance, song, handicraft, stories & artwork which have been generally transmitted from generation to generation and regarded as pertaining to particular people or their territory and certainly evolving in response to a changing environment^{1, 2} and Indigenous knowledge not only confines to use & collection of plants but also about their specific characteristics, spatial distribution & seasonal availability. Traditional knowledge of tribal groups is based on years of experience and provides guidance and solutions to them not only for sustainable development but also for treatment of various diseases, protecting forest, agriculture, preservation of food, water management etc.

Ethnomedicine deals with information pertaining to social adaptation, deviant behavior, illness. disease, medical taxonomy, folk medical knowledge and systems of medical care. Some of the problems inherent in studying these issues include: (a) What is illness what is not, (b) The role of sick person, (c) The interpretation of symptoms, (d) Treatment of illness by social group, (e) Institutions used for treatment and (f) Organization and quality of medical systems³.

On a practical level, knowledge of indigenous medical belief and practices is important in planning health programs for and in delivering health services to the traditional people. Since local knowledge of health and diseases could have immense theoretical and practical importance, this study makes a modest attempt to record the ethnomedicinal practices and ethnic healers among the Gond & Halba tribe of Kanker district of Chhattisgarh.

1.1 Aims & Objectives

- 1) The main aim of the study was to understand the dependency of Halba and Gond tribe on herbal plant resources for their health care practices.
- 2) Indigenous knowledge related to plants used by the Halba and Gond tribe inhabiting Kanker district of Chhattisgarh.
- 3) To document traditional health care practices among the Halba and Gond tribe.

1.2 Material & Methods

- **Study Area:** The present study was conducted in villages of Antagarh Tahsil of Kanker district that comes under Bastar Division of Chhattisgarh State.
- **Method & Technique of Data Collection:** Primary data were collected through Anthropological tools and techniques like non-participant observation, in-depth interview, interview-cum-schedule, case study technique. 29 medicinal plants were identified with relevant information and documented with regard to their botanical name, family, local name, plant parts used and utilization for treatment of 18 types diseases.

About Gond Tribe:

The Gond tribe is the second most population tribe in India and largest tribe in Central India. The Gonds known for their unique customs and traditions. They are mainly a nomadic tribe and call themselves as Koytoria. The term 'Gond' is derived from the Telugu word 'Konda' which means hill. Gond Tribes are primarily located in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, eastern Maharashtra, northern Andhra Pradesh and western Orissa. (With population of over 4 millions, Gonds also form the largest tribal group in India). In Chhattisgarh, Gonds are the largest tribal group in terms of population and are mainly concentrated in the southern part

of the state. More than 20 % of Gonds in Chhattisgarh live in Bastar region only. There are 3 major sub- tribes of Gond in Bastar – Maria, Muria and Dorla⁴.

The Gonds are predominantly like to live in groups in small villages. The main language of the Gonds is Gondi but about half of Gond populations also speak Indo-Aryan dialects including Hindi. The Gonds are traditionally agriculturalists and some practice shifting cultivation even today. Other major activities of Gonds include collecting forest produce, fishing, hunting, forging metal goods in cottage industries and other primary sector activities. Gonds also have a special skill that has been passed down every generation and that is the secrets of the medicinal plants. As there are no proper health facilities in several areas, they still follow the traditional system of medicine and use plants and herbs for curing various ailments. The Gond society is regarded as highly stratified and not conforming to the usual image of egalitarianism among tribals⁵.

2. About Halba Tribe

Study area (The nascent state of Chhattisgarh is housed in the heart of Central India and is renowned for a multitude of

reasons). The quaint villages situated amidst the lap of nature are inhabited mainly by the tribals. The Halba tribe is a popular tribe who has happily settled in the bucolic lands of Chhattisgarh. The Halba Tribals are widely dispersed all over Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. One of India's predominant tribes, the Halba inhabits the districts of Drug, Bastar and Raipur in Chhattisgarh.

The mannerisms and lifestyle of the Halbas who inhabit Bastar closely resemble that of their counterpart who resides in Andhra Pradesh Warangal District. The Halba tribe owes its nomenclature to the term 'Hal' that locally means ploughing or farming. This clearly implies the Halbas were primarily farmers although nowadays they are involved in a myriad of professions of their choice. Of all the tribes that occupy Chhattisgarh, the Halbas are possibly the most affluent and progressive lot. They also enjoy the privileged status of a high local caste and hence are deeply revered in the tribal society. The unique individuality of the Halbas is evinced by their apparels, dialects and traditional customs. What add to the diversity of their dialect are the pronounced traces of Oriya, Marathi and Chhattisgarhi languages^{5,6}.

3. Results & Discussion

Medicinal plants used for treatment of various diseases among Halba and Gond Tribes

SN	Disease Name	Plant used	Botanical Name ^{7,8,9,10}	Plant Part used	Other thing Used	Method of Preparation	Dosage		Duration
							Adult	Children	
1	Wound or Injury or Bleeding	Kala Musali	<i>Curculigo archiolis</i> (L)	Root	-	Paste of Kali Moosali root is made and applied on injured part	-	-	Just one time
		Bamboo	<i>Bambusoideae</i>	Stem	-	Outer layer of Bamboos tree is used on injured part of patients	-	-	One time in a day, till relief
		Tobacco	<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>	Leaf	Lime (Chuna)	Fine mixture of tobacco and lime (Chuna) is applied on wound	-	-	One time in a day, till relief
2	Jaundice	Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Leaf	-	Arch of Neem leaves is used with water	1 tea Spoon arch + 1 cup water	1 tea Spoon arch + 1 cup water	One time in a day (Morning) as least 10-15 days
3	Acidity & Indigestion	Harra	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Fruit	Gud	Make a powder of Harra and dry ginger and mixed with Gud and taken with water			
		Dry Ginger	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Rhizome					
4	T.B. (Tuberculosis)	1.Harra	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Fruit	-	250 gr. Harra fruit mixed with 50 gr. black pepper, 10-15 dry leaves of Neem, outer layer of Neem root, 50 gr. of dry ginger and 100 gr. of garlic is mixed and grinded and mixture is given to the patients.	1 spoon	1 spoon	Twice in a day (Morning & Evening) at least 20-25 days
		Black Pepper	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Fruit					
		Ginger Dry	<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Rhizome					
		Ginger	<i>Allium sativum</i>	Rhizome					
		Garlic	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Bud					
		Neem		Bark & outer layer					

				of root					
5	Asthma	Black Pepper	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	fruit	Honey	4-5 black pepper is taken and the make powder is mixed with honey given to the patient	1Spoon	½ Spoon	Twice in a day (Morning & Evening) at least 10-15 days
6	Cough	Harra	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Fruit	-	Powder of Harra and Behera fruit is taken with water	1 spoon powder 1 cup water	½ Spoon powder 1 cup water	At least twice a day
		Behra	<i>Terminalia bellirica</i>	Fruit					
		Moonga	<i>Moringa oriefera</i>	Bark	-	Bark of Moonga tree squeeled and the Juice sucked	-	-	3-4 times in a day for 2-3 day
7	Dysentery	Tislsa	-	Bark	-	Decoction is prepared with water and given to the patients	1 Gilas	1 cup	In early morning, till relief
		Arjun	<i>Terminalia</i>	Bark	-	Decoction of Arjun Bark is prepared with water and given to the patients	1 cup	1 cup	3-4 times in a day, till relief
8	Malaria & Normal Fever	Bhoi Neem	<i>Swertia-angustifolia</i>	Leaves	-	Bhoi-Neem leaves boiled with water and its filtrate is given to drink	1 Gilas	1 cup	In Morning till relief
		Bhoi Neem & Ashwagandha	<i>Swertia-angustifolia</i> <i>Withania somnifera</i>	Leaves Roots	Gud	Powder of grinded Ashwagandha roots, Bhoi-lim made and mixed with Gud and made into tablet form	1 Tablet	½ Tablet	Morning and Evening for 3-4 days
		Nagarmotha	<i>Cyperus scariosus</i>	Roots	Gud	Powder of Nagarmotha roots, dry leaves of Bhoi-lim and Neem is made and mixed with Gud tablet are taken with water	1 Tablet	½ Tablet	Morning & Evening, till 2 days
		Bhoi-Neem	<i>Swertia-angustifolia</i>	Leaves					
		Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Leaves					
9	Brain Fever	Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Bork	-	Decoction of Neem bark is given to the patient	-	-	2-3 times in a day for day, till relief
		Gaypad	<i>Cissampelos-paireira</i>	Root	-	Grinded Gaypad roots are boiled its given to the patient	1 Gilas	½ Gilas	2 times in a day, for 3-4 days
10	Dog-bite	Aak	<i>Callotropus-procera</i>	Root	Gud	Equal quantity of grinded Aak root Gudsukari root is taken and mixed with Gud. After mixing made into 22 tablets	1 Tablet	1 Tablet	One time in day (Morning), for 22 day
		Gudsukari	<i>Grewio-hirsuta</i>	Root					
		San	<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>	Seed	-	3 or 4 year old San seeds are grinded and applied to the wounds.	1 Gilas	½ Gilas	One time in a day, for 7 days
11	Snake-bite	Garud	<i>Corallocarpus epigaeus</i>	Stem	-	Rub of Garud stem with the help of water and mixed in water	1 cup	1 cup	After Snake-bite
		Kochla	<i>Strychnos nuxvomica</i>	Seed Bark	-	Rubbed Kochla seed is applied on effected are and decoction of Garud bark is given to the patient	1 Cup	1 Cup	After Snake-bite
		Garud	<i>Corallocarpus epigaeus</i>						
12	Scorpio-stung	Kochla	<i>Strychnos nuxvomica</i>	Seed	-	Rubbed Kochla seed is applies on Scorpio-stung areas	-	-	After Scorpio-stung
13	Fracture of	Amar Bel	<i>Cuscuta</i>	Stem Leaf	-	The fracture bone is	-	-	For 14-15

	setting broken bone					set-right and the stem and leaves of Amarbel are grinded and applied on effected area. After which it is tied with Bamboo strips and a piece of cloth			days
		Harisingar	<i>Nyctanthes arbor-tristis</i>	Stem Leaf	-	The fracture bone is set-right and the stem and leaves of Harisingar are grinded and applied on effected area. After which it is tied with Bamboo strips and a piece of cloth	-	-	For 15-20 days
14	Epilepsy	Black Pepper	<i>Piper nigrum</i>	Seed	Cow's Milk	Kali Mirch (Black Pepper) and Cows Milk is taken in a bottle and kept closed for 21 days. After 21 days it is taken.	5 Seed	2-3 Seed	Morning and Evening till 10-15 days
15	Whooping Cough	Clove Ellaichi	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> <i>Elettaria cardamomum</i>	Flower Fruit	Butter	2 Cloves, 2 ellaichi and 1 spoon butter is boiled with water and given to the patient	1 Cup	1 Cup	2 time in a day till relief
16	Rheumatism	Jarkakanda	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>	Tuber	Butter	Jarkakanda is cooked with butter and its given to the patients	Not specific quantity	Not specific quantity	Morning & Evening, till relief
17	Worms infection	Neem	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Leaf	-	Arch of Neem leaves is used with water	1 tea Spoon arch + 1 cup water	1 tea Spoon arch + 1 cup water	One time in a day (Morning) as least 10-15 days
18	Blood Purification	Safed Musali Shatavari	<i>Chlorophytum borivilianum</i> <i>Asparagus racemosus</i>	Root Root	Gud	Powder of Safed Musali root and Shatawer root is mixed with Gud. After mixing tablet is made.	2 Tablet	1 Tablet	Morning & evening for 10 days

4. Conclusion

The Halba and Gond tribe use many medicinal plant species for the treatment of common skin ailments, wounds, eczema as well as gastro-intestinal problems such as diarrhea, dysentery, constipation, jaundice, cardio vascular disease, paralysis, cold and cough, asthma, tuberculosis, malaria, arthritis and also snake bite, scorpion bite, dog bite, fracture of bone, etc. traditional health practices and Indigenous health care practices can provide valuable clues to medical scientists in discovering medicine of modern diseases.

5. Acknowledgement

We are thankful to all local tribal people of Chhattisgarh for their volunteer cooperation and participation in the study.

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Volume 5 Issue 9, September 2016

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