

GUEST PAPER .

Ethnomedicinal Wisdom Among Local Tribes in Hamirpur Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India

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Abstract

The current investigation was focused at documentation, analysis and interpretation of ethnomedicinal phyto wisdom in Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh. The impoverished tribal and rural people of Hamirpur District (Himachal Pradesh, India) do not receive satisfactory primary healthcare. They have crudely been still exploiting traditionally the medicinal plants existing in their surrounding environment for diverse purposes including ethnomedicine use. The objective of the study was to document ethnobotanical knowledge primarily of notable herbs employed by the different backward people, whether tribal or rural, in the area under study. Ethnomedicinal data was accessed through structural interviews, and discussions with the tribal/rural informants, healers, medicine-men/women, etc. (with age between 45-65). Minimum five to eight informants were taken into consideration for each claim. This investigation brought on record that people of the study area (Hamirpur) generally utilize about 50 plants species belonging several distinct families. Different plant parts such as leaves, flowers, fruit, stem-bark and root are most commonly employed. A fair wide range of diseases are treated by people of Hamirpur district using local medicinal plants. These ethnomedicinal claims may aid in finding novel phytoconstituents for welfare of mankind. The data would be useful for further scientific exploration.

Keywords: Ethnomedicinal, Plants, Hamirpur

Introduction:

The Hamirpur district is located between 31°25'N and 31°52'N and between 76°18'E and 76°44'E. It is situated in the south western part of Himachal Pradesh, touched by lower Himalayas (400 meters to 1,100 meters). The major hill ranges of the district are known as Jakh Dhar and Sola Singhi Dhar covered with dense forest constituting medicinal plants. Majority of population of Hamirpur live in the rural areas and mostly are agriculturist. They grow wheat, Barley, Gram, Masar etc. in the Rabi season and Maize, Paddy, Blackgram, Kulth etc. in the Kharif season. For the purpose of their ailments the tribal people of Hamirpur rely upon these medicinal plants (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamirpur,_Himachal_Pradesh, Arya et al 2011, Khare 2007, Kiritikar 1999, Verma and Singh 2008, Vogel 2002, Nadkarni and Nadkarni 2005).

Materials and Methods:**Sample Collection and Preservation:**

Field trips were arranged in order to collect information about the Ethnomedicinal usage of plants by the local people during 2012 in Hamirpur District of Himachal Pradesh, India. Standard methods (WHO guidelines) were followed with regard for collection of plant materials drying, mounting, preparation and preservation of plant specimens. Voucher specimens of medicinal plants were collected, prepared and identified.

Plants with their correct nomenclature were arranged by family name, common name, ethnomedicinal uses. The identification and nomenclature of the listed plants were based on The Flora of Himacal Pradesh, India.







Methodology:

Knowledgeable elders/informants with 45-65 years of age were usually contacted, including the traditional healers, medicine men and women in the tehsils. Information regarding geography, main routes, forests, tribal communities, language and dialects, etc. was obtained. They also accompanied in the field study for collecting plant samples. Discussions were held and personal interviews were conducted to obtain data about ethnomedicinal plants, or plant products, local plant names, methods of preparation of medicine and their administration, dosage and their timing, age.

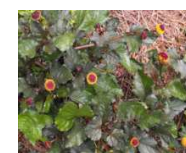
Ethnomedicinal Knowledge:

A questionnaire method was adopted for documentation of ethnomedicinal knowledge. The interviews were carried out from local community to document local name and ethnomedicinal uses. About 500 informants have been interviewed on random basis. The indigenous medicinal plants having traditional knowledge of utilization among the people have been selected as reference specimens. The final compiled data have been mentioned in Table 1 given below.







Table 1: Ethnomedicinal uses of some plants of Hamirpur Valley of Himachal Pradesh, India







Botanical name	Family name	Common name	Local name	Part used	Ethnomedicinal use	Photograph
<i>Artemisia maritima</i>	Compositae	Wormseed	Kirmala	Roots, stems	Treatment of ascaris and oxyuris infections	
<i>Quercus glauca</i>	Fagaceae	Grey oak	Ban	Oak bark	Used as astringent, the decoction of the bark is used in diarrhoea and dysentery	
<i>Agave cantala</i>	Agavaceae	Century plant	Ranban	Leaves	Antibacterial activity	
<i>Dioscorea deltoidea</i>	Dioscoreaceae	Wild yam	Khitha	Root	Used for intestinal colic (and indigestion), to soothe diverticulitis	
<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>	Solanaceae	Wild eggplant	Hadaq	Fruit	Stimulant, expectorant, diuretic, laxative, febrifuge	
<i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>	Compositae	Honey leaf	Mithipatti	Leaves	Healing and health promoting as a tonic, antifungal and antibacterial	






<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Labiatae	Sage	Salva	Flower	Hypoglycaemic, gingivitis, antiasthmatic
<i>Coronopus didymum</i>	Brassicaceae	Lesser swine-cress	Halim	Leaves	Wound-healing, anti-inflammatory
<i>Sisymbrium sophia</i>	Brassicaceae	Flix weed	Jangli saron	Leaf, flower	The plants has been used externally for ulcers
<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Solanaceae	Black nightshade	Pamola	Berries, flowers	Prescribed in cough and cold
<i>Spilanthes oleracea</i>	Asteraceae	Paracress	Akarkaraa	Seeds	Used in inflammation of jaw-bones and caries shows a strong sialogogic action
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Compositae	Common dandelion	Dudhal	Root	Diuretic, cholagogue, pancreatic and bile duct stimulant



<i>Camellia sinensis</i>	Theaceae	Tea	Cha	Leaves	Stimulant, diuretic, astringent	
<i>Vanda roxburgh</i>	Orchidaceae	Vanda brunnea	Rasana	Roots	Antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, tranquilizer	
<i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>	Asteraceae	Goat weed	Chhota phulnu	Leaves	Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, styptic	
<i>Aster falcatus</i>	Asteraceae	White fall aster	Jadi	Flowers	As an antimicrobial	
<i>Berberis aristata</i>	Berberidaceae	Holly leaved berberry	Kaimblu	Flowers	Antiprolific, antipsoriatic, alterative	
<i>Bidens pilosa</i>	Compositae	Hairy beggars tick	Lumb	Leaves	Applied to ulcers and swollen glands	
<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Chenopodiaceae	Fat hen	Bathuaa	Seeds	Stimulant, diuretic, carminative, antispasmodic	

<i>Cuscuta reflexa</i>	Convolvulaceae	Doddar	Dodan	Herb	Hepatic, laxative, carminative, urinary, spleen and liver disorders	
<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Cycadaceae	Sago palm	Sabudana	Root	Expectorant, tonic	
<i>Duranta repens</i>	Verbenaceae	Duranta	Touran	Leaves	Antifungal (topically), lethal to mosquito larvae	
<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Oxalidaceae	Wood sorrel	Khat mithu	Leaves	Boiled with butter milk is a home remedy for indigestion and diarrhoea in children	
<i>Polygonum bistorta</i>	Polygonaceae	Snake weed	Villauri	Leaves	Used for internal haemorrhages, irritable bowel, diverticulosis	
<i>Prinsepia utilis</i>	Rosaceae	Himalayan cherry prinsepia	Kangore	Oil	Rubefacient and is externally in rheumatism	

<i>Sida cordifolia</i>	Malvaceae	Country mallow	Bala	Seeds	For the treatment of rheumatism	
<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>	Liliaceae	Solomon's seal	Medaa	Leaves	Used as an infusion for pulmonary complaints	
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Castor seed	Arand	Leaves, Root	In rheumatism, pain in the urinary bladder	
<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Liliaceae	Meadow saffron	Minminaouo	Entire plant	Anti-gout	
<i>Argemone Mexicana</i>	Papaveraceae	Prickly poppy	Liyan	Oil, leaf juice and root	Used externally for indolent ulcers and skin diseases	
<i>Hibiscus rosa sinesis</i>	Malvaceae	Shoe flower	Chini gulab	Flower	Used in impotency, bronchial catarrh	

<i>Achyranthus aspera</i>	Amaranthaceae	Prickly chaff flower	Puthkanda	Roots	Blood-purifying property, astringent, haemostatic	
<u><i>Citrullus colocynthis</i></u>	Cucurbitaceae	Colocynth bitter apple	Indrayan	Root, Fruit	Fruit used as cathartic, drastic purgative, irritant and toxic	
<i>Bauhinia variegata</i>	Fabaceae	Buddhist bauhinia	Karal	Dried buds	In diarrhoea, dysentery, worm infestation, piles and tumours	
<i>Lantana camara</i>	Verbenaceae	Wild sage	Phulnu	Leaves, fruits	The plant is considered poisonous ,cardioactive and fish poison	
<i>Cassia tora</i>	Calsalpiniaceae	Ringworm plant	Ailum	Pods	In dysentery	

Woodfordia fruticosa Lythraceae Fire-flame bush Dhaw Dried flower Purifies blood, heals ulcers, haemorrhages, astringent, prescribed in haemetemesis



Vallaris solanacea Apocynaceae Bread flower Poon Latex Applied to old wounds and sores (mildly irritant)



Plumbago zeylanica Plumbaginaceae Leadwort Chitra Root Intestinal flora normalizer, stimulates digestive processes



Barleria cristata Acanthaceae Barleria Raktajhinti Root Given in anaemia



Jasminum multiflorum Oleaceae Downy jasmine Chameli Bark Boiled bark applied on burns



Stereospermum suaveolens Bignoniaceae Trumpet flower Padal Stem bark In oedema and retention of urine








Cordia dichotoma Boraginaceae Sabestan plum Lassora Kernels Externally applied to ringworm



Bambusa bambos Gramineae Thorny bamboo Beyin Leaf bud and young shoots Used in dysmenorrhoea; externally in ulcerations



<i>Opuntia dillenii</i>	Cactaceae	Prickly pear	Naagphani	Fruit	Nutritious, given in whooping cough	
<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	Papilionaceae	Toothed medic	Khukhni	Fruit	Sprouts of seeds used in diabetes	
<i>Agaricus campestris</i>	Agaricaceae	Meadow mushroom	Khumbi	Fruit	Diuretic, laxative, deobstructant, expectorant	
<i>Indigofera oblongifolia</i>	Fabaceae	Wild indigo	Jhil	Entire plant	Antisymphilitic	
<i>Pyrus communis</i>	Rosaceae	Common pear	Naakh	Fruits	Help in maintaining a desirable acid balance in the body	

<i>Trichosanthes dioica</i>	Cucurbitaceae	Pointed gourd	Meh	Aerial parts	Hypoglycaemic
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Caryophyllaceae	Common chickweed	Khokhua	Leaf, flower	Antirheumatic, anti-inflammatory



Result: These plants having medicinal values described in this paper giving relevant wisdom to research oriented people and help a lot in carrying out new research in the field of life, and pharmaceutical sciences. Such medicinal flora is regularly used by people but they are not aware of their eternal potential to cure several ailments. This medicinal flora can be proved to be an elixir to humanity.

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