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Plants used by Gond and Baiga women in ethnogynaecological disorders in Achanakmar wild life sanctuary, Bilaspur, C.G.**Pankaj Kumar Sahu**

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Abstract

Traditional medicines are still under practice in Indian villages and have been developed through experience of many generations. The present communication reports first hand information gathered on 20 plant species traditionally used by Gond and Baiga women of Achanakmar wildlife sanctuary, Bilaspur for the treatment of various diseases and disorders related to gynaecological problems. Valuable information about the medicinal uses of certain plants against various diseases of the Gond and Baiga women were obtained through personal interviews and collection. The botanical names, families, local name, and locality of these collections are also given along with medicinal uses.

Key-Words: Ethnogynaecology, Gond & Baiga women, Achanakmar wildlife sanctuary.

Introduction

Achanakmar Wild life sanctuary is part of Achanakmar- Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve is situated between latitude $22^{\circ} 15'$ to $22^{\circ} 58'$ N and longitude $81^{\circ} 25'$ to $82^{\circ} 5'$ E, having an area of 3283.96 sq. km serves as buffer zone of the Biosphere Reserve. A good number of tribal communities are living Chattishgarh. Out of this, an area of 1224.98 sq. km falls in Madhya Pradesh and the rest of the area of 2058.98 sq. km falls in Chhattisgarh. The boundaries of the Achanakmar- Amarkantak Biosphere Reserve pass through Dindory and Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh and Bilaspur districts of Chhattisgarh State. The phytogeographic regions are represented in the study area as follows: Bilaspur (68.1%), Anuppur (16.2%) and Dindory (15.7%) districts. The entire core zone area falls in Chhattisgarh State. It includes one Protected Area (PA) viz, Achanakmar sanctuary lying in Bilaspur district with a total geographical area of 551.15 sq. km¹⁻⁴. The ethno-medicinal research is important aspects of ethno-botanical research. The tribal tracts are storehouse of information and knowledge on the multiple uses of plants. The common tribal communities are Baiga, Gond, Bharia, Bhils, and Oraon tribes. They are partially or completely dependent on forest product for their survival.⁴⁻⁹

Indigenous Knowledge is a potential tool in searching for new economic plants for uses of medicinal plants for various purposes by tribals. Most of the population lives in rural areas and mainly belongs to Gond tribes and other non tribal localities. Ethno-gynaecology is an important field of study that deals with various diseases among Gond tribal societies, related to sterility, conception, abortion etc. and the use of abort-facients. Very little work has been done on the ethnogynaecological use of plants in the treatment and health care programme of women as evidenced by the literature and references.¹⁰⁻²⁰

Material and Methods¹²⁻¹⁴

The survey to collect the data, presented in this paper was conducted during the period of 2007-2008 in 5 villages of the sanctuary namely, Lamni, Achanakmar, Kota, Tilaidara, and Chaparwa. The local tribal medicine men or herbal informants were selected and their views regarding the subject matter were used. It has been observed during survey that the chief trainer women play a significant role in discussions since they possess more cognizances about the utility of local herbal products in curing various melodies. Data on the preparation of ethno-herbal recipes along with their application were gathered from experienced and knowledgeable medicine men and women. More than twenty plants were reported to be commonly used in medicine in this sanctuary. There are some plants which are used in Gynaecological problems. Details are given below.

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Enumeration

The botanical names are arranged in alphabetical order, followed by family, local name, locality, plant parts used and medicinal importance.

Achyranthus aspera L. (Amaranthaceae), 'Chirchitta, Adhajara', Chaparwa

The fresh root is tied around the thumb of right leg for easy delivery.

Asparagus racemosus Willd. (Liliaceae), 'Satavar', Lamni, Achanakmar

Boiled tuberous roots are eaten to the increase lactation in women

Leaf juice (two teaspoon a day) is given during pregnancy for easy delivery.

Aloe vera L. (Liliaceae), 'Gwarpatha', Lamni

Juice of leaves is given to lessen labour pain during delivery.

Alstonia scholaris (L.) (Apocynaceae), 'Chitwan & Saptarni', Achanakmar

Stem bark is dried and made in to powder. 5 gram powdered bark with cow's milk given once every morning 3-7 days in gonorrhoea.

Argemone maxicana (L.) (Papaveraceae), 'Bhatkatai & Satyanasi', Kota

Dried root powder used as tea for regulating fertility.

The ripe fruits are smoked and said to be useful in venereal diseases.

Leaves juice is given in leucorrhoea.

Annona squamosa (L.) (Annonaceae), 'Sitaphal', Kota, Lamni

Leaf decoction is drunk for easy delivery.

One spoon of seed powder with a cup of water taken for 3-4 days for abortion.

Boerhaavia diffusa L. (Nyctagenaceae), 'Patherchatta', Kota, Achanakmar

About 20 ml. of leaf juice is gives during delivery as haemostatic.

Two grams root paste with 25 ml. cow's milk for abortion.

Butea monosperma (Lamk.) Taub. (Caesalpinaceae), 'Palas, Dhak', Lamni, Chaparwa

Paste of the bark is applied to treat gonorrhoea.

Cassia fistula Linn. (Caesalpinaceae), 'A maltash, Kirware', Achankmar, Kota

Paste of the flower is applied on the affected part to treat gonorrhoea.

Cassia tora L. (Caesalpinaceae), 'Charota, Pawar', Chaparwa

Young seedling of the plants after washing is chewed by pregnant women for timely and easy delivery.

Curculigo orchoides Gaertn. (Amaryllidaceae), 'Kali musli', Achanakmar, Lamni

Powdered tuberous roots of plant are taken with milk as a tonic against impotency.

Cuscuta reflexa Roxb. (Convolvulaceae), 'Amar bel', Chaparwa.

Powder of seeds used orally for antifertility.

Cocculus hirsutus L. Diels. (Menispermaceae), 'Jaljamni' Lamni, Achanakmar

The juice of leaves mixed with water is used orally in gonorrhoea.

Datura metel Linn. (Solanaceae), 'Kala Datura', Kota, Lamni

One teaspoon powdered root given twice a day for 15 days after menstruation for permanent sterility.

Dolichos biflorum Linn. (Leguminosae), 'Kulthi', Kota

Decoction of seeds is used orally in leucorrhoea.

Euphorbia hirta (L.) (Euphorbiaceae), 'Dudhi', Achanakmar, Kota

Leaves are crushed and the extract is taken orally with honey once a day in the morning for leucorrhoea for a month.

Ficus carica L. (Moraceae) 'Anjir', Tilaidabra

Two cups of fruits decoction is taken a few days before the delivery period to make it easier.

Gossypium arboreum L. (Malvaceae), 'Kapas', Lamni. Root bark is used for amenorrhoea and dysmenorrhoea.

Hemidesmus indicus R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae), 'Anantmol', Lamni, Kota, Tilaidabra

Root juice is given in treatment of urinary disorders.

Vitex negundo (Linn.) (Verbenaceae), 'Nirgundi', Achanakmar.

One teaspoon powder of young root along with milk is given to ladies in menstrual disorders and also to restore fertility.

Results and Conclusion

During the survey period it has been observed that although tribals of this sanctuary are still in primitive stage of economic life and depend upon wild resources around them for their needs, they possess fairly good knowledge about the medicinal uses of plants. Due to the constant association with the forest environment and in the absence of any other medical facility available to them in their localities, they have evolved curious knowledge by the method of tribal and have developed their own way of treatment of ailment.

The present findings indicate that tribal women of the study area have deep faith in traditional medicine. They seem to depend upon the plants for curing various diseases including abortion, sterility, conception disorders, menstrual troubles, leucorrhoea etc. prevailing among them. Traditionally they do not go to a doctor or a clinic but depend upon herbal treatment suggested by old ladies (Chief trainers) or experienced medicine men of the village.

The present study deals with twenty plant species of medicinal plants belonging to 15 families used by tribal women of Achanakmar wild life sanctuary in the treatment of various gynaecological diseases and disorders.

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