

Plants used as medicine by traditional medicine men in Chitrakoot region of Madhya Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Chitrakoot is a most sacred place for the pilgrimage of Hindus and has been rich in ethnic and biological diversity since ancient times. There are several tribal communities like Kol, Gond, Mawasi and Khairwar inhabit in Chitrakoot region and utilize wide variety of plant resources for food, fodder, fibre, medicine etc. An ethno botanical study among the tribal and rural communities of Chitrakoot has been carried during 2011-2014. In the present paper, medicinal uses of 20 plant species belonging to 20 genera and 19 families have been reported. These medicinal uses are not reported earlier literature.

Keywords: *Traditional Medicine, Chitrakoot, Ethnic, Biological Diversity*

Introduction

Chitrakoot is situated in the northern part of Satna district of Madhya Pradesh and surrounded on North, Northwest and Northeast by Karwi (Chitrakoot) district of Uttar Pradesh and West by Panna District of Madhya Pradesh. It lies between 80° 52' to 80° 73' N latitude and 25° 10' to 25° 52' E longitude, covering an area of 1584 sq km. The general topography is hilly, precipitation and undulating cut off by numerous rivers and rivulets. Mandakini, Chakara and Jhuri rivers drain the region. The Mandakini (an offshoot of Holy River Ganga) is also known as Payasuni. The forest of the Chitrakoot predominantly consists of tropical dry mixed deciduous type. The climate of the Chitrakoot is dry and the maximum temperature goes up to 49.5°C in the month of May and minimum up to 5°C in the month of January.

Chitrakoot is a one of the famous place of pilgrimage of Hindus in India and surrounded by lush green hills of legendary Vindhya range. Since time immemorial, it has been famous for its religious importance, elegant environment and spiritual peace. Chitrakoot is also well known for its beautiful hill

ranges, historical caves, perennial streams and varied flora and fauna. Therefore, the Chitrakoot has been sacred place of worship for sages and hermits since antiquity.

It has been the centre of devotion, dedication and faith of devout persons of Lord Rama. Lord Rama, the most dignified and the best among the men, excels as an ideal role model in every respect and remains a timeless source of inspiration for mankind since an eon. He stayed in Chitrakoot with consort Sita and brother Lakshman about 11.5 years during his 14 year exile.

This holy place has provided spiritual inspiration and energy to many sages and dignitaries and changed their attitude of life like Maharishi Valmiki, Goswami Tulsidas, Abdul Raheem Khankhana, Tansen and even Aurangzeb *etc.*

It is mentioned in Indian history, that when the Mughal Emperor Akbar, expropriated Abdul Raheem Khankhana, one of the 9 gems of his Agra court and a great poet took asylum in Chitrakoot. Chitrakoot hill (also called Ramgiri) had also been residing place of *Yaksha* (a Demi God) of Kalidas's *Maghdoot*.

There are several tribal communities like Kol, Gond, Mawasi, and Khairwar *etc.* as mentioned in *Shri Ramcharitmanas* still reside in Chitrakoot forest area and utilize a wide variety of plants for food, fodder, fuel, medicine, dye, gum, tannin, thatching, household and farming implements *etc.* They are still very backward and poor and having small land holdings. There is no irrigation facility is available in tribal areas therefore they wholly dependent upon forest resources for their livelihoods. They also treat their local ailments and diseases through locally available herbs.

Materials and Methods

An ethnobotanical survey was conducted in tribal and rural areas of Chitrakoot region during 2011-2014 and the first hand information on medicinal uses of plants *viz.* local name of the plant, part used, mode of preparation, mode of administration/application, dose, duration *etc.* was collected from old and experienced traditional medicine men and women with the help of a standard questionnaire. The voucher specimens of the plants collected during the survey were properly identified with the help of floras and preserved in the herbarium of Arogyadham, Deendayal Research Institute, Chitrakoot.

The recorded data were compared with published literature *viz.* Ambasta (1986), Chopra *et al.* (1956, 1969), Jain (1991), Sikarwar (2001) Sikarwar *et al.* (2004, 2008, 2012) Sikarwar & Pathak (2007), Soni *et al.* (2008, 2010) and Tropathi & Sikarwar (2013) *etc.* and it is found that the reported uses are not published in earlier literature.

Enumeration

Plants are arranged alphabetically by botanical name, followed by family (in brackets), local name and medicinal uses.

1. *Acacia catechu* (L. f.) Willd. (Mimosaceae) L. N. : Khair
Decoction of stem bark of Khair (*Acacia catechu*), Chheula (*Butea monosperma*), stem
- pieces of Guruch (*Tinospora cordifolia*) and leaves of Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) is given as blood purifier to treat skin diseases, two times a day, till cure.
2. *Achyranthes aspera* L (Amaranthaceae), L. N. : Apamarg
Root paste with honey is given in pneumonia for 21 days.
3. *Argemone mexicana* L. (Papaveraceae), L. N. : Ghamoia
Leaf paste is applied on wounds till cure.
4. *Balanites aegyptiaca* (L.) Delile (Simaroubaceae) L. N. : Engua
Decoction of fruit kernel is given in rheumatism, two times a day till cure.
5. *Bauhinia variegata* L. (Caesalpiniaceae) L. N. : Kachnar
Bark decoction is given to treat goiter, two times a day till cure.
6. *Calotropis procera* (Ait.) R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae), L. N. : Ak
Tender leaf is pressed hard and makes a pill and one pill daily for 7 days is given in dog bite.
7. *Carissa carandus* L. (Apocynaceae) L. N. : Karonda
Leaf paste with whey is given for three days to treat blood dysentery.
8. *Clerodendrum multiflorum* (Burm. f.) Kuntze (Verbanaceae), L. N. : Arn
Leaves of Arn and Patharchatta (*Boerhavia diffusa*) are pounded together and juice is given to treat jaundice, two times a day for 15 days.
9. *Cocculus hirsutus* (L.) Diels (Menispermaceae), L. N. : Chhahata
Root is pounded with seeds of Kali Mirch (*Piper nigrum*), roots of Apamarg (*Achyranthes aspera*) and clarified butter. The paste is given in snake bite, two times a day for three days.
10. *Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers (Poaceae), L. N. : Doob

Whole plant juice is given with sugar for the treatment of urine inflammation, two times a day for 5 days. It is also given to stop bleeding of any part of body.

11. *Ficus benghalensis* L (Moraceae) L. N. : Bargad
7 drops of latex are poured in Batasa (a semi spherical cake of sugar) and given in empty stomach to treat diarrhoea, two times a day for three days.
12. *Grewia hirsuta* Vahl (Tiliaceae) L. N. : Gulsakari
Paste of root is given with 50 g milk and sugar in empty stomach for increasing the quantity of semen in body, once a day for 21 days.
13. *Melia azedarach* L. (Meliaceae) L. N. : Bakain
Luke warm leaf juice is dropped in ear to treat ear diseases, two times a day till cure.
14. *Moringa oleifera* Lam. (Moringaceae) L. N. : Sahajan
6 gm seed powder with honey is given daily for 21 days to treat night blindness.
15. *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* L. (Nyctanthaceae) L. N. : Saharua
Leaves of Sharua (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*) with bark of Sahajan (*Moringa oleifera*), leaves of Medaki (*Vitex negundo*) are taken in equal quantity and make a powder. The 12 gm powder is given daily to treat sciatica, till cure.
16. *Psidium guajava* L. (Combretaceae) L. N. : Bihi
Leaf is chewed with Kattha (*Acacia catechu*) to treat mouth sores, two times a day for three days.
17. *Raphanus sativus* L. (Brassicaceae) L. N. : Muli
Leaf juice is given as night during time of sleeping daily for the treatment of piles, till cure.
18. *Sphaeranthus indicus* L. (Asteraceae) L. N. : Gorakhmundi
Globoid inflorescence is given daily, two times a day for seven days to cure eye diseases.
19. *Sterculia urens* Roxb. (Sterculiaceae) L. N. :

Kullu

50 gm gum is soaked in water and kept overnight. The soaked gum with sugar is given, two times a day for three days to treat diarrhoea and dysentery.

20. *Terminalia cuneata* Roth (Combretaceae), L. N. : Kahua
Stem bark pieces with flowers of Mahua (*Madhuca longifolia*) are boiled in milk and milk is given in heart diseases, two times a day for 15 days.

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