TRADITIONAL USE OF FAMILY LORANHTACEAE FORM WESTERN MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Family Loranthaceae is characterized by parasitic nature of its species. Tribal people give importance to members of this family for their wild edible, medicinal values and witchcraft and superstitious uses. In this connection, ethnobotanical survey among Mahadeokoli tribe was carried out in five districts namely Ahmaidnagar, Nasik, Pune, Raigad and Thane. Information collected during field survey in Western maharashtra as well as from ancient literature is presented in this paper.

Introduction

Family Loranthaceae is characteristic for its parasitic habit on trees and shrubs. This family includes three genera viz. Loranthus, Dendrophthoe and Viscum. Many of the trees like Mangifera indica, Memecylon edule, Ficus spp. Etc are common hosts of these parasites.

Researches have reported new hosts from different regions (5,9). Traditional uses of those plants were compiled on medicine from Himalayan region, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra also. Several uses of the genus Loranthus. Like abortification, antifertility, brain tonic, wound healing, etc. were reported (3).

Viscum species are also used for antifertility, bone fracture, fever, itches, etc. They are also used for hysteria and as purgative, antispasmodic, cardiotonic, fenrifuge, aphrodisiac, etc, it is very interesting to note that Viscum monoicum and V. orientale are found in Strychnos nux-vomica Linn. Tress. Due to parasitic nature, its leaves possess properties more or less similar to S.nux-vomica. Viscum articulatum contains chemicals like a-angyrin, betulin, betulinic acid, lupeol and oleanolic acid (1). Biological activites of Dendrophthoe are astringent, narcotic, for asthma, menstrual troubles, etc. Quercetin and Gallic, ellagic and chebulic acids were found in Dendrophthoe falcata, as they are reported to parasitize Terminalia tomentosa (10).

Ethnobotanical information on Bhill community form Rajasthan region regarding Viscum articulatum, as whole plant is used for pulmonary inflammation and swelling in chest (4). However, very scanty ethnobotanical information on family Loranthaceae has been collected from state of Maharastra. Some folk uses reported in ancient literature (8) were based on superstitious beliefs. Tribal people also practice plants from family Loranthaceae for purpose of human/animal health care, medicine, wild edible, superstitious, witchcraft, etc. Present paper deals with ethnobotanical approach in respect of family Loranthaceae.

Material and Method
The state of Maharashtra occupies fifth position in the size of tribal population. The proportion of scheduled tribe population to the total population of the state is to the tune of 9.10 percent. Major tribes in the state are Bhill, Mahadeokoli tribe ranks second in the state. They reside in hilly regions of Ahmadnagar, Nasik, Pune, Raigad and Thane districts. This tribe is socio-economically very compact and homogeneous. They have no traditional occupations based on caste. They practice agriculture and also prefer to work as agricultural and forest labourers like any other hill or forest tribals.

This tribe collects food, medicine, fodder and other 40 different essential commodities form forest resource. They worship forest god or tribal deity. They maintain very compact social, cultural and environmental relationship with the surrounding forest and sacred forest. It is a sensitive and sentimental affinity in tribal localities of India and it is maintained under all odds and disasters(6). Mahadeokoli tribe is using ‘Bande’ or ‘Bandgul’ for different purpose. During the ethnobotanical survey data procured in connection with the family loranthaceae is presented below.

*Dendrophthoe falcata* (L.f.) Etting.

**Wild edible:**
Ripe fruits are edible.

**Medicinal:**

**Urine disorder**
Juice of the parasite on *Mangifera indica* L. or *Tectona grandis* L. is used for urine trouble.

**Bone fracture**

1. Parasite on *Ficus racemosa* L. Is used for bone fracture.

2. Paste of Parasite on Grecian tiliifolia Vahl, *Sterculia urens* Roxb. and *Diospyros melanoxylon* Roxb. is applied on bone fracture area.

**Tonic**
Juice of parasite on *Carissa carandas* L. is used as tonic.

**Diarrhoea**
Ripe fruits are eaten to check diarrhea.

**Veterinary medicine:**

**To prevent immature delivery**
Stem part of parasite is tied to neck of pregnant cattle to prevent immature delivery.

*Viscum angulatum* Heyne ex DC.

**Medicinal:**

**Bone fracture**
Whole parasite made into paste is used for bone fracture.

**Jaundice**
Stem part is garlanded on neck in jaundice.

**Veterinary medicine:**

**Bone fracture**

1. Whole extract of parasite is given orally as well as tied on bone fracture area.
2. Whole plant extract of parasite along with bark of Grewia asiatica L. is used for bone fracture.

To prevent immature delivery:
Stem part of parasite is tied to neck of pregnant cattle to prevent immature delivery.

Medicinal uses reported in Ancient literature:
1. Extract of parasite of Ficus religiosa L. collected in Ashwin constellation (Nakshatra) is taken with cow milk.
2. Parasite of Aegle marmelos Coirr is kept in house.

To get relief from ill health
Parasite on Ficus racemosa L. collected in Kratika constellation is extracted and taken with milk.

For increasing hunger/appetite
Parasite on Dalbergia sissoo Roxb. Collected in Uttara of Purva constellation is tied on hand.

To get relief from fever
Parasite on Xeromphis spinosa Keay is collected in Hasta constellation and tied on hand.

To increase span of life
Parasite on Pongamia pinnata Pierre is collected in Vishakha constellation and tied on hand.

Aphrodisiac
Prasite on Acacia nilotica Willd.is procured in Revati constellation and tied on hand.

For Arthritis
Parasite on Bombax ceiba L. is used for arthritis.

For otolea and ear complaints
Parasite on Terminalia chebula Retz. Is used for ear disorder/ear infection

Veterinary Medicine
To relieve from diseases
1. Parasite on Phyllanthus reticulates Poir. Is tied on neck of sheep and goat.
2. Parasite on Terminalia chebula Retz. Is used to relieve cattle form diseases.

To get high yield of grain
1. Collect parasite from Syzygium cumini Skeels on Bharani constellation and keep in grain storage barrel.
2. Procure parasite on Ficus benghalensis L. in Magha constellation and keep in grain.
3. Parasite on Phyllanthus reticulata Poir. Is kept in house/grain to increase in yield.
4. parasite on *Mangifera indica* L. Is used for high grain yield

**Witchcraft**

Free from enemies: Parasite on azadirachta indica A. Juss. Collected on jeshta constellation and kept in residence of enemies.

**Evil spirit**

1. Prasite on *Limonia acidissima* L. Is used to ward off evil spirit.

2. Parasite on *Ziziphus mauritiana* Lamk is used to get relief from evil spirit.

**Discussion and conclusion**

Tribal people have faith on forest god and goddessess. They believe that when goddesses are not given due recognition are reverence, they get offended and in their wrath cause diseases and even death. Parctice of witchcraft, evil eye and evil spirit causes infections/diseases. The treatment for such diseases have been mentioned in the kouitya’s Arthasastra, Atharvaveda and in Ayurvedic Samhitas of Charakas and Susruta. Tribal people or local inhabitants are still practice to get relief from evil spirits causes infections/diseases. The treatment for such diseases have been mentioned in the Kouitya’s Arthasastra, Atharvaveda and in Ayurvedic Samhitas of charakas and susruta. Tribal people or local inhabitants are still practice to get relief from evil spirits, witchcraft and superstitious causes which affect their day –to day life with the help of plants and offerings like hen, sheep, goat, lipuor, etc. (2)

Present study gives information on high grain yield, relief form ill health, increase hunger, hunger depression, evil eye, evil spirit, animal health, etc. the association of parasite is linked with constellations (Nakshatra) which has beneficial effect on mankind.

In recent years modern man has little time to understand the rituals that are mentioned in ancient literature. The ancient people or local inhabitants noticed the mystery of everything around them, and looked at life with awe and wonder. They were receptive to everything and arrived at conclusions which they considered best for their welfare. They were less rational but more intuitive.

Thus, the superstitions, though may be irrelevant today, are the milestones on the road of human understanding and rationaliazation of cause and effect concern. The ancient literature needs to be tested in modern scientific way (7,11).

Tribal people practice Dendrophthoea and Viscum for medicinal purpose like bone fracture, abortion, antifertility, jaundice, tonic, etc. these medicinal utilities are tested in tribal life form generation to generation. The tool for testing these claims with modern ethno-pharmacological techniques will highlight biological uses of family Loranthaceae for curing disease.

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