Folk Medicine of Nasik District
(Maharashtra), India

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ABSTRACT: The study concerns the first –hand information on 50 ethnomedicinal plants
traditional used by aborigines and rural folks o Nasik district, Maharashtra, for the treatment of
various human ailments and disorders. The paper gives botanical identity, local name, family
and mode of administration.

Keywords: Folk Medicines, Nasik District, Maharashtra.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Nasik is a northwestern district of state of
Maharashtra. The ranges of Western Ghats
extend in the district. The forests in the
region vary from evergreen to dry deciduous
types. It is a preaominantly tribal district.
Bhils, Katkaris, Kunabi-Kokana, Thakur,
Warli and Mahadeo Koli constitute major
segment of tribal population. They have
their own socio-cultural traditions and way
of life. The forests, forest products and
traditional crop plants are the main source of
their livelihood.

Sharma and Lakshimanarsimhan paid some
cursory attention to the traditional utility of
plants (1986, 1997) while surveying the
district floristically. Te present authors
extended ethnobotanical observations as an
exclusive topic of research since June 1997,
the results of which are being
communicated. This paper reports
especially plants of medicinal importance as
used by aborigines and rural folks of the
district.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The ethnobotanical surveys are carried out
since June 1997. Ethnobotanical data were
accrued after discussions with tribal and
rural physicians, tribal headmen. Elder tribal
ladies and other local informants. Repeated
enquiries were made in different pockets of
the district different seasons. To
authenticate the information, plant
specimens have been collected, preserved
and housed in the Herbarium of Botany
department of G.E. Trust’s Arts, Science
and commerce college, Nagaon District
Dhule (Maharashtra). Plants arranged
alphabetically by their botanical name
followed by local name, family and uses.

ETHNOBOTANICAL ENUMERATION:

Aerides crispum Lindl. (Vinchu, Bandgul;
Orchidaceae): Seed powder is applied on
injuries. Plant material used is collected if it
is epiphytic on *Mangifera indica* L. exclusively.

**Ailanthus excelsa** Roxb. (Maharukhi; Simaroubaceae): Tablets are prepared from leaf paste and given with banana fruit for a day or two, thrice a day to treat jaundice.

**Artocarpus heterophyllus** Lam. (Phanas; Moraceae); The ash obtained from bar of this plant and leaves of *Amaranthus spinosus* L. is mixed coconut oil. It is applied for echzema.

**Cassia occidentalis** L. (Rantarota; Caesalpiniaaceae): Leaves are burnt are burnt and the soot is collected on a plate applied with coconut oil. It is then applied onto eyebrows to induce sleep.

**Cassine albens** (Retz.) Korstern (Bhutyakalas, Buscut; Celastraceae): Leaf powder is snuffed to relieve from headache.

**Catunaregum spinosa** (Thunb) Trivegadum (Gal: Rubiaceae); Te paste of fruits along with seeds is applied onto neck of a patient suffering from tonsillitis.

**Celmatis triloba** Heyne ex Roth (Mogra; Ranunculaceae); Leaf paste is applied on head against headache.

**Clerodendrum serratum** (L) Moon (Dhaiti; Verbenaceae): Roots are rubbed on gums in case of children for better teething.

**Coix gigantean** koen. Ex Roxb. (Kachura; Gramineae); Extract of rootstock is mixed in bath water for person suffering form joint pains for 3-7 days

**Cordia macleodii** (Griff) Hook.f. and Thoms (Davisa; Cordiaceae): Stem bark is crushed, boiled and decoction is given to anaemic person for 2-3 times a day.

**Cryptolepis buchanani** R. and S. Bhuikawali; Asclepiadaceae): Roots of this plant along with the roods of solanum anguivi lam. And Kyllinga tenuifolia steup are crushed The extract is obtained used urine of child. It is then boiled ad solidified into a paste it is applied for skin disease like itching (Wagh chevda), swelling (Uthav,) bruises (Phodwa).

**Curculigo orchioides** Gaerth. (Kalacheda; Hypoxidaceae): Root paste is applied onto injuries to expel worms and also in case of septic.

**Dendrobium barbatulum** Lind 1. (Zadyalosan; Orchidaceae): Extract obtained form pseudobulbs is administered orally to treat stomach-ache and improve digestion.

**Dendropthoe falcate** (L.f.) Etting (Bandgul; Loranthaceae): Stem pieces of this species are collected only when it is epiphytic on maginfera indica L. They are tied together by black thread. Lead is smeared on them and are held in the fumes obtained by adding ghee on burning charcoal. After wards they are placed onto abdomen of a pregnant lad to avoid abortion.

**Dichrosachys cinerea**(L) Wight and Arn. (Yelatur; Mimosaceae): Roots are rubbed in water. It is kept overnight. The slurry obtained is applied in case of lymph adenitis or torsion in things.

**Diplocyclos palmatus** (L) C. Jeffery (Shivlingi, Patnari; Cucurbitaceae): Entire plant along with fruits is crushed and made into paste. It is applied against septic.

**Elytraria acaulis** (L.f) Lindau (Vismuli; Acanthaceae) : Roots are chewed for urinal complaints.
**Emilia sonchifolia** (L) DC (Dhampan; Compositae): Plants are dried, powdered and boiled in water. The decoction is taken orally for asthma.

**Erythrina indica** Lam. (Pangara; papilionaceae): Leaf juice of this plant are Butea monosperma (Lam) Taub is given for 3-4 days twice a day to treat cough.

**Euphorbia neriifolia** L. (Sabar; Euphornoaceae): Peels of outer parts young stem are heated. The extract is them obtained which is dropped I ears to treat ear –ache.

**Geodorum densiflorum** (Lam). Schlecht. (Haryakand; Orchidaceae) : Dry rhizomes are powdered which is applied on swellings.

**Heracleum grandis** (Dalz) S.M. Almeida (Bhaphali; Apiaceae): Entire plant or tubers are crushed in water. This extract is administered for 3-4 days to patients suffering form cholera.

**Heterophragma quadriloculare** (Roxb.) K.Schum. (Waras; Bignoniaceae): Bark paste is tied on injuries for healing.

**Ipomea illustris** (C.B.CI.) prain (Gogveli; Convolvulaceae): The fumes after burning the leaves are passed over the body of a child suffering from chicken-pox.

**Ipomea pes-tigris** L. (Borvel, Borvak; Convolvulaceae): Stem powder is boiled in water and extract mixed with sugar-candy. Tablets are prepared and given for 21 days for impotency.

**Ipomoea turbinata** Lag. (Guggalvel; Convolvulaceae): Stem powder is boiled in water. The decoction obtained is given against cold and fever.

**Jatropha curcas** L. (Mogli Erand, Parsi Erand; Euphorbiaceae): To Kill germs in teeth cavities, Patients are advised to use stem pieces as tooth brush.

**Launea coromandelica** (Houtt). Merr. (Modal; Anacardiaceae): Bark paste is tied on injuries for healing.

**Maytenus emarginata** (Willd) Dig Hou (Henkal; Celastraceae): Leaves are chewed for cough.

**Meyna laxiflora** Robyns (Aliv; Rubiaceae):Fresh leaves are smeared with coconut oil and then slightly heated. These are wrapped on goiter or swellings.

**Miliusa tomentosa** (Roxb) Sinclair (Humb; Anonaceae) Unriped fruits are dried and crushed. They are burnt and the smoke is allowed to pass over the body of lad after delivery to reduce body swelling.

**Mucuna pruriens** (L) DC (Kachquiri; Papilionaceae): Hairy tomentum removed from the fruits is homogenised in jaggery. It is given to children as a wormicide.

**Mukia maderaspatana** (L) Roem (Meka; Cucurbitaceae): The ash of the dried leaves is mixed in coconut oil. this paste is applied onto injuries locally called ‘Chikhali’ caused due to constant contact of mud or water.

**Phanera integrifolia** (Roxb) Benth (Chamel; Ceasalpiniaceae) :Bark extract is used to wash hands for 3-4 days regularly to treat jaundice.
Piliostigma malabaricum (Roxb) Benth (Shid; Ceasalpiniaeae): Rot paste is applied onto injuries caused due to weapons.

Plumbago zeylanica L. (Chitrok; Plumbaginaceae): The roots covered with clot are placed beneath the stone-grinder. They are then burnt and the smoke is allowed to pass though the hole of the grinder so as to react the annus of the patient suffering form piles.

Pogostemon parviflora Bth. Phangula; Labiatae): Leaves of this plant and vitex negundo L. are crushed together. The paste prepared is kept in jaws to relieve toothache.

Pongamia pinnata (L) Pierre. (Karanji; Pierre. (Karanji; Papilionaceae) : Bark extract is applied on tongue of patients suffering form malaena.

Schrebera swieteinoides Roxb. (Moka; Oleaceae): Few drops of leaf juice are dropped in ears as a reedy against ear-ache.

Solanum virginianum L. (Bhuiringni; solanaceae) : Heated fruit are cut into pieces. They are in moth. Saliva is continously dropped of to cure toothache.

Solena amplexicaulis (Lam) Ghandhi (Gomett; Cucurbitaceae): Tuber of this plant and of momordica dioica Roxb. Ex willd. Are crushed and paste is given orally to improve appetite.

Stemodia viscose Roxb. (Ramban; Scrophulariaceae): Naturally dried leaves of this plant are collected and wrapped in the leaves of butea monosperma (Lam. Taub. This wrapped packet is heated slightly. The hot leaves of stemodia viscose are immediately bandaged on white spots of human body, which are indicative of earlier stage of leprosy. This causes temporary injury on these spots.

Bark of Butea superba Roxb is burnt and black ash is rubbed or placed on injured spot which help cures later.

Terminalia arjuna (Roxb ex Dc.) Wight and Arn (Arjun Sadada; Combretaceae): Bark paste is applied to cure wounds.

Terminalia bellirica (Gaertn.) Roxb. (Behada; Combretaceae): Fruit wall is dried and powder finely. A pinch of turmeric powder is added. A spoonful of this mixture is mixed in water and advised for 7-15 days for patients suffering from chronic cough.

Trewia polycarpa Bth and Hk.ex Hk.f. (petari; Petara; Euphorbiaceae); Leaves are burnt and the ash, locally called ‘misri’ is applied in case of piles.

Tinospora cordifolia (Willd.) Miers ex Hook f. and Thoms (Ghamoli; Menispermacaeae): Twigs are collected in early morning and lead is applied of the. Te are fumed while enchanting. Stem pieces are tied together around the neck of a patient suffering form jaundice.

Tylophora dalzelli Hook .f. (Kawalvel; Asclepiadaceae): Bark of this plant, fruits of Aegle marmelos (L) Corr, and kernels of cocos nucifera L. are sliced into fine pieces. They are wrapped by using leaves of piliostigma malabaricum (Roxb) Bth It is smoked for 3-4 days in case of throat infection.

Vitex negundo L. (Nirgudi; Verbenaceae): Pulp of boiled leaves is applied onto joints as a remedy against rheumatic pains.

DISCUSSION:
This paper reports ethnomedicinal uses of 50 angiospermic species belonging to 47 genera and 31 families locally available to the tribals and rural people of Nasik district, to treat various human ailments and disorders. The local populace depend on native medicinal plants. This study may bring to light new drugs of vegetable origin. The ethnomedicinal lore on the uses of plants in various diseases and ailments provides valuable clues. These species, however, need further investigation in respect of their active principles, pharmacology and clinical trials to evaluate their efficacy and safety of use. These may provide lead in the development of new drugs. The vegetational wealth of the district as enormous potential to run herbal drug industry and cultivation of medicinally significant species through social forestry programmes for the benefit of local inhabitants. The medicinal uses of plants recorded during this study are unknown for such uses from this region in extant literature.

However, some species e.g., Clenodendrum serratum, curculigo orchioides, plumbago zeylanica, pongamia pinnata, pterocarpus marsupium, solanum virginianum, Terminalia arjuna, terminalia bellirica, tinospora cordifolia, vitex negundo etc. Are well known medicinal plants and their uses in other diseases are widely documented in traditional systems of Indian medicine. In some cases, administration of medicine is magical in character, designed to reinforce the effect of medicine.

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