



ETHNOMEDICINAL USE OF DIFFERENT MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE TRADITIONAL PRACTITIONERS IN NORTH EAST INDIA FOR THE TREATMENT OF JAUNDICE

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Article Received on
13 Dec. 2018,

Revised on 03 Jan. 2019,
Accepted on 24 Jan. 2019

DOI: 10.20959/wjpps20192-13163

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ABSTRACT

The forests of North-East India are rich in medicinal plants; many are still unknown to us. Traditional healers of North-East India were studied for the use of medicinal plants in the treatment of jaundice. We report 47 numbers of medicinal plant species and 24 types of traditional healing treatments for the cure of jaundice. But the traditional use of plants has declined due to scarcity of medicinal plant species which is caused by human activities and over grazing by animals. Therefore, it is essential to focus on conservation of these plant species. Again the traditional healers are on the decline because the younger member of the tribes have started moving towards the

towns and cities and are not willing to practice this form of medicines. There is danger that the knowledge of these traditional practices will also die with them. It is therefore, necessary to document the medicinal plants and the indigenous traditional practices to conserve them.

KEYWORDS: Ethnomedicine, Traditional practitioners, Medicinal plants, Jaundice, North East India.

INTRODUCTION

Ethnobotany deals with the acquired knowledge system about the use of the biological resources among various human communities living close to the nature it is based on the natural and direct relationship with plants and mans including both the useful and harmful aspects. About 53.8 million tribal people in 5000 forest dominated villages of tribal community inhabited in Indian subcontinent represents one of the greatest emporia of ethno-

botanical wealth (Chowdhuri SK: In studies in Botany Volume-2. Eds: Mitra D, Guha J, Chowdhuri SK Kolkata: Manasi Press, 2000: 855-867). The North East India harbors more than 130 major tribal communities of the total 427 tribal communities found in India (2001 census). Northeast India is rich in traditional medicine culture based on herbs and ritual practices for health care adopted right from ancient time. In fact, traditional knowledge of different ethnic groups of northeast is the vast source of ethno pharmacological information. The ethnic people owned the knowledge on the use of plants and plant products in curing various ailments from their livelihood and nearby environment. They have a deep belief in their native traditional medicine for remedies of they rely exclusively on their own herbal cure.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A survey was carried out for compilation of existing information on medicinal plants which are used for the treatment of jaundice by the traditional healers of Northeast India. Field studies were made to identify the plant species along with the local healers. In addition to investigation on taxonomic aspects, the association of medicinal plants with local inhabitants of Northeast was also considered. For this purpose, a close relationship was built up with local knowledgeable persons and medicine men and information was collected through interviewing them using pre tested questionnaire and short term participant observation. Discussion made at times with local chiefs and herbal doctors not only for gathering information, but also confirming the use of some plants recorded from different informants at different places. Each medicinal practice was cross checked with at least three (3) informants, critically analyzed and documented.

The identification of specimens was confirmed by consulting available literature and is presented in the form of herbarium.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through the present study 47 plants are identified and recorded which were used by the traditional practitioners and 24 types of traditional healing treatment for the cure of jaundice. Tribal people have good knowledge about the use of medicinal plants. They believe that all afflictions are caused by supernatural forces. Traditional healers use their eyes, ears, nose and hands to diagnose as they live in interior areas and there is lack of modern equipments for treatments. Herbal medicines for the cure of jaundice prescribed by the traditional practitioners are either preparation based on single plant part or a combination of several

plant parts. The preventive measures and the formulations of indigenous traditional practices are given in Table I.

Table I: List of indigenous herbal formulations used by the traditional healers of North East India.

<i>Serial No.</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>	<i>Parts used</i>	<i>Method of treatment</i>
Treatment I	<i>Magnifera indica</i> <i>Artocarpus heterophyllus</i> <i>Oroxylum indicum</i> <i>Passiflora nepalensis</i> <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> <i>Cuscuta reflexa</i>	Bark Bark Bark Climber Whole plant Whole plant	The juices of all the above plants are extracted and mixed well and one spoon is taken trice a day for one week
Treatment II	<i>Carica papaya</i> <i>Saccharum officinarum</i> <i>Curcuma zedoria</i>	Fruit Stem Rhizome	Intake of sugarcane and papaya are increased and the rhizome of <i>Curcuma zedoria</i> is cut into pieces and chewed for 10-25 day.
Treatment III	<i>Bridelia retusa</i> <i>Commelina bengalensis</i>	Bark Root	The bark of <i>Bridelia retusa</i> and roots of <i>Commelina bengalensis</i> are grounds and made into one spoon juice of it is taken twice a day.
Treatment IV	<i>Sapindus mucorossi</i> <i>Rhus succedanea</i> <i>Entada scandens</i>	Seed Seed Seed	The seeds of <i>Entada scandens</i> , <i>Rhus succedanea</i> and <i>Sapindus mucorossi</i> are burned into fire till it chars, ground into pastes, mixed with water and two spoons of which is taken a day for two days. The paste is applied externally on the whole body in the evening and bath is taken in the next morning.
Treatment V	<i>Edgeworthia sps</i>	Root	The root of <i>Edgeworthia</i> is cut into very small pieces and is to be chewed once every seven days for three weeks.
Treatment VI	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> <i>Rubus calycinus</i>	young shoot tip Root	The young shoot tip of <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> and <i>Rubus calycinus</i> are ground and made into paste. One spoon paste is mixed with 1/2 glass of water and taken once a day for 10-15 days.
Treatment VII	<i>Musa balbisiana</i>	Inflorescence	Inflorescence is boiled with six Crabs in water and decoction is given once daily for 7-10 days to cure jaundice
Treatment VIII	<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	fruits	Dried fruits are taken against the treatment of Jaundice.
Treatment IX	<i>Andrographis paniculata</i>	Whole plant	The whole plant extract is taken for the treatment of Jaundice.
Treatment X	<i>Phyllanthus amarus</i>	Fruits & leaves	Dried leaf & fruit powder is eaten twice a day for two weeks to cure jaundice.
Treatment XI	<i>Catheranthus roseus</i> <i>Piper caninum</i>	Leaf Leaf	Leaf extract is given in Jaundice

Treatment XII	<i>Melothria perpusilla</i> <i>Mimusa pudica</i>	Whole plant Leaf	<i>Melothria perpusilla</i> plant is boiled in water along with the plants of <i>Mimusa pudica</i> and the soup is taken in large quantity against jaundice.
Treatment XIII	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>	Whole plant	Freshly prepared extract of the plant is effective in the treatment of cirrhosis of liver
Treatment XIV	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Fruit and Seeds	Dried seed powder mixed in water is taken for one month for the treatment of jaundice Dried grind powder is mixed in sugar solution for the treatment of jaundice, hepatitis and other liver disorders.
Treatment XV	<i>Justacia adhatoda</i>	Roots	Decotion of its roots is taken by the patients for one month in the treatment of jaundice
Treatment XVI	<i>Bridelia monoica</i> <i>Smilax ovalifolia</i> <i>Ardisia paniculata</i>	Root Root Root	The root of these plants are rubbed on grindstone and the paste is collected in a cup of water. The mixture is boiled and taken orall
Treatment XVII	<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Stem	Fresh stem juice is taken orally twice a day for 7 days.
Treatment XVIII	<i>Solena heterophylla</i> <i>Plumbago indica</i> <i>Curcuma longa</i>	Root Root Rhizome	The roots of <i>Solena heterophylla</i> and <i>Plumbago indica</i> are tied with the rhizome of <i>Curcuma longa</i> then
Treatment XIX	<i>Sida rhombifolia</i> <i>Urena lobata</i> <i>Elaeagnus caudata</i> <i>Bixa orellana</i> <i>Randia dumetorum</i>	Root Root Root Bark and root Bark and root	The root of <i>Sida rhombifolia</i> , <i>Urena lobata</i> , <i>Elaeagnus caudata</i> and <i>Randia dumetorum</i> are crushed Extract is taken three times daily.
Treatment XX	<i>Psidium guajava</i> <i>Sida cordifolia</i>	Fruit Root	Fruit juice of guava, goat milk and preparation is taken orally in 3 doses. root of <i>Sida cordifolia</i> are mixed
Treatment XXI	<i>Homalomena aromatica</i>	Rhizome	Rhizome juice is taken orally to cure jaundice
Treatment XXII	<i>Curcuma longa</i> <i>Piper longum</i>	Rhizome Fruit	Rhizome of <i>Curcuma longa</i> crushed and made extract and extract is mixed with fruits of <i>Piper longum</i> and taken orally for 20-25 days
Treatment XXIII	<i>Cuscuta reflexa</i>	Whole plant	Fresh plant material is cocked and are taken orally for 15-20 days. three to four tea spoons of the paste
Treatment XXIV	<i>Oxalis corniculata</i>	Leaves	Fresh leaves are crushed and mixed in Water. One cup of the juice is given to the patient twice a day for 15 to 20 days.

CONCLUSION

The present paper deal with the ethnomedicinal information includes 47 plants, useful parts of plants and mode of administration for curing of jaundice by the traditional healers. Many people still practice as healers for cure of jaundice and hardly consult a physician or a recognised Practitioner. Their faith in herbal drugs, formulation is unbelievable. As the results are highly satisfactory to the local populations, they have great faith in it. Thus the acceptability of these preparations is quite high among the local people of Northeast. Further researches are needed on these herbs to ascertain their biologically active compounds and to detect the mechanism involved thereof.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the State medicinal Plants Boards of Manipur, State Medicinal Plants Boards of Sikkim, State Medicinal Plants Board of Assam and State Drug Testing Laboratory, AYUSH, Govt. of Assam at Govt. Ayurvedic College, for providing help in carrying out this research work.

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