

## **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 exceisa 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 bark of this plant and leaves of *Amaranthus spinosus* L. is mixed coconut oil. It is applied for eczema.

**Cassia occidentalis** L. (Rantarota; Caesalpiniaceae): Leaves 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) Trivegamum (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 from 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 buchani** R. and S. Bhuikawali; Asclepiadaceae): Roots of this plant along with the roots of *Solanum anguivi* Lam. and *Kyllinga tenuifolia* Steud. are crushed. The extract is obtained and used for urine of child. It is then boiled and solidified into a paste it is applied for skin disease like itching (Wagh chevda), swelling (Uthav,) bruises (Phodwa).

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

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

**Dendrophoe falcate** (L.f.) Etting (Bandgul; Loranthaceae): Stem pieces of this species are collected only when it is epiphytic on *Mangifera 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 lady 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 lymphadenitis 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 urinary 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; Euphorbiaceae): Peels of outer parts young stem are heated. The extract is then obtained which is dropped in 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 from cholera.

**Heterophragma quadriloculare** (Roxb.) K.Schum. (Waras; Bignoniaceae): Paste of fresh bark is applied on injury caused accidentally due to axe.

**Ipomea illustris** (C.B.Cl.) 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 turbinate** 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 coromadelica** (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) Unripened fruits are dried and crushed. They are burnt and the smoke is allowed to pass over the body of a patient after delivery to reduce body swelling.

**Mucuna pruriens** (L) DC (Kachqiri; 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.

**Oroxylum indicum** (L) Vent Tetu; Bignoniaceae) : Bark is crushed and the extract obtained is boiled. This decoction is administered to women to control leucorrhoea and menorrhoea.

**Phanera integrifolia** (Roxb) Benth (Chamel; Ceasalpinaceae) :Bark extract is used to wash hands for 3-4 days regularly to treat jaundice.

**Piliostigma malabaricum** (Roxb) Benth (Shid; Ceasalpinaceae): 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 through the hole of the grinder so as to react the annus of the patient suffering from 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 from malaena.

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

**Solanum virginianum** L. (Bhuringni; solanaceae) : Heated fruit are cut into pieces. They are in moth. Saliva is continuously 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 viscosa** 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 viscosa 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; Menispermaceae): 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 from 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 orcioides*, *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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