

Traditional Uses of Medicinal Plants in Kashmir Valley

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Abstract: Traditional knowledge about the medicinal plants is at the verge of extinction throughout the world because younger generation is not taking interest in its learning and preservation process. The aim of the present study is to explore the traditional uses of medicinal plants in Kashmir valley. Kashmir Valley harbors rich biodiversity of medicinal plants. Some important medicinal plants and their traditional uses were reviewed and presented in this paper. Medicinal plants in Kashmir Valley plays a vital role in rural areas especially in remote areas in treatment of different diseases.

Keywords: Medicinal Plants, traditional uses, kashmir valley

1. Introduction

Medicinal plants have been a vital source of both curative and preventive medical therapy preparations for human beings, which also has been used for the extraction of important bioactive compounds (Mbuni et al, 2020). Traditional medicine also known as complementary and alternative medicine in developed countries, is widely used and is of rapidly growing interest in health care systems all over the world. Traditional medicine is still recognized as the preferred primary health care system in many communities, with over 60% of the world's population and about 80% in developing countries depending directly on medicinal plants for their medical purposes (WHO, 2002). Traditional medicine is very popular and attracts much attention from a large spectrum of health system stakeholders, not only for its accessibility and affordability for poor people but also because of the risk of adverse effects of chemical drugs in allopathic medicine. Medicinal plants also form a source of income for millions of people (Lange, 1998), the use of plants to cure several kinds of human diseases has a long history. Various parts of plants such as leaf, stem, bark, root, etc. are being used to prevent, allay symptoms or revert abnormalities back to normal. Kashmir Himalaya harbors a rich diversity of medicinal plants. The region provides a wide variety of plants (herbs, shrubs and trees) owing to its diversified landscapes. The local inhabitants largely depended upon the local flora for food and medicine. The information on these plant species is utilized to understand the human plant relationship, as well as a guide for drug development under the assumption that a plant

which has been used by indigenous people over a long period of time may have an allopathic application (Farnsworth, 1993). In remote area the 'hakims' resorted to different medicinal plants as a treatment to different diseases (Shinwari, 2002). The decline in their cultural peculiarities and their traditional knowledge about the local floras are spontaneous and fast due to better facilities of transportation, communication and education. Thus, the present study was carried out as an ethno botanical exploration to collect and document information on useful plant species (their local names) that find traditional use in the daily life of local inhabitants for medicines and healthcare.

2. Material and Methods

The present study is the review of existing information on the medicinal plants and their traditional uses in Kashmir valley. The information about the use of plants as medicine among the people residing in the Kashmir valley were gathered from Studies published in journals, books, theses and reports.

3. Results and Discussion

The data obtained from this study is compiled in (Table-1) where the plant species are arranged in alphabetic order. A total of 20 species belonging to 16 families have been presented. They are used to treat skin diseases, fever, cough, muscle pain, joint pain, stomach disorders, measles, kidney disorders, eye sight, flatulence, obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol level, dandruff, hair growth, gout, chest congestion, sore throat, head ache, vomiting, excessive bleeding, asthma etc. The most common forms of preparing the medicine from plants are fresh juice, powder, paste and decoction. External applications are indicated for ailments like wounds, warts, skin diseases, muscular pain, burns, cuts and wonds, hair loss and dandruff. Sometimes particular plant parts are chewed for curing oral diseases, gums and teeth. The use of medicinal plants against different ailments plays a significant role in meeting the primary health care needs of tribal and rural community of study area. The area of study is fairly rich in medicinal plant wealth. But due to indiscriminate exploitation, overpopulation of the area, destruction of forests, agricultural expansion, over

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grazing and changing scenario of rural life cycle, the oral extinction because younger generation is not taking interest in folklore of plants as well as knowledge is in the process of its learning and preservation process. Hence, sound

Table 1
Tradational Uses of Some important Medicinal Plants of Kashmir Valley

S.no	Taxon Name	Local Name	Part Used	Medicinal Use
1	<i>Aconitum heterophyllum</i>	Paewakh	Root	Antidote for snake bites,
2	<i>Arnebia benthamii</i>	Kah Zaban	Rhizome	Common Cold, Cough, Fever,
3	<i>Coriandrum sativum</i>	Danival	Seeds	Hair fall
4	<i>Artemesia absinthium</i>	Tethwan	Leaves	Obesity, Diabetes, liver infection
5	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Hand	Roots	Back pain, common cold, Chest infection
6	<i>Trigonella foenum-graecum</i>	Meth	Seeds	Back Pain
7	<i>Cannabis sativa</i>	Bhang	Leaves, seeds and stem	ear-ache, blood purifier, scabies
8	<i>Cascuta reflexa</i>	Kukliporte	Whole Plant	Joint pains, wound healing and falling of Hairs.
9	<i>Iris kashmiriana</i>	Mazarmund	Whole plant	Joint pains
10	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Sotal	seeds	Cough, fever, eye sight
11	<i>Datura stramonium</i>	Datur	Seeds	Rheumatism, Frost bite, toothache, tonic
12	<i>Ficus carica</i>	Anjeer	Stem	Birthrate control
13	<i>Rosa webbiana</i>	Gulab	Flowers	Cough and colds.
14	<i>Saussurea costus</i>	Kuth	Rhizome	Joint pain, back pain, sole ulcers, dysentery, fever, urinary problems
15	<i>Sambucus wightiana</i>	Hapatfal	Root, leaves	Chest congestion, Boils
16	<i>Senecio graciliflorus</i>	Mongol	Leaves, flowers	Dermatitis, Stomachache
17	<i>Juglans regia</i>	Doan kul	Leaf, Bark	Tooth infection, scrofula, rickets and leucorrhoea
18	<i>Picrorhiza kurrooa</i>	Kour	Roots, Rhizome	Fever, appetizer
19	<i>Podophyllum hexandrum</i>	Banwangun	leaves and roots	Skin diseases, Gastric problems
20	<i>Zea mays L</i>	Makai	Herb Flower, Corn	Diabetes, Urethritis

degeneration. Therefore, an early need arises to study and document the available information in detail for a wider application in future. More research and conservation efforts should be focused on these resources of the area so that in future the coming generation could benefit from these precious plants that are real gift to mankind.

4. Conclusion

The present study presented important medicinal plants from Kashmir Valley, which has Traditional uses against different diseases and plays a significant role in meeting the primary health care needs of the local people especially rural communities of Kashmir Valley. Traditional knowledge of medicinal plants is restricted to health practitioners and elder community members only. This knowledge is at the verge of

conservation strategies need to be developed and implemented for the sustainable utilization of medicinal flora and preservation of traditional knowledge.

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