

HERBAL REMEDIES PRACTISED BY TRADITIONAL PRACTITIONERS OF NEPALI TRIBE IN SIKKIM

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Abstract

A survey of medicinal plants used by traditional practitioners of Nepali tribe of Sikkim, India was reported. Fifteen different species of the plant belonging to fourteen different families were included. A list of plant species along with their botanical and local names, family, plant parts used and uses has been enumerated.

Key words

Traditional Practitioners, Medicinal plants, Ethnomedicine

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim, a small Himalayan State lying between 27° 00' 46" N - 28° 07' 48" N latitudes and 88° 00' 58" E - 88° 55' 25" E longitudes is the second smallest state in India. There are four districts in Sikkim i.e. North, South, East and West. It is barely 7,096 sq km in size yet has an elevation ranging from 300 m to 8585 m above sea level. The mean annual rainfall varies from 2000mm to 4000mm and the average annual temperature for most part of Sikkim is around 18 °C.

POPULATION

The total population of the studied area is 540,493, comprising of 288,217 males and 252,276 females

(2001 census). There are three main ethnic communities viz. Nepali, Bhutia, and Lepcha. The major occupation of the people is agriculture. Cardamom, ginger and tea are the major cash crops.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The main scope of the present study is to review the use of medicinal plants by traditional healers of Nepali community in Sikkim.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE ON FLOK MEDICINE

The traditional uses of medicinal plants of Sikkim have been reported previously as antidiabetic [1],

anti-rheumatic [2], and having various other medicinal uses [3,4].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The survey was conducted during the period from February 2014 to October 2014. The information was collected from 18 traditional herbal practitioners (all men) from different parts of the state. The data was collected on field note books through direct interviews with the traditional practitioners. Cross verification of the data was done to authenticate the information [5, 6]. All of the practitioners were more than 50 years old. The authors collected the plant materials and identified with the help of botanist. Voucher specimens were deposited in the department of Pharmacognosy, Himalayan Pharmacy Institute, Sikkim.

RESULTS

The results of the survey are presented in Table 1. The plants are arranged in alphabetical order [7, 8]. The botanical name, voucher specimen number, local name, parts used and uses of the each species have been provided.

CONCLUSION

We compared the data collected in our study with data already present in the ethno botanical literature about the medicinal plants of Sikkim Himalayas [9, 10]. It is observed that many of the uses in the listing are not recorded earlier. However, some of the species such as *Ageratum conyzoides*, *Bergenia ciliata*, and *Oroxylum indicum* are found to be similar to those published in the literature. Some of the already reported plants has come to the light with new uses namely, *Hippophae salicifolia* for skin eruptions, *Rhododendron arboreum* for dysentery and diarrhea, *Costus speciosus* for diabetes and *Gloriosa superba* for leprosy. Further scientific assessment of these medicines on phytochemistry, biological activity and clinical studies may provide a lead in the development of drugs to be used in the modern system of medicines.

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Table 1: Medicinal plants of Sikkim Himalaya used by traditional practitioners of Nepali tribe

| Botanical name and voucher number | Family | Local name | Parts used | Uses |
|---|-----------------|------------|----------------------|--|
| <i>Ageratum conyzoides</i> L. (47) | Compositae | Elame | Flower buds & leaves | Styptic |
| <i>Bergenia ciliata</i> (Haw.)Sternb. (105) | Saxifragaceae | Pakhanbed | Root & rhizome | Tonic, fever, boils, astringent |
| <i>Costus speciosus</i> Sm. (312) | Costaceae | Bet laure | Root | Fever, bronchitis, anemia, rheumatism and antidiabetic |
| <i>Drymaria cordata</i> Willd. (56) | Caryophyllaceae | Abhijalo | Whole herb | Antidiabetic |
| <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i> L. (213) | Compositae | Kalijhar | Leaves & tender bud | Cuts and wounds |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Gloriosa superba</i> L. (205) | Liliaceae | Langarey Tarul, | Tubers, roots flowers | Chronic ulcers, leprosy, piles, |
| <i>Hippophae salicifolia</i> D.Don (95) | Elaeagnaceae | Achuk | Fruits/bark | Lung dieases, skin Eruptions,Irritations |
| <i>Nyctanthes arboristis</i> L. (221) | Oleaceae | Parijat | Leaves, bark | Malarial fever, bone fracture |
| <i>Orchis latifolia</i> L.(44) | Orchidaceae | Panchaunlay | Tubers | Bodyache, heart ailments |
| <i>Oroxylum indicum</i> Vent. (62) | Bignoniaceae | Totola | Bark, root bark, fruits | Fever, bronchitis, dysentery, asthma |
| <i>Passiflora nepalensis</i> Walp. (76) | Passifloraceae | Lahare aap | Leaves & flowering tops | Hypertension |
| <i>Phytolacca acinosa</i> Roxb. (84) | Phytolaccaceae | Jaringo | Leaves | Bodyache |
| <i>Rhododendron arboreum</i> Sm. Exot. (120) | Ericaceae | Laliguras | Flowers, young leaves | dysentery, diarrhea, headache |
| <i>Rumex nepalensis</i> Spreng. (211) | Polygonaceae | Halhalay | Root & leaves | Jaundice |
| <i>Stephania hernandifolia</i> Willd. (74) | Menispermaceae | Tamarke | Tubers | Antidiabetic |

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