

An Ethnopharmacology Study of District Chamba, Himachal Pradesh

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Short Communication

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ABSTRACT

An ethnopharmacology study in tribal, rural and sub rural pockets in Chamba (Dalhousie, Kalatop, Kundi, Darkundi, and Tissa) district has been carried out. Information gathered through repeated visits to various sites, participant observations, structured, semi-structured and unstructured questionnaires, focus group discussion and personal contacts with various people of local community, Gaddis and Gujjars. During the survey, 304 plant taxa belonging to 92 genera and 70 families were mentioned by them having economic importance, of which only the ethnopharmacological value of them were highlighted. Of the plants 86 species were used only as medicine. Different plant parts of different spp. are used as medicine for treating various diseases.

Nowadays it is a well-established fact that herbal remedies are more suitable to human body; an isolated chemical medicines (Natural herbs and natural extracts, 2009). India is a country of different traditional culture and tribes and follow different customs and systems of medicine. It is generally established that over 6000 plants in India are used for traditional, folk and herbal medicines, representing about 75% of the medicinal needs of the third world countries.

Medicinal plants have been playing an important role in the development of human culture. As a source of medicine, medicinal plants have always been at forefront virtually all cultures of civilization.

INTRODUCTION

The earliest record carved on clay tablets in cuneiform date from 2600 BC are from Mesopotamia: among the material that were used were oils of *Commiphora* species (Myrrh), *Cedrus* species (Cedar), *Glycyrrhizaglabra*

(Liquorice), *Papver somniferum* (poppy juice), *Cupressus sempervirens* (Cypress) are still used today for cure of the disease extending from cold, cough, inflammation and parasitic infections [1].

Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh is considered as one of the richest area of traditional and potential medicinal wealth. The vegetation of the district Chamba varies considerably, chiefly owing to elevation and rainfall [2].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work is mainly based on information gathered from the interview with the tribal (Gaddis, Gujjars) rural and sub rural pockets in Chamba (Dalhousie, Kalatop, Kundi, Darkundi, and Tissa) district on the plants having economic importance to them. Relevant plants were the present investigation is divided into two parts: Part-I. Interview with the local people of tribal (Gaddis, Gujjars) rural and sub rural pockets in Chamba (Dalhousie, Kalatop, Kundi, Darkundi, and Tissa) district, collection, study, identification of plants. First step was interviewing the local community about the plants they used in their daily life. These included the plants that have some economic importance as fruits, vegetables, furniture, drug, etc. Collections were made throughout the year and particular care was taken not to miss the flowering stages or the fruits. In all cases collections were made through the photographs. During collection attempts were made to know the local names of the plants [3].

Part-II. Study of ethnopharmacological aspects: For the present investigation interviews were taken from the local people in the study area about different aspects, i.e. a) Use of plants parts. b) Use of these plants parts to cure various diseases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Present ethnopharmacological study in tribal (Gaddis, Gujjars), rural and sub rural pockets in Chamba (Dalhousie, Kalatop, Kundi, Darkundi, and Tissa) district ethnic areas generated many important information that might be useful for primary healthcare programme, economic and agricultural policy, alternative food programme, discovery of new drug and biodiversity conservation and management action plan of Himachal Pradesh. Since little work has been done in the field of ethnopharmacological research in Himachal Pradesh, information document in this paper may be of immense use in other fields of research[4]. Identification of plants species have been done through various resources such as books written by R K Verma and K S Kapoor, Rakesh Shah and also with the help of internet, Flowers of India, and through the guide available. The information related to traditional uses of plants by the tribal, Rural and Sub rural pockets in Chamba (Dalhousie, Kalatop, Kundi, Darkundi, and Tissa) district community are comparatively new to the ethnopharmacological science in Himachal Pradesh . From the available information it is revealed that this ethnic area uses plant species, that has cure many health related diseases. Data have been gathered on the traditional uses of plant species, especially for abscess, for asthma, for abortion, burning sensation, blood pressure, cough, chickenpox, constipation, dysentery, diarrhoea, diabetes, eczema, fever, fracture, headache, heart disease, itches, jaundice, menstrual disease, paralysis, piles, skin disease, snakebite, sex problem, tooth disease, vomiting, wound, worm and others [5]. Further, the local people of Chamba region is using plant species or their parts for various other purpose, e.g. in poultry disease, as traditional needle, for children's games and toys, for dye, in preparation of fermentation agent, for tooth brush and uses in different worship [6]. By applying survey, interview, collection and identification methods, different ethnopharmacological information were accumulated [7,8]. The well analyzed and check listed information about the plant materials collected from the study area are described in below figures 1-6.

Figure 1. Life Form of Reported Common Plants.



Figure 2. *Eriocapitella rivularis* (River Anemone).



Figure 3. *Prunella vulgaris* var. *Vulgaris*.



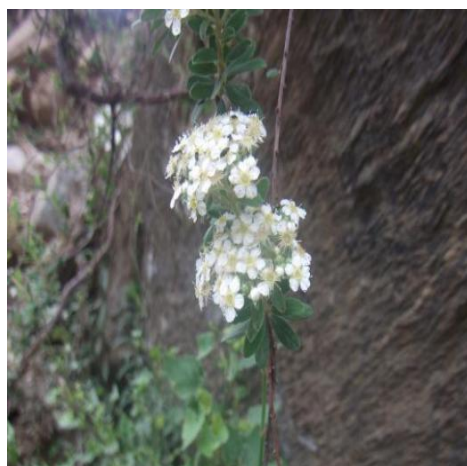
Figure 4. *Daphne papyracea* (Indian Paper Plant).



Figure 5. *Mazus surculosus* (Suckering Mazus).



Figure 6. *Spiraea canescens* (Grey stem spiraea).



CONCLUSION

Most of the people in the village of “Chamba” are poor and backward. In one hand, these local peoples are out of the reach of modern medicines and on other hand, the market price of most available medicines are very expensive. As a result, these medicinal plants are used by them to cure all of the disease. The wide use of local flora by the tribal people like Pangwals, Gaddis, Gujjars suggests that cultivation and conservation of indigenous

useful plants should be encouraged. There is a need of intensive work in this direction which may help tribal development.

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