

## HERBAL FOLK MEDICINE OF JALGAON DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

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Fifty plants belonging to 33 angiospermic families used by aboriginals and rurals for different human ailments hitherto unreported from Jalgaon district, Maharashtra, are communicated. First-hand information with respect to plant and part/s used, family, local name, disease treated, recipe and administration is given as accrued from them. Further scientific evaluation on pharmacological and clinical lines is needed for these widely employed herbal medicines.

**Keywords :** Herbal folk medicine; Jalgaon district.

Jalgaon district is located on the northern part of the state of Maharashtra, India. It lies between 20° and 21° north latitude and 74° 55' and 76° 28' east longitude. It is inhabited by a large section of rural population and different ethnic tribes. Pawara, Bhil, Kokani, Tadwi and Vanjari are some of the major tribal communities<sup>1</sup>. Although they make their living through agriculture, they have to depend on plant resources from their surroundings to meet different requirements. The ethno-medico-botanical data accrued during this study are the first-hand information, except the sole report on medicinal plants from this region<sup>2</sup>.

The observations are based on surveys conducted in rural and tribal-dominated areas of Jalgaon district. Information was obtained through interviews with traditional healers, medicinemen, headmen and elder women in the study area. The plants are identified by the authors with the help of related literature<sup>3-10</sup>. Voucher specimens are deposited in the Herbarium, Department of Botany, Pratap College, Amalner, District Jalgaon, Maharashtra. The plants are enumerated alphabetically with their correct botanical name, followed by family in parenthesis, vernacular name/s and brief notes on methods of preparation and administration.

**Ethnomedicinal Enumeration - *Abrus precatorius* L.** (Papilionaceae), Gunj Charnatadi. Seeds of this plant, leaves of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* L. and honey are homogenized. This paste is applied on the scalp at night to promote hair growth on bald.

***Acacia nilotica* (L.) Willd. ex Del. subsp. *indica* (Bth.) Brenan var. *vediana* (Cooke) Naik** (Mimosaceae), Vedi Babbul. Decoction of thorns is used as a remedy for hiccough.

***Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr.** (Rutaceae), Bel. Decoction of leaves in which four black pepper (dried unripe berries of *Piper nigrum* L.) is taken orally to treat jaundice. Sherbet of ripe fruit pulp is administered as a coolant.

***Allium cepa* L.** (Liliaceae), Kanda. Paste of bulb is applied

on forehead to minimize the effect of sunstroke. Bulb is halved and immediately inhaled to treat fit.

***Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.** (Meliaceae), Neem. A cup of leaf extract is drunk for 22 days for cooling effect.

***Baliospermum raziana* Keshav. et Yog.** (Euphorbiaceae), Dati. Fresh stem pieces are used as tooth brushes to keep mouth clean and to prevent tooth decay.

***Bauhinia purpurea* L.** (Caesalpiniaceae), Kanchan, Kachnar. Fruit wall pulp is made into paste using decoction of rice grains. It is drunk and also applied locally to cure lymph gland.

***Biophytum sensitivum* (L.) DC.** (Oxalidaceae), Sharmi, Lajalu. Leaf paste is applied externally to treat rheumatism.

***Belepharis repens* (Vahl) Roth** (Acanthaceae), Hadsan. Leaf paste is applied externally in case of bone fracture to accelerate healing.

***Boerhavia diffusa* L.** (Nyctaginaceae), Punarva. Decoction of the entire plant is taken internally to treat jaundice.

***Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub.** (Papilionaceae), Khakara, Palas. Root extract is added in bath water to check biliousness and allergy.

***Calotropis procera* (Ait.) R.Br. and *C. gigantea* (L.) R.Br.** (Asclepiadaceae), Aak, Rui, Mhatari. Latex is applied on gums to reduce toothache. It is also applied in case of scorpion sting.

***Cassia tora* L.** (Caesalpiniaceae), Tarota, Takala. Seeds of this plant along with the fruits of *Tribulus terrestris* L. are powdered, a single tablet of which is prescribed for seven days to treat rheumatism. Also root powder homogenized with fruit juice of *Citrus aurantifolia* (Christmann) Swingle is applied to cure wound caused due to thorns.

***Cassine albens* (Retz.) Kosterm.** (Celastraceae), Bhutkes, Bhutyapa-palas. Gum is applied externally for skin diseases, called 'anjuri'.

***Catunaregam spinosa* (Thunb.) Tirvengadam** (Rubiaceae), Gel. Fruit pulp homogenized in water is given for vomiting in case of poisoning.

*Cayratia trifolia* (L.) Domin (Vitaceae), Bailmal. Root paste is applied externally to reduce muscle pains.

*Centella asiatica* (L.) Urban (Apiaceae), Bramhi. Decoction of the entire plant is administered for dysentery.

*Cleome viscosa* L. (Capparidaceae), Bhera, Piwali Tilwan. Three to four drops of leaf extract are dropped in ears in case of pus formation in them.

*Coccinia grandis* (L.) Voigt (Cucurbitaceae), Tondli, Tongala. Leaf extract is taken orally to reduce acidity till cure.

*Cocculus hirsutus* (L.) Theob. (Menispermaceae), Vasan, Vasanwel. About ten grams of leaf powder mixed with equal amount of animal ghee is consumed every day to cure piles.

*Cuscuta chinensis* Lamk. (Cuscutaceae), Amarwel. Stem paste is rubbed onto the scalp to remove dandruff. Stem powder mixed with borax powder (hydrated sodium tetraborate), Santalum powder (about 1 gm) (powdered wood of *Santalum album* L.) and Sal ammonia (about 1 gm) (ammonium chloride) are thoroughly mixed and made into pellets. These are given to patients to cure vitiligo.

*Cymbopogon martinii* (Roxb.) Wats. (Poaceae), Rosha gavat. Oil obtained from the leaves is rubbed onto the joints for rheumatism.

*Cynodon dactylon* (L.) Pers. (Poaceae), Dubadi, Durva. Infusion of the plant is mixed with bath water. After eleven days of eruption of small pox, called Devirog, this water is used for bath to cure early.

*Dichrostachys cinerea* (L.) Wight et Arn. (Mimosaceae), Yellatur. Infusion of stem bark is drunk for dysentery. Likewise, infusion of roots is used as a purgative and diuretic.

*Dolichandron falcata* (Wall. ex DC.) Seem. (Bignoniaceae), Medhshingi. Leaf paste is applied onto the swellings.

*Ensete superbum* (Roxb.) Cheesm. (Musaceae), Devkela, Rankel. Decoction of seeds is employed as an antidote for dogbite.

*Erythrina variegata* L. (Papilionaceae), Pangara. Decoction of stem bark is given orally to treat fever. Leaf paste is applied onto the joints to relieve pains.

*Ficus benghalensis* L. (Moraceae), Wad, Wat. Latex is applied locally for rheumatism and lumbago. Leaf poultice is applied on abscesses.

*Ficus religiosa* L. (Moraceae), Pimpal, Pippal. Infusion of stem bark is administered for scabies.

*Glossocardia bosvallea* (L.f.) DC. (Asteraceae), Mirgi. Few drops of leaf decoction are dropped into the ears for ear-aches.

*Hygrophila auriculata* Schult. (Acanthaceae), Talimkhana. Decoction of leaves is advised for stomach complaints.

*Indigofera linneae* Ali (Papilionaceae). Roots are chewed to cure mouth ulcer.

*Lavandula bipinnata* (L.) O.Ktze. (Labiatae). Leaf paste

is applied on gums to relieve pains from tooth-ache.

*Launea procumbens* (Roxb.) Ramayya & Rajgopal (Asteraceae), Pathari. Leaf paste is applied onto the mammary glands of women to increase lactation especially after delivery.

*Lawsonia inermis* L. (Lythraceae), Mehandi. Leaf paste or decoction is used to treat boils and burns. Decoction is also given for gargling for sore throat.

*Luffa cylindrica* (L.) M.Roem. (Cucurbitaceae), Gilke. Leaf juice is taken orally for seven days for entire body swelling.

*Merremia emarginata* (Burm.f.) Half.f. (Convolvulaceae), Undirkani, Chuhakani. Root powder is given to inhale for preventing nasal bleeding.

*Moringa concanensis* Nimmo ex Dalz. (Moringaceae), Kadu-Shewga. Extract of bark mixed in paste of garlic (*Allium sativum* L.) is consumed for ventilago.

*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* L. (Oleaceae), Shiradi, Parijatak. One gram of stem bark mixed in water is advised in early morning to cure asthma.

*Pergularia daemia* (Forssk.) Chiov. (Asclepiadaceae), Utaran, Popat-chonchi, Phal-kankati. Fruits are crushed in warm water which are then applied to relieve from sprain.

*Phyllanthus amarus* Schumarch & Thornn (Euphorbiaceae), Bhui-awala. Decoction of the entire plant or leaves is taken orally to treat jaundice.

*Rolata serpyllifolia* (Roth) Bremek. (Lythraceae). Entire plants after heating gently are tied on chest of women to relieve pains of mammary glands.

*Solanum virginianum* L. (Solanaceae), Bhui-ringani, Ranwange. Fruits are dried and powdered. Five grams of this powder per day mixed in warm water cures chronic tumours.

*Terminalia arjuna* (Roxb. ex DC.) Wight & Arn. (Combretaceae), Kahu, Arjun-sadada. Stem bark paste is applied for body pains.

*Trichosanthes tricuspidata* Lour. (Cucurbitaceae), Gavlan. Two seeds of this plant alongwith betle leaf (*Piper betle* L.) and areca nut (*Areca catechu* L.) is advised to eat thrice a day for asthmatic complaint.

*Tridax procumbens* L. (Asteraceae), Ekdandi. Leaf juice is applied on wounds, bruises and to check haemorrhage.

*Triumfetta rotundifolia* Lamk. (Tiliaceae), Zhila. Leaves are chewed for stomatitis.

*Vitex negundo* L. (Verbenaceae), Nirgudi. Root paste is applied externally onto the swellings.

*Xanthium strumarium* L. (Asteraceae), Landga. Five grams of fruit powder mixed in water is given to the patients for seven days to cure tumours.

The rural and tribal people exploit wild, cultivated, introduced or naturalized plant species as herbal medicines to treat different ailments. Out of 50 species presently reported, some have primary uses such as vegetable (*Coccinia indica*, *Luffa cylindrica*), flavouring food

(*Allium cepa*), religious plants (*Aegle marmelos*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Ficus benghalensis*, *F. religiosa*, *Nyctanthes arbor-tritidis*) and essential oil (*Cymbopogon martinii*). Few exotic floral elements of weedy nature (*Cassia tora*, *Tridax procumbens*, *Xanthium strumarium*) or introduced for miscellaneous purposes (*Lawsonia inermis*, *Erythrina variegata*) are also employed. The people in the study area, by and large, still rely upon traditional medicines for their healthcare and treatment of diseases. The folk medicinal resources of plant origin provide fundamental data for further studies aimed at clinical tests, rural healthcare and economic welfare of rural and tribal population of this region and world at large.

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