MEDICINAL USES OF PLANT ROOTS FROM SHEO HAR DISTRICT, BIHAR

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Abstract: The paper enumerates 39 medicinal plant species belonging to 39 genera and 28 families, which are used as folk medicine in the treatment of various ailments or diseases by the rural and common people of Sheohar district.

Keywords: Folk medicine, Medicinal plants, Vaidhya, Sheohar.

Introduction
Indian Systems of Medicine derives many of their curative tools from plants. Reference to plants used as drugs are often found in old literature (Atharveda, Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, etc.). In spite of achievement of allopathic medicines the Indian Systems of Medicine still continue to provide medical cure to majority of the people on account of their cheaper cost and no side effects. Folklore use of medicinal plants from Trinidad; Gwalior forest circle, Madhya Pradesh; Chittor district, Andhra Pradesh; Dehradun; Amritsar; Yanandis of Sathyavedu Mandal; Chittor district, Andhra Pradesh; Barnawa in Baghpat district Uttar Pradesh; and Baghpat district of Uttar Pradesh have been reported.

Methodology
The Sheohar District situated in the latitude 26°51 N and longitude 85°29 E. It is bounded in the North by District Sitamarhi, in the South by District Muzaffarpur and in the West by District Purbi Champaran, respectively. Sheohar district comprises of 5 blocks of 53 panchayats comprising 203 villages in the district. The survey of folk medicinal plants was conducted for two consecutive years in villages of 5 Blocks in Sheohar district. The study involved field work and interviews, folk medicinal information collected from the native informants (Vaidhya or Hakim) and elderly village people. Interviews were held in villages and information was recorded; medicinal plants were collected and deposited in the University Department of Botany, B.R.A.B.U. Muzaffarpur Bihar.

Ethnomedicinal uses of plants root in Sheohar District
1. Plant name - Achyrenthes aspera Linn.
   Family - Amaranthaceae
   Local name - Chirchita
   Uses - The root paste is applied externally at the point of scorpion sting thrice a day for two days for giving instant relief.
2. Plant name - Acorus calamus Linn.
   Family - Araceae
   Local name – Bach
   Uses - Rhizome paste is given in fever to children thrice daily for 2-3 days.
3. Plant name - Aerva lanata(Linn.) Juss
   Family - Amaranthaceae
   Local name - Dedua ki chal
Uses - The root paste is rubbed on the forehead in headache for 3-4 times a day till relief.

   Family - Mimosaceae
   Local name - Siras
   Uses - Dilute root paste is given orally repeatedly till the patient regains consciousness in case of snakebite; paste is also applied externally on the bite point.

5. Plant name - *Argemone mexicana* Linn.
   Family - Papaveraceae
   Local name - Peelikateli
   Uses - Root is given for expelling tapeworm.

6. Plant name - *Aristolochina bracteolata* lamk
   Family - Aristolochiaceae
   Local name - Kiromar
   Uses - Dried roots are given to increase uterine contraction during labour. Root is also given thrice a day for expelling round worms.

7. Plant name - *Asparagus racemosus* Wild
   Family - Liliaceae
   Local name - Satawar
   Uses - Root powder with cold water is given for biliousness; also given with honey; used as tonic.

8. Plant name - *Bauhinia variegata* Linn
   Family - Caesalpiniaceae
   Local name - Kachnar
   Uses - Root decoction is administered for reducing corpulence.

   Family - Bombacaceae
   Local name - Samel
   Uses - For the treatment of sexual debility, root powder is given with milk for 7 days in the morning. Treatment is repeated twice every alternate month.

    Family - Menispermaceae
    Local name - Padh, Jaljamini
    Uses - Root paste is applied locally in skin diseases. Root paste mixed with black pepper (Kali mirch) powder is given thrice a day for 5 days for the treatment of malaria.

11. Plant name - *Citrullus colocynthis* Schrad
    Family - Cucurbitaceae
    Local name - Indrayan
    Uses - For internal inflammations, root powder mixed with castor oil is given for 3 days.

    Family - Papilionaceae
    Local name - Gokarni
    Uses - Root juice is given in chronic bronchitis to help expectoration.
13. Plant name - *Curcuma domestica* Val.
   Family - Zingiberaceae
   Local name - Haldi
   Uses - For cold, milk boiled with turmeric and sugar is given. For catarrhal cough, fresh rhizome and Dhania (Coriandrum sativum) decoction is given thrice a day.

14. Plant name - *Cynodon dactylon* (Linn.) Pers
   Family - Gramineae
   Local name - doob ghas
   Uses - Paste prepared from equal quantities of fresh Doob roots and Kans (Saccharum spontaneum) is given with cow milk and sugar early in the morning for one month to cure leucorrhoea.

15. Plant name - *Cyperus rotundus* Linn.
   Family - Cyperaceae
   Local name - Motha
   Uses - Scraped roots with ginger and honey are given in gastric & intestinal disorders. For the treatment of malaria, decoction of equal quantities of moth rhizome, Gloe (Tinospora cordifolia) stem pieces and dried ginger is given thrice daily for 4-6 days.

   Family - Gramineae
   Local name - Dhab
   Uses - The root infusion is usually given in jaundice and urinary troubles twice daily till cure.

17. Plant name - *Ficus religiosa* Linn.
   Family - Moraceae
   Local name - Pipal
   Uses - Adventitious root of pipal mixed with sugar is given with fresh water in case of chicken pox once a daily for 7-8 days continuously.

18. Plant name - *Gloriosa superba* Linn. (Linn.)
   Family - Liliaceae
   Local name - Kalihari
   Uses - Decoction of Kalihari root stock in sesame oil is filtered and applied twice a day followed by massage on joints having pain continued for one month.

   Family - Tiliaceae
   Local name - Phalsa
   Uses - Root paste is applied on the back before going to bed in case of backache.

20. Plant name - *Hemidesmus indicus* Linn.
   Family - Asclepiadaceae
   Local name - Gurmar
   Uses - Root paste is used in swellings twice a day. Root decoction is used thrice a day for one month as a blood purifier and in skin diseases.

   Family - Sapotaceae
   Local name - Mahua
   Uses - Root paste in Madua liquor is given at bed time for 3-5 days continuously to expel intestinal worms.
   Family - Mimosaceae
   Local name - Chui-mui
   Uses - Root powder with crystalline sugar for three days is given after menstruation to stop conception.

   Family - Nyctaginaceae
   Local name - Gulabans
   Uses - Root poultice is applied over carbuncles, contusions and wounds.

   Family - Cucurbitaceae
   Local name - Karela
   Uses - Root paste is applied over piles.

   Family - Moraceae
   Local name - Toot
   Uses - Tea made from root is used twice a day for 5-7 days to treat diarrhoea.

   Family - Musaceae
   Local name - Kela
   Uses - Saffron (Crocus sativus) stamens mixed with banana roots is given once in the morning to cure even most complicated case of typhoid.

27. Plant name - *Nerium indicum* Mill.
   Family - Apocynaceae
   Local name - Kaner
   Uses - Kaner (white flowers) roots ground and fried in ghee is applied externally on the ear of patient to cure inflammation.

   Family - Lamiaceae
   Local name - Tulsi
   Uses - Root decoction is given in malarial fevers; fresh root paste is applied to bites of insects and leeches.

29. Plant name - *Plumbago zeylanica* Linn.
   Family - Plumbaginaceae
   Local name - Chitra
   Uses - Chitra roots are crushed and boiled in mustard oil is filtered and kept in a bottle. It is applied (3-4 drops) in the ear for pain, bleeding and itching twice a day.

   Family - Cruciferae
   Local name - Muli
   Uses - Fresh root juice is given in 1-2 gm doses in urinary troubles and syphilis
   Family - Apocynaceae
   Local name - Sarpgandha
   Uses - In case of mental depression, root powder is given twice a day for 2 days.

32. Plant name - *Sida cordifolia Linn.*
   Family - Malvaceae
   Local name - Kharaiti
   Uses - Root extract is given once a day for 3 days and repeated twice every week in case of constipation.

33. Plant name - *Solanum virginiatum Linn.*
   Family - Solanaceae
   Local name - Berkateli
   Uses - Fresh root extract mixed with equal quantity of lemon juice is applied daily for one month as a preventive measure against cataract.

34. Plant name - *Tephrosia purpurea (Linn.) Pers*
   Family - Papilionaceae
   Local name - Jungli-mathar
   Uses - In fever and vomiting, root paste made with water and ginger is given with honey thrice a day for 3-4 days.

35. Plant name - *Tianthema portulacastrum Linn.*
   Family - Aizoaceae
   Local name - Santh
   Uses - In case of ascites, root and black pepper paste is given twice daily for 8 days. During the treatment, no salt should be used.

36. Plant name - *Urena lobata Linn.*
   Family - Malvaceae
   Local name - Vilayti san
   Uses - Root decoction is used as a remedy in severe windy colic.

37. Plant name - *Verbena officinalis Linn.*
   Family - Verbenaceae
   Local name - Peelagulabiphool
   Uses - Root paste is used as an antidote to snakebite.

38. Plant name - *Withania somnifera (Linn.) Dunal.*
   Family - Solanaceae
   Local name - Aswagandha
   Uses - Root powder is given with goat milk for about 2 months to cure arthritis especially of early stage. During the treatment, use of rice is avoided.

   Family - Zingiberaceae
   Local name - Ginger
   Uses - tea is usually given in colds and influenza. Ginger fresh rhizome juice with honey is a domestic remedy for coughs and asthma. In case of common fever during pregnancy, dried rhizome is pounded and given orally with goat's milk twice daily for 4-5 days.
Results and discussion

In the study, roots of 39 medicinal plant species belonging to 39 genera and 28 families were found to be useful to cure various diseases or ailments. The plants are enumerated with their family, local name and uses.

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