

FOLK RECIPES OF SOME MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE INHABITANTS OF SOON VALLEY KHUSHAB (PAKISTAN)

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants possess active chemical constituents in any of their part. These produce a definite curing physiological response in the treatment of various ailments in human and other animals. The aim of this study was to collect the information about how the local people used the plants of their area to cure a wide variety of ailments in human and livestock. Extensive surveys were carried out during the field work; interviews were conducted with the local inhabitants, the herbalists 'Hakims' (local physicians). About fifty informants were interviewed on random basis. The ethno botanical data obtained was checked and compared with the exiting literature and was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In total 60 species of plants belonging to 34 families were recorded as used medicinally for preparation of folk recipes of 87 ailments. During the field study, it was found that the indigenous knowledge related to medicinal uses comes from women age between 30-50 years, whereas the folk medicinal uses comes from men. This survey indicated that 72 % source of indigenous knowledge related to the medicinal use of plants comes from people between age of 50 years, while 28 % of it comes from people between age 30 and 50 years. The survey also indicated that men especially old one's are more informative of folk knowledge of medicinal plants than women in the area. It was also indicated that about 60 % of the home made drugs were used by people above the age of 50 years, 30 % by children below age of 15 years especially infants. While remaining 10 % of the traditional medicines of plant origin were utilized by people between ages of 15 to 50 years. In conclusion it is necessary to point out that what remain of folk uses of medicinal plants survives and still plays a role in public health of the study area must be preserved and documented.

Keywords: Folk Recipes of medicinal plants.

INTRODUCTION

Soon Valley is a fascinating land of people, language and culture. The culture of this area resembles to that of the adjacent area of Punjab. The area has both cultures, rural and urban. The people of Soon valley are poor and the area is highly under developed. Local people are primarily farmers or tenants. They also rear livestock. The area, particularly, the foothills and plains, has an agricultural economy mainly dependent on rainfall. Some people collect medicinal plants and morels and sell it in local markets, thus earning their livelihood. Soon Valley, from the ethno botanical point of view, is one of the least investigated areas of the Soon Valley with exception of a few contributions made by Ishtiaq (2001), Khan et al. (1985) and Sadique (1991). Soon valley is bestowed with a unique biodiversity, comprising of different climatic zones and wide range of plant species.

There is pressing need for documentation of this precious knowledge of local informants.

The present study was conducted keeping in view the following objectives.

1. To compile the inventory of the folk recipes of medicinal plants.
2. To obtain information about the use of local herbs by the inhabitants of the area for the treatment of various disease.
3. Documentation of the precious knowledge about the use of medicinal plants by the elderly people of the area.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research was conducted in several areas such as Khabaki, Uchali, Sodi, jaywali, Knotty Garden and Deap Sharif For data collection, 35 informants, mostly 40 and above (age) and native to the area mainly farmers, shepherds and housewives were interviewed. After having collected the species, the lists were prepared and then identified according to the nomenclature of Flora of West Pakistan by Stewart (1972). The voucher specimens were submitted to Herbarium of University of Sargodha, Sargodha (UOS).

The methods included three stages,

Field Work: The field work was based on observations, interviews and guided field trips. Two methods for collecting information were used during the field work

Observations: The observations were made in the upland during herbal growth of the plants species, which were collected, dried and identified. Harvesting time, processing and their utilization were recorded. All the plants were collected during their flowering season.

Interviews: Extensive surveys were carried out during the field work; interviews were conducted with the local inhabitants, the herbalists, 'Hakims' (local physicians). About 35 informants were interviewed on random basis. Three questionnaires were used during the survey for information about the plant resources, quantities used, rate of consumption, availability and percentage of plants species found and their utilization by the people.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the table 1, out of 60 species belonging to 34 families, only 14 were listed. Family, botanical and vernacular name, part of the plant used, voucher number and respective manipulations are reported.

Some important medicinal plants were collected and used in the area are *Achyranthes aspera* L., *Tribulus Terrestris*, *Brassica campestris* L., *Cannabis sativa* L., *Convolvulus arvensis* L., *Solanum nigrum*, *Justicia adhatoda* L., *Phyllanthus Amblica*, *Peganum harmala*, *Withania somnifera* (L.), *Amaranthus viridis*, *Malvastrum coromandelianum*, *Taraxacum officinale*, *Euphorbia albomarginata*.

A total of 40 diseases were reported by the traditional medicine practitioners of the study area. The numbers of medicinal plant species used were given in the

The uses of the recorded species relate to minor ailments mainly those of the urinary tract infection (UTI) and kidney stone (13 species), diarrhoea (12 species), respiratory disorder (10 species), Asthma (9 species) and rheumatic (6 species).

A survey was conducted in order to see the source of indigenous knowledge about medical uses of plants in the research area. The data revealed that 72% of folk medicinal knowledge comes from people above the age of 50 years while 28% of it comes from people between ages of 30 and 50.

The local people employed several methods in order to prepare medicines from these plants. However, aqueous extract (28 species,

46.67%) followed by powdering (14 species, 23.33%) and decoction (09 species, 15%) were the most frequently used methods of medicine preparation.

Medicinal plants are used by humans for curing different ailments in almost all parts of the world. The trends of its usage have drastically decreased with the introduction of allopathic drugs but still they

provide bulk of medicine in developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Medicinal plants play an important role as it, not only provide crude drugs for curing different ailments but also support the weaker economy of the area. During the present study, frequently used recipes were documented. Some important folk recipes used in Soon valley are listed.

Table 2: Shows some important folk recipes used in Soon valley

1	Achyranthes aspera L.	The extract of root and stem is mixed with juice of onion bulbs and is used on snake bite.
2	Tribulus Terrestris	The aqueous extract of the fronds is given thrice a day for three days in snake bite. It is also used as antihelmintic and vermifuge .
3	Brassica campestris L.	Aqueous extract is used to cure urinary tract infection and also given for the release of kidney stone. The 20ml. of decoction is advised twice a day for 3 or 4 days to control the disorder of menstruation in females. It is also an active febrifuge.
4	Cannabis sativa L.	Aqueous extract of the plant is mixed with wheat flour and sugar and cooked in desi ghee and given for the treatment of abdominal pain. Curry is prepared by roots and the stem of plant, a cup of it is advised thrice a day for the treatment of backache. Aqueous extract of the root is given for the release of kidney stone. It is also used as tonic and febrifuge.
5	Convolvulus arvensis L.	The powder (5g.) of the dry rhizome along with 20 black pepper is taken thrice a day as antipruritic and blood purifier. It is used as carminative agent. The powder (5g) is taken for treatment of toxemia and many diseases of children.
6	Solanum nigrum	The aqueous extract (20ml) of the fresh leaves and the stem of the plant is given twice a day as antipruritic. It is used as blood purifier and cooling agent. The fresh plant is given to animals as a treatment of diarrhea .
7	Justicia adhatoda L.	The aqueous extract of the roots (50ml) is takes twice a day to recover from rheumatism. It is also used as aphrodisiac and for the treatment of sexual disability. The rhizome powder is taken to recover from general weakness.
8	Phyllanthus Amblica	Folk Medicinal Recipes: The dry leaves (5grams) along with tobacco are smoked for three or five days to cure cough and cold. The fumes of fresh leaves are respired for release of mucus from the respiratory tract in lung infection.
9	Peganum harmala	The aqueous extract of roots (100ml) is taken orally, twice a day for two to three days to recover from general weakness due to prolonged illness. The powder of the dry bark of the root is taken with milk as aphrodisiac.
10	Withania somnifera (L.)	The aqueous extract of the roots is given to the children suffering from weakness and stunted growth. The drug is taken once in a morning for twenty one days. The drug is believed to cure the weakness and make the children more energetic.
11	Amaranthus viridis	Folk Medicinal Recipes: The aqueous extract of roots (5ml) given thrice a day for treatment of pneumonia in children.
12	Malvastrum coromandelianum	The dried rhizomes are used for making tea. It is used as tonic and relief of muscular pain. The powder of rhizome is used to cure fever and diarrhea.
13	Taraxacum officinale	The bark and leaves are crushed and converted into paste. This paste is used as poultice for tumor and swellings. An ointment of the bark of stem and root is used to promote discharge from indolent ulcers, and it is also used for snake and other venomous bites. It is taken internally for chronic rheumatism. The tincture is used to ease neuralgic pain and toothache.
14	Euphorbia albomarginata	The dried leaves are smoked to remove irritation of the mucous membrane, the cough associated with bronchitis, asthma, whooping and spasmodic coughs in general. It can also be good for diarrhoea, inflammation of the urinary system. After placing bruised mullein leaves in olive oil and leaving it for a period, the oil can be used for relieving pain of earache.

v) Majority of the world population currently depends on tradition medicine for their primary health and needs.

Table 3: Methods of traditional medicine preparation

Method of preparation	Number of species	Percent
Aqueous extract	28	46.67
Powdering	14	23.33
Decoction	09	15
Poultice	03	05
Smoking	03	05
Mixture	02	3.33
Pasting	01	1.67
Ointment	01	1.67
Ashing	01	1.67

Table 2: Common disease and number of medicinal plant species to treat disease

Disease	Number of Plant species used
Urinary tract infection and kidney stone	13
Diarrhoea	12
Cough	10
Asthema	09
Abdominal worm	07
Sexual disorder	07
Snake bite	06
Rheumatism	06
Liver and stomach disorder	06
Blood disorder	06
General weakness	06
Pneumonia	05
Gout	04
Skin disease	04
Dyspepsia	04
Insect bite	04
Eye disease	04
Backache	04
Poils	03
Toothache	03
Sunstroke	03
Leucorrhoea	02
Vomiting due to pregnancy	02
Bronchitis	02
Earache	02
Constipation	02
Toxemia	02
Cancer	02
Tuberculosis	02
Jaundice	02

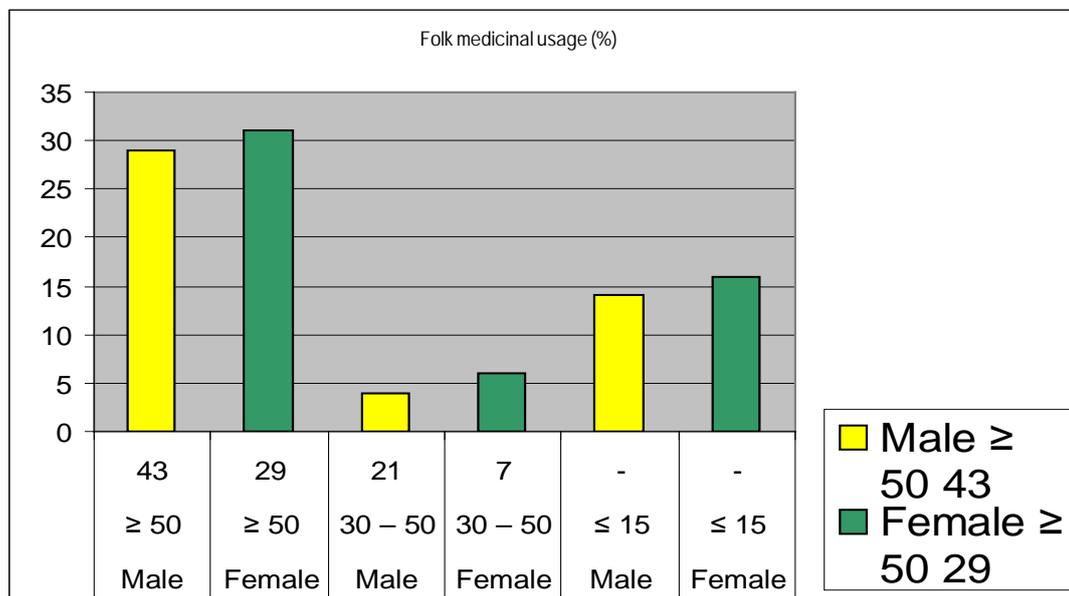


Fig. 1: Gender and age wise distribution of folk medicinal knowledge and its utility in Soon valley

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is necessary to point out that what remains of folk uses of medicinal plants survives and still plays a role in public health of the study area must be preserved and documented.

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