

FOLK LORE USES OF AN ENDANGERED ETHNOMEDICINAL HERB OF INDIA *SARCOSTEMMA ACIDUM*.

(SOMLATA)

Gupta Shailesh^{1*} and Kohli Seema²

1, Suresh Gyan Vihar University, Jaipur, Rajasthan-India

2, Department of Pharmacy, Kala Nikaten Polytechnic College, Jabalpur, (M.P.)-India

ABSTRACT

Herbal medicines are in great demand in both developed and the developing countries in primary healthcare because of their great efficacy and little or no side effects. These traditional systems of medicine together with homoeopathy and folklore medicine continue to play a significant role largely in the health care system of the population. The tribals and rural population of India are highly dependent on medicinal plant therapy for meeting their health care needs. This attracted the attention of several botanist and plant scientists of several medicinal plants and there was a spurt of scientific literature. Somlata (*Sarcostemma acidum*) belonging to the family Asclepiadacea grown in India, Europe and US is an underutilized crop. The herb is highly used by the rural and tribal people in curing various disorders. The present paper enumerates various traditional and ethnomedicinal utility of the plant for this survey was done in center region of Madhya Pradesh of India, which are based on well designed open ended questions tool. And it was concluded from the present work that somlata herb were used in various diseases such as asthma, swelling, fever and cold, dipsia, inflammatory infection and gastric problem etc.

KEY WORDS: Somlata, traditional and folk remedies, ailments

*** Corresponding Author**

E.mai-shailgpharma@gmail.com

Mob. +919893392221

INTRODUCTION

Plants are living and irreparable resources that is exhaustible if over used and sustainable if used with care and wisdom. The importance of medicinal plants has been overlooked in the past. However, at present medicinal plants are looked upon not only as a source of health care but also as a source of income. Due to over population, ecological imbalance, deforestation, greedy traders etc. medicinal plant wealth of our country is threatened and it require urgent conservation before it become extinct

Somavalli or Somlata (*Sarcostemma acidum* Wight. & Arn.) belonging to the family Asclepiadacea found wildly in India, Pakistan, Europe etc. It is distributed in various parts of India. It is found in dry rocky places in Bihar, Bengal, Konkan, Deccan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. It is a perennial leafless, jointed trailing shrub with green, cylindrical, fleshy glabrous, twining branches having milk white latex, leaves reduced to scales, opposite, flowers white or pale greenish white, fragrant, in umbels on branch extremities, fruits follicles, tapering at both ends, seeds flat, ovate, comose. The plant is bitter, acrid, cooling, alternate, narcotic, emetic, antiviral and rejuvenating. Whole part of the plant is used in vitiated condition of pith, dipsia, viral infection, hydrophobia, psychopathy and general debility. It is traditionally used to reduce vitiations of pitta in the treatment of psychosis, depression and fatigue. According to folklore the whole part of the plant is used in the treatment of asthama.¹⁻² The plant is used by the various tribal communities of India in the treatment of various disease and disorders³⁻⁴, keeping this view the present work was conceived to explore the folk lore and traditional uses of this plant.

METHODOLOGY

The present work was carried out in three center regions of Madhya Pradesh India viz., Mandla, Bhopal and Malwa region during January- 2010 to December-2010. Extensive survey (as per method adopted by Dwivedi et. al 2007) was made by the author in order to find out the ethnomedicinal and folk lore uses of the plant from the local informants selected (rural people, tribal people, , hakim, ayurvedic doctors, tradional therapist)⁵⁻⁷. The present investigation was carried out by well designed questioner as suggested⁸⁻⁹ and validated by Dr. S. N. Dwivedi, Head & Principal Investigator, Department of Botany, Janata College, A.P.S. University, vaidhyas

M.P.-India for identification of plant. The survey was based on open ended questions. The questioner tool was well discussed with tribal and other people in their local language.

OBSERVATIONS

Table 1. Observation of questioner tool for *Sarcostemma acidum* W. & A. from selected study sites of India

Tools of investigation (Questioner)	Inferences							
	Tribal People	Rurul People	Village Farmers	Vaidhyas	Hakim	Ayurvedic Doctors	Traditional Therapist	Botanist
LN	Soma	Somavalli	Somlata	Somavalli	Soma	Somavalli	Somlata	Somavalli
PU	Whole plant Root	Whole plant	Whole plant	Whole plant Root	Whole plant Root	Whole plant	Whole plant	Whole plant Roots
D	Asthma, Swelling	Cold, Asthma	Swelling, Gastric problems	Rejuvenating, Asthma	Fever , Cold Asthma	Dipsia, Asthma	Asthma, Gastric problems	Inflammatory Infection, Asthma
MOP	The plant was crushed and made infusion with the water.	The whole part of plant juice given to children to relief from	Thick paste prepared in water applied to the selling area	Juice of whole plant with other herbal medicine was taken orally	Whole part crushed and made to powdered given with water	Powder part is given with cow milk or Luke water	Powdered part given empty stomach to get relief from gastric problem	Thick Paste of plant is applied in the swelling area to prevent the inflammation

		cold.						
FD	BD for 2-3 months	BD, when required	TID to the infected area	OD, Regularly 1-2 month when weakness observed	OD when required	OD before sleeping after food for one months	OD empty stomach for 1-2 months	BD applied to the swelling area
SS	E	V	V	CE	CE	E	E	E

Abbr. I=Informants, LN= Local Name, PU= Part Used, SS=Status of species, D=Disease, MOP=Method of preparation, FD=Frequency of administration of medicine, OD=Once in a day, BD=twice in a day, TID=thrice in a day, E=Endangered, V=Vulnerable, CE=Critical Endangered

Table 2. Results of questioner for *Sarcostemma acidum* W. & A. from selected study sites of India

S/No.	Uses	Method of preparation
1.	Asthma	The plant was crushed and made infusion with the water and taken twice a day.
2.	Cold	The whole part of plant juice given to children to relief from cold.
3.	Inflammatory	Thick Paste of plant is applied in the swelling area.
4.	Rejuvenating	Juice of whole plant with other herbal medicine was taken orally regularly 1-2

		month when weakness observed.
5.	Dipsia	Powder part is given twice a day with cow milk or Luke water

Status & Conservation¹⁰⁻¹¹

Status: Endangered

Conservation: In-situ and Ex-situ Conservation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Herbs are the natural drugs used to regain the alterations made in normal physiological system by foreign organisms or by any malfunctioning of the body. In every ethnic group there exists a traditional health care system, which is culturally patterned. In rural communities, health care seems to be the first and foremost line of defense. The WHO has already recognized the contribution of traditional health care in tribal communities. It is very essential to have a proper documentation of medicinal plants and to know their potential for the improvement of health and hygiene through an eco friendly system. Thus importance should be given to the potentiality of ethnomedicinal studies as these can provide a very effective strategy for the discovery of useful medicinally active identity. A detailed and systematic study is required for identification, cataloguing and documentation of plants, which may provide a meaningful way for the promotion of the traditional knowledge of the herbal medicinal plants. The present review reveals that the herb Somlata is used in treating various ailments. It elicits on all the aspects of the herb and throws the attention to set the mind of the researchers to carry out the work for developing its various formulations, which can ultimately be beneficial for the human beings as well as animals.

During the course of present investigation a well documented survey with the approved questioner viz., informants, local name, part used, status of species, disease, method of preparation and frequency of administration of medicine, was designed to explore the folk

lore of the herb. It was concluded from present work that the herb is locally known as soma, somlata, somavalli and root and whole plant were used in the treatment of various diseases such as asthma, swelling, fever and cold, dipsia, inflammatory infection, gastric problems and as rejuvenating by the various informants selected in different doses and duration along with specific method of preparation of the medicine (Table 1&2). Further the status of the species was also recorded which conclude that the species is endangered in almost all the survey sites, though at some cases it was found that the species is in the verge of extinction, so there is urgent need of conservation. Hence, it was concluded from the present wok that the selected species of *Sarcosteema* is very useful in the treatment of certain kind of disease and various ex and in-situ conservation strategies may be adopted to prevent the species from extinction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are highly thankful to Principal. Kala Nikaten Polytechnic College, Jabalpur, M.P.-India, Dean Research Department, SGVU, Jaipur, RJ-India and Modern Laboratories, Indore, M.P.-India for providing necessary facilities. Sincerely thanks to Dr. S.N. Dwivedi, Principal Investigator, Department of Botany, Janata College, A.P.S. University, M.P.-India for identification of plant.

REFERENCES

1. Anonymous 2000. *The useful plants of india*, PID, CSIR, New Delhi.
2. Chopra RN, Chopra IC, Handa KL, Kapoor LD, Chopra's Indigenous drug of India, U.N. Dhar & Sons Pvt. Ltd. Calcuta, 2nd ed. 1958.
3. Dwivedi S.N. 2003. Ethnobotanical studies and conservation strategies of wild and natural resources of Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.* **27(1)**: 233-244
4. Khare C.P. 2004. Encyclopedia of Indian medicinal plants, Springes-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, New York
5. Dwivedi Sumeet (2009). Status survey of medicinal plants wealth of Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh with special reference to conservation of vulnerable and endangered species, *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.*, **33(2)**: 443-452.
6. Sikarwar R.L.S. 2002. Ethnogyneological uses of plants new to india, *Ethnobotany*, **14**:112-115

7. Sinha R.K. 1998. Tools of investigation. In *Ethnobotany: The Renaissance of traditional herbal medicine*. INA Shree Publication. Jaipur 194-202.
8. Dwivedi, S.N. (2003). Ethnobotanical studies and conservation strategies of wild and natural resources of Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh, *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.*, **27(1)**: 233-244.
9. Varghese E. SVD (1996). *Applied Ethnobotany- A case study among the Kharias of Central India*”, Deep Publications, New Delhi.
10. Mc. Neel J.A., Miller K.R., Reio W.V., Mittermeier R.A., Werner T.B., 1990. *Conserving the world biological diversity*. Global Biodiversity, IUCN, Switzerland
11. Phillips O., Gentry A.H., Reynal H., Wilkin P., Gulvez-Durand C.B., 1994. Quantitative ethnobotany & Amazonian conservation, *Conser. Biol.* **8**: 225-248