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SOME ETHNO-ETHNIC PLANTS OF RAJASTHAN STATE: A SPECIFIC STUDY (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRATAPGARH TEHSIL)

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ABSTRACT:

Ethno botany is the study of a particular region's plants and their practical uses through the traditional knowledge of a local culture and people. "Ethno" means study of people and "botany" stands for study of plants. It is the study of interdependence between humans and plants. It involves the indigenous knowledge of plants' classification, cultivation and use as food medicine and shelter.

Scope of ethno botany is increasing day by day in both developing and developed countries. National and international market of herbal products are growing rapidly. We cannot even think about progress unless we use our national heritage with efficiency and effectiveness.

The focus of Ethno botany is on how plants have been or are used for food, fodder, fuel, medicine, intoxication, cosmetics, dyeing, rituals, agriculture and social life implements etc.

Through ethno botany we can study a great diversity of practical aspects of everyday life. The rich biodiversity and related home-grown knowledge for their sustainable use more intelligi ble and accessible to people is the need of the hour.

Pratapgarh is a renowned ecotourism destination because of its location between the Aravali Hills and the Malwa Plateau. The city is surrounded by many tribal villages. Plants and their products are very important for the tribal life of this region. The rural community uses these ethnoplants as drug along with modern medicines. The study tells that rural community of the area prefer to use herbal drugs for many diagnostic purposes either the whole plant or different parts.

KEYWORDS:

ETHNO BOTANY, ETHNO PLANTS, INTERDEPENDENCE, CULTIVATION, BIODIVERSITY, ECOTOURISM, TRIBAL COMMUNITY

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INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan is a state in northern India. It covers 342,239 square kilometres or 10.4 per cent of India's total geographical area. It is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. It is on India's northwestern side, where it comprises most of the wide and inhospitable Thar Desert.

Pratapgarh is situated in the southeastern part of Rajasthan in Chittorgarh district. The district situated in the junction of the Aravali mountain ranges and the Malwa Plateau area, these geographical area adjoins Udaipur and Chittorgarh districts of Rajasthan and Mandsaur of Madhya Pradesh; hence the characteristics of both prominently feature was noticed in this area. Pratapgarh is located at 24.03° N latitudes and 74.78° E longitudes.

In the principality era, Pratapgarh was known as Kanthal Nagri. Its present name is after Maharawat Pratap Singh (1673-1708) who is credited to have built the city. Post-independence, the princely state of Pratapgarh joined the Rajasthan Union in 1948.

Pratapgarh remained as an independent district between 1948 and 1952, however, due to the reconstitution of district boundaries, it later became part of the Nimbahera district and then of Chittorgarh. Present-day Pratapgarh district came into existence on 26th January 2008 as the 33 district of Rajasthan. The district was formed by combining 5 blocks from 3 different districts Arnod, Pratapgarh and Chhoti Sadri from Chittorgarh, Dhariawad from Udaipur and Peepalkhoont from Banswara. These 5 continue to be the blocks / tehsils of Pratapgarh till date.

Pratapgarh has 1.29 percent of Rajasthan's total area, which is 4449 sq.km. The district ranks 32" in terms of population and 30th in terms of area among all districts of the state.

About 12.44% of the population belongs to tribes such as

the Bhil, Bhil-Meena, Patelia, Garasia, Damor, Dhanka, Kathodi, Kolidhar, Kokna reside in remote areas devoid of basic infrastructure facilities. Majority of the tribal population fall below poverty line and are the main dwellers of these forests. The surrounding environment of these people are an integral part of their lifestyle and culture. Knowledge of the medicinal plants as well as cultural system gets passed on from generation to generation through oral talk or folk songs.

A SPECIFIC STUDY OF SOME ETHNO-ETHNIC PLANTS

Plant based drugs have a long history in both traditional and modern societies as herbal remedies or crude drugs, or as purified compounds approved by the Food and Drug Administration and similar regulatory agencies. According to one estimate 20,000 to 35,000 species of plants are used as medicines, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and nutraceuticals by different ethnic groups the world over.

Medicinal plants are the potent source of life saving drugs for the majority of world's population. About 70-80% of people world-wide rely mainly on traditional, largely herbal medicines to meet their primary health care needs and have gained renewed interest for various reasons, affordability, low pricing, little or no side effects, their solutions for chronic diseases and disorders time tested remedies and several preventive approaches.

Due to religious faith of tribals, the people who know about the medicinal properties of plant do not want to give all the information because the medicinal plant is disclosed its medicinal properties will be lost forever. For this reason, the information collection from the tribals is an important task. The peoples who can provide information from one locality, were consulted at other localities. It resulted authentic information about medicinal properties of plants and the information collected during fieldwork were verified at different places through different informants and in different seasons.

There is an urgent need to conserve genetic diversity of medicinal plant resources by developing protocols for micro propagation. Due to extensive utilization of medicinal plants for medicine and scientific research, many of them are facing extinction; therefore it is imperative to adopt alternative methods for rapid multiplication of such plants.

USES OF SOME ETHNO-ETHNIC PLANTS

1. Lepidagathis cristata - Local name of this plant is Aewal Kangio. It is used in fever as a tonic. Ash of the dry plant is employed as on application to sores.

2. Lepidagathis Trinervis - Local name of this plant is Pather-phor. One tea spoonful of the whole plant decoction is given once daily for fortnight and one tea spoonful of root juice or powder is given twice a day for two months to cure piles.

3. Ruellia tuberosa - Sisrangha is the local name of this plant. Leaves and tuberous roots are used in venereal diseases, stimulant in making rice beer. Four tea spoonful of tuberous root decoction is given twice daily for the treatment of gonorrhoea.

4. Adhatoda Vasica- Adusa is its local name. Decoction of leaves along with jaggery and water is kept in an earthen pot for a month by tribals and taken two tea spoonful twice orally. This is highly beneficial in cure of tuberculosis.

5. Barleria prionitis - Local name of this plant is Vajradanti. Leaf decoction is given for the treatment of cough; roots and leaves chewed to relieve toothache and bodyache.

6. Barleria cristata - Janti is its local name.

The decoction of root is very useful in anaemia. The juice of leaves is useful in cough and inflammations.

7. Eranthemum roseum- Local name of this plant is Dasmuli. The decoction of the entire plant is used in urino-genital diseases, malaria, typhoid and leucorrhoea. Decoction of root is very useful in leucorrhoea.

8. Indoneesiella echioides - Jodapatta pattar is its local name. Leaf paste is applied on the affected areas of a skin. This plant is beneficial in skin diseases.

9. Andrographis paniculata- Local name of this plant is Kalmegh. Leaf decoction is used in leucoderma, liver ailments, plam decoction with milk and black salt is given in malaria; traditionally used to cure children suffering from liver and digestion complaints; also used to eradicate worms in children and against excessive gas formation.

10. Elytraria acaulis- Pathar chatta is its local name. Root of the plant crushed with garlic and salt and kept on the affected teeth for curing teeth infections or troubles. Decoction of leaves used for venereal diseases.

CONCLUSION

The information on the ethnomedicinal plants will certainly help in developing strategies for the conservation, cultivation of traditional medicine and economic welfare of rural and tribal population of this region of Rajasthan. The plants and the remedies as recorded here need phytochemical and pharmacological screening for their active principles and clinical trials for therapeutic action.

Magico religious beliefs of tribes are very ancient and are indulged as their customs and rituals. Many of the plants discussed above in the present investigation have common auspicious and inauspicious bearing in other tribal communities. Tribal's on the basis of religious ground and their beliefs of deities both good and evil residing on the trees, have resulted in the preservation of vegetation in the form of sacred groves.

India in the present scenario is very rich in biodiversity. The ethnic people have helped in conservation of bio-diversity. However, efforts for conservation in present scenario have to be made in both vertical as well as horizontal direction due to rapid industrial revolution and urbanization. Conservation of diversity, sustainable management, micropropagation of such valued flora is the need of this century.

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