

Folk remedies against several human disorders by *Eclipta alba* (L.) Mant.

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Abstract

The communication deals with the traditional knowledge of *Eclipta alba* (L.) Mant. used by tribal people of our study area i.e. Mihinpurwa block of tehsil Nanpara of Bahraich, a terai district of U.P. This area is very rich in ethnic as well as floristic diversity. The inhabitants of the area have inherited a rich traditional knowledge of the use of this herbaceous flora for cure and care of various human ailments. Important ethnomedicinal uses of flora, parts utilized, local name and mode of treatment has been included in this paper.

Keywords: *Eclipta alba* (L.) Mant., Ethnic, Herbaceous flora, Tribals

Introduction

Study of ethnobotany in itself is a very intricate or convoluted process. India represents one of the most important center of knowledge with special reference to knowledge of plant species for various ailments, examples are the Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha system of medicinal care. To lesser the burden on both human and environment and to make our mother earth safe for future generations indigenous or inherent technical knowledge should be given more emphasis and prominence. The geological area of Bahraich is 5026.6 Km² and it is located at 27° 04' to 28° 24' N latitude and between 81° 03' to 83° 13' E longitude. The surveyed villages of Mihinpurwa block i.e. Phakeerpur, Aama, Lohari, Sahoni and Baligaon of Nanpara tehsil is having good population of tribal people i.e. mainly "Tharus". These villages are situated near forest and they are original settlers (Jain, 1987). It is also important to quote here that the knowledge of tribals regarding plants has descended from one generation to another, as a domestic practice (Brahmam, 2000).

Materials and Method

The study is based on field survey which was carried during July 2006 to July 2007 of Nishangada forest of Kakraha range of district Bahraich. Out of 50 collected floras, this potent medicinal flora locally called as "Bhangaria" by tribal people was collected. The tribal ladies named as Phool Kumari, Pooja Chaudhary and Man kumari Chaudhary were working as labours in the forest. They informed us about the use of different remedial properties regarding various human disorders. The collected plant were identified correctly with the help of available literature, i.e. Maheswari, 1986; Jain, 1987; Duthie, 1994; Cooke, 1998; Singh *et al.*, 2000 and Joshi, 2000. The herbarium of plant species was prepared scientifically following the method described by Jain and Rao, 1976 and maintained in department for record and reference. A questionnaire was prepared containing the information about the tribal people, their living style, source of income and mode of disease treatment.

Results and Discussion

The study was based on indigenous knowledge of herbaceous flora. The tribal people of the study area told that plant is used for treatment of hair, eye and skin diseases. Fresh juice of leaves is rubbed on head scale for healthy and black hairs. The mixture of Triphala powder and Bhangaria juice is mixed and dried in shade, 1.5 gm of this paste is daily applied on hair in morning for black hairs, it also controls whitening of hairs in young generation which is a frequent problem. The tribal people told that this wild flora is very effective in certain skin problems, fresh juice of leaves is rubbed on burning symptoms of hand and legs. It is also useful in itching and swelling on body. The mixture of 10 gm leaves of bhangaaraia, 10 gm Javasa, 60 gm chiraita and 60 gm sarfoka are made paste in 100 gm of water, it is filtered and mixed with 20 gm honey. This mixture is applied three times in a day for curing eye problems. 10 gm of dried powder of leaves is mixed in 3 gm honey and 3 gm Ghee of cow milk, it is applied in night for 40 days at sleeping time, it cures every problems related to eyes. The present ethnobotanical study provided information regarding *Eclipta alba* (L.) Mant. (Asteraceae). The plant is very commonly growing as wild on moist waste places and near drainage. Stern is herbaceous aerial, erect, cylindrical, branched and light brown in colour. Leaves are opposite, simple, sessile and inflorescence is head or capitulum. Flowers are small and white. It may be mentioned here that the treatment given by these tribal people is found very effective as per their information during field survey.

Hence there is need to raise awareness among the people about the flora and to assist for cultivation of the plant to local people of the area to meet their own need. There is also need for conservation of such flora and also maintenance and assessment of germplasm for future use of researchers. The present study was done through structured questionnaire is consultation with tribal people and has resulted the documentation of ethnomedicinal importance of this herbaceous flora. The studied area has long tradition of using herbal products for health care, hence there is an increasing awareness of significance of ethnic and traditional knowledge in the field of therapeutics.

The indigenous knowledge system of herbal practice is still very rich and available among tribal, rural community of Bahraich, north western terai region of U.P. The establishment of modern medical health centers is in progress in many rural areas and that may gradually change the existing pattern of indigenous knowledge system of healthcare. Hence it is necessary to document the traditional knowledge of useful plant and their therapeutic use before being lost forever the community.

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Plate 1:

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