



Medicinal plant and Traditional healing practices in Chitrakoot, MP, India

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Abstract

The Chitrakoot is located at the border of Madhya- Pradesh and Uttar- Pradesh, has been characterised by rich biodiversity and cultural traditions, which makes it significant area for examining conventional medicine. This research paper enlightens the traditional healing practices and analyses diversity of medicine potent plants utilized by healers for welfare of local rural communities of Chitrakoot. Traditional healing practices are the adaptability of folks that developed after years of experiences and struggle. Various herbal practices, indigenous medicines and key information lost in absence of proper records and documentation. This research explores locally used plant species and their medicinal virtues. The study was conducted through field survey and interview in several village of Chitrakoot. The data were collected from locals, saints of ashrams, ayurveda lab, herbal practitioner and knowledgeable villagers. The vision based on their experiments, innovative thoughts and observation. Documented plants were listed and analysed. 40 plant species have been reported during the research, which helps to cure- inflammation, snake-venom, fever, wound infection, diarrhoea, small pox etc. The folks rely on diverse plant species in Chitrakoot region- *chlorophytum tuberosum*, *Tinospora cardifolia*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Withania somnifera*, *Ocimum sanctum* and so on. Documentation and evaluation of such therapeutic herbal practices will set up the foundation for many clinical researches and sustainable approach toward medical science.

Keywords: Conventional medicine, traditional, healing practices.

Introduction

Chitrakoot the city of pilgrims, hills, rivers and spiritual tradition¹. Chitrakoot area has rich biodiversity, which consist various ecosystem as forest, grassland, swamp, landscapes, Kamadgiri hills, even including aquatic ecosystem- stagnant and running water of river Mandakini, that establish the habitat for broad range of medicinally potent vegetation and animals. The tribes and rural communities co-exist; they make the best use of plant growing round them for multiple purposes, food, fodder, furniture, and medicine¹⁻⁴. Herbal practices are vital part of these community to survive.

It has been stated for years the Chitrakoot is place of folks uneducated, tribal communities but the study proves them wrong. In lack of proper documentation abundance of traditional knowledge stored in such small group of individuals are vanishing day by day and unable to pass the baton of knowledge to next generation. They evolved and invented numerous plant-oriented remedies to cure human health. The utilization of ethnomedicinal wisdom by healers to cure numerous diseases as – honey, ginger and turmeric for cough, cold, fever etc, moreover skin infections such as cuts, wound infection, rashes can be cured by applying pulp of aloe vera, or leaf paste of neem, laburnum^{2,4,5}.

Commonly used medicinal plant in Chitrakoot region are- *chlorophytum tuberosum* (musli), *Withania somnifera*

(ashwagandha), *Trigonella foenum* (methi), *Ocimum sanctum* (tulsi), *Tinospora cardifolia* (guruchi), *Curcuma longa* (haldi), *Azadirachta indica* (neem), *Hibiscus rosa sinensis* (gurhal), *Meduca indica* (mahua) etc^{1,4,5,6}.

These medicinal plant species have been integral part of local communities, not only for remedies to treat but also it demonstrates a connection between mankind, their traditional healthcare methods and rich biodiversity of Chitrakoot¹⁻³.

Methodology

The research sites were identified on the basis of locality of rural communities. Research survey was conducted randomly in several villages for 12 months span (June 2024- May 2025). During survey approx. 500 people were interacted. The importance of traditional healthcare accessed via questioners. Crucial information gathered from reliable sources- locals, healer, Vaidya, saints of ashrams, ayurveda lab, herbal practitioner and knowledgeable villagers of Chitrakoot area^{2,7}. Information was recorded and documented⁷.

Results and Discussion

During survey around 40 plant species were identified utilising as home remedies. Some species were repetitive -Tulsi, Ginger, Giloy, Musil, Neem etc¹.



Figure-1: Bhanga village; Chitrakoot.



Figure-3: *Vitex negundo* L.



Figure-2: *Murraya koenigii* L.



Figure-4: *Agave Americana*.



Figure-5: *Alstonia scholaris*.



Figure-6: *Aloe barbadensis miller*.



Figure-7: *Curcuma longa*.



Figure-8: *Lantana camara L.*

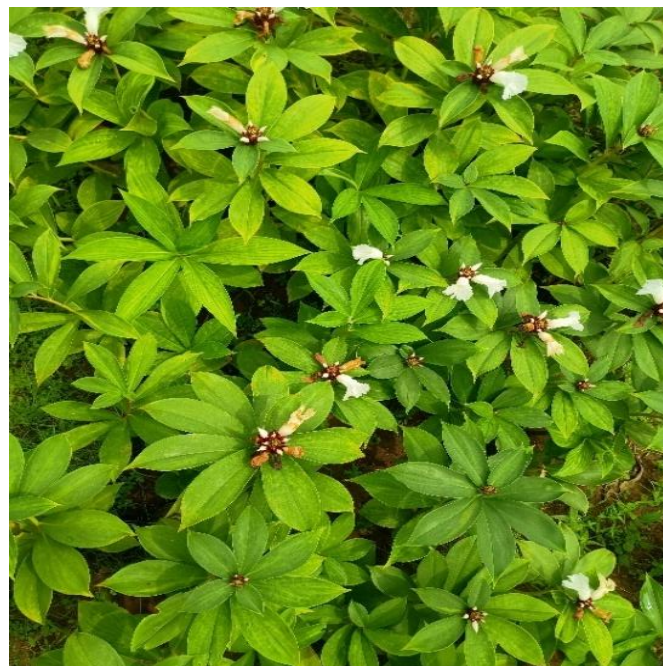


Figure-9: *Zingiber officinale*.

Table-1: Documentation of medicinal plant.

Botanical name	Native name	Family	No. of use reports	Remark
<i>Tinospora cardifolia</i>	Giloy	Menispermaceae	53	Commonly known, multifunction
<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	Tulsi	Lamiaceae	90+	Widely used
<i>Vitex negundo</i>	Nirgundi	Verbenaceae	35	Known to healers
<i>Murrayakoenigii L.</i>	Meethi neem	Rutaceae	29	Medium recognition
<i>Agave americana</i>	Gwarpantha	Agavaceae	26	Used by elders
<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>	Saptarni	Apocynaceae	22	Less common
<i>Achyranthes aspera</i>	Chirchita	Amaranthaceae	31	Commonly known herb
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Neem	Meliaceae	90+	Widely used
<i>Cassia fistula</i>	Amaltash	Caesalpiniaceae	24	Medium recognition
<i>Boerhavia diffusa</i>	Punarnava	Nyctaginaceae	27	Medium recognition
<i>Cassia tora</i>	Chakwand	Leguminosae	16	Low recognition
<i>Withinasomnifera</i>	Ashwagandha	Solanaceae	60	Commonly known
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Haldi	Zingiberaceae	90+	Widely used
<i>Trigonella foenum</i>	Menthi	Fabaceae	73	High traditional value
<i>Hibiscus rosa sinensis</i>	Gurhal	Malvaceae	67	Common around village
<i>Jatropha curcus</i>	Jungaliarandi	Euphorbiaceae	22	Known by healers
<i>Aloe barbadensis miller</i>	Aloe vera	Asphodelaceae	45	Medium recognition
<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Madar	Asclepiadaceae	30	Medium recognition
<i>Meduca indica</i>	Mahua	Sapotaceae	38	Used by elders
<i>Chlorophytum tuberosum</i>	Musli	Asparagaceae	78	Widely used
<i>Aegle mormelos</i>	Bel	Rutaceae	32	Medium recognition
<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Harra	Combretaceae	47	Used by elders
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Bakain	Meliaceae	19	Low recognition
<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	Amla	Euphorbiaceae	33	Used by elders
<i>Butea monosperma</i> ⁵	Palash	Papilionaceae	26	Medium recognition
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Sonth	Zingiberaceae	90+	Widely used
<i>Limonia acidissima L.</i>	kaitha	Rutaceae	29	Common tree
<i>Asperagus racemosus</i>	Satavari	Asparagaceae	30	Used by elders
<i>Agave sisalanaperrine.</i>	Ramkand	Capparaceae	10	Found in forest patches
<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Sahjan	Morangaceae	35	Medium recognition
<i>Citrus limon L.</i>	Lemon	Rutaceae	67	Very Common
<i>Allium sativum</i>	Garlic	Liliaceae	59	Widely used
<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>	Brahmi	Plantaginaceae	23	Known by healers
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Lemongrass	Poaceae	39	Common in some area
<i>Tamarindus indica (L.)</i>	Imli	Fabaceae	62	Very Common
<i>Alium cepa</i>	Onion	Liliaceae	58	Commonly known
<i>Solanum xanthocarpum (L.)</i>	Bhatkataiya	Solanaceae	20	Known to healers
<i>Carica papaya L.</i>	Papita	Caricaceae	55	Commonly known
<i>Lantana camara L.</i>	Gandhati	Verbenaceae	23	Known by healers
<i>Brassica campestris</i>	Mustard	Brassicaceae	48	Common household

Table-2: Disease and healing practices in rural areas.

Disease	Healing Practices
For cough, cold	Chirchita, Giloy, Sonth, Haldi, Amaltash, Tulsi, Ginger, Bhatkataliya, Amla etc
Maternal care ²	Musli, Ginger, Moringa, Garlic, Methi, Sonth, Mustard oil, Bel
Joint pain ⁸	Mustard oil, Turmeric, Ginger, Aloe vera, Madar
Small pox	Madar, Neem, Turmeric, Madar,
Snake poisoning	Jungaliarandi, Nirgundi, Gwarpantha, Ramkand Mahua
Skin issues	Neem, Haldi, Palash, Mahua, amaltash, Lemon Tulsi
Constipation	Haldi, Papita, Harra, Ginger, Flax seed, Methi, Musli, Bel, Lemon, Imli, Giloy
Headaches	Lemon, Gurhal, Tulsi, Ginger, Turmeric, Aloe vera, Amla
Menstrual cramps	Ginger, Gurhal, Haldi, Saunf
Insomnia	Aloe vera, Lemon, Ashwagandha
Toothache	Garlic, Clove, Turmeric, Aloe vera, Chirchita Gwarpantha, Madar, Bhatkataliya
Diarrhoea	Ginger, Pomegranate, Lemongrass, Harra, Bel, Palash, Papita
Low immunity	Musli, Ashwagandha, Gwarpantha, Satavari, Giloy
Mouth ulcers ³	Turmeric, Chirchita, Bhatkataliya
Neurological disorder	Ashwagandha, Brahmi, Tulsi
Cardiovascular disorder	Musli, Garlic, Turmeric, Moringa, Chirchita, Punarnava, Madar, Papita, Amla, Tulsi
Warm infection	Neem, Turmeric, aloe vera, Punarnava, Palash Lemon Tulsi
Fever ⁹	Tulsi, Garlic, Ginger, Giloy, Papita, clove, Ashwagandha, lemongrass tea, Bhatkataliya, Neem, Madar, Bakain
Blood circulation	Turmeric, Garlic, Ginger, Brahmi
Abdominal pain	Ginger, Chirchita, Neem, Papita, Lemon, Turmeric, Imli
Respiratory disorder ¹⁰	Tulsi, Ginger, Saptparni, Garlic Bel, Punarnava, Madar,
Wounds	Turmeric, Neem, Gwarpantha, Papita, Bakain
Inflammation	Ashwagandha, Turmeric, Neem, Musli, Ginger, Nirgundi, Satavari, Punarnava, Madar

Conclusion

The present investigation identifies various medicinal plantas-*curcuma longa*, *Zingiber officinale*, *Chlorophytum tuberosum*, *Meduca indica*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Withinia Somnifera* etc utilized in locals and tribal communities¹⁻¹³. The study concludes that 40 plant species are extensively utilising by local communities for herbal practices in Chitrakoot area.

These 40 individual medicine plants belong to 28 families. Major part of such community still relies on herbal practices for cure of disease like small pox, skin disease, cough, fever, mild diarrhoea etc^{1,2,7,13}. About 80% of the world's population relies mostly on traditional medicines for their primary healthcare, making traditional plant-based medicinal systems crucial to health care¹².

Despite evolution and further development in religious area due to pilgrim attraction and heritage, the reliability on medicinal isn't declining.

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