

Plants Used as Health Booster By the Aborigines of Rajasthan, India

***Dr. Sitaram Khandelwal**

Abstract

The present paper provides the information about the plant species which are used as health booster to increase immunity and strength of body, to keep them healthy and free from diseases by the tribals of Rajasthan. There are 27 plant species belonging to 18 families.

Key Words - Immunity, strength, booster, tribal, body

Introduction

The term "aboriginal botany" means a study of plants, which the aborigines used for medicines, food, textiles, fabrics, ornaments (Powers 1875). The role of ethnobotanists in search of new medicinal plants is very important (Schultes 1962).

Rajasthan is the largest state of India, has an area of 3,42,239 sq. Kilometres stretches between 23° 3' N to 30° 12' N and 69° 30'E to 78° 17' E longitude.

Physio-graphically, it is a land of lofty hills and shifting sand-dunes, of scorching heat and freezing cold, of fertile plain, rugged ravines and dense forests.

The general climatic condition of the region is dry, except a brief duration of rainy season. The average annual rainfall is 686 mm. December to February is cold season, March to June

summer, July to September rainy season and October to November is autumn season. Relative humidity is generally over 60% during the season.

The average maximum and minimum temperatures remain 41° and 25° respectively (Bhalla 1999).

Rajasthan has about 70.97 lac tribal population (fifth rank in India) forming 13.5% of state's total population which is concentrated mainly in nine districts viz. Baran, Banswara, Chittorgarh, Dausa, Dungarpur, Rajsamand, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli and Udaipur. Twelve tribes reside in Rajasthan, of which five are demographically important viz. Bhil, Damor, Garasia, Meena and Saharia. Besides, certain denotified folk communities characteristics to the state are the Baori, Jogi, Kalbelia, Nut, Raibari and Sansi. This tribal population has drawn the attention of ethnobotanists.

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Methodology

The objective of the present study is to document the plant species which are used as health booster by tribal and traditional communities. Regular field surveys were carried in the study area during 2013- 2015 using questionnaire cards. Generally two types of interviews were taken, firstly of individuals and secondly of groups. Total informants were 179, among them female interviewers were 43.21 % while remaining 56.79% were male. Most of them were over 27 years and uneducated.

Before embarking on surveys the localities were carefully selected on the basis of the available information on the areas to be visited and the people to be studied taking aid of maps, divisional forest working plans, floras, icons, literature on the tribes and obviously, discussions with relevant personnel. In surveys besides tribal people and traditional communities, their medicine men and ladies, local *Vaids*, *Bhopas*, *Gotheeyas* etc. were interviewed in the villages of Rajasthan.

The selected informants were field validation (Martin 1995). Collection of plant species was done alongwith informants and later processed following the methods of Jain & Rao (1997). All the plants and their parts were collected and herbarium specimens were prepared, preserved and identified with help of Flora of Indian Desert (Bhandari 1990), Flora of Rajasthan- vol.1-3 (Sheety & Singh 1987-93), Flora of North-East Rajasthan (Sharma & Tiagi 1979) and BSI (Botanical Survey of India), Jodhpur. Specimens were collected and deposited in the herbaria of University of Rajasthan (RUBL), Jaipur.

Enumeration of plants as health booster:

1. ***Achyranthes aspera* L. (Amaranthaceae), Onga, 20016**

Seeds boiled with milk and suga rare eaten.

2. ***Allium sativum* L. (Liliaceae), Lahsun**

The bulblets are fried in ghee and few are taken daily for a month to increase potentiality.

3. ***Aloe vera* (L.) Burm. f. (Liliaceae), Gwarpatha**

The plant pulp is cooked as vegetable, halwa (sweet dish) or made into laddooes (sweet dish).

4. ***Asparagus racemosus* Willd. (Liliaceae), Shatawar, 19978**

Paste of tuberous roots is taken with water or milk as growth tonic. Extract of fresh root is mixed with sugar and 4-8 ml is taken daily as a good health tonic. Flowers are cooked as vegetable and eaten.

5. ***Bombax ceiba* L. (Bombacaceae), Semal, 19985**

The roots powdered with those of *Chlorophytum*, *Capparis sepiaria* and fruits of *Pedaliium murex* are taken with water.

6. ***Butea monosperma* (Lamk.) Taub. (Fabaceae), Chheela, 19984**

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Gum is powdered with turmeric, dried ginger, seeds of *Tribulus terrestris* and *ammi* and catechu, made into laddoos and eaten for good health.

7. *Capparis sepiaria* L. (Capparidaceae), Jaal, 20002

The root is powdered with that of roots of *Chlorophytum tuberosum*, *Bombax ceiba* and fruits of *Pedaliium murex* and taken with water.

8. *Chlorophytum tuberosum* (Roxb.) Baker (Liliaceae), Dholi moosali

The root is powdered with that of *Capparis sepiaria*, *Bombax ceiba* and fruits of *Pedaliium murex* and taken with water.

9. *Cocculus hirsutus* (L.) Diels. (Menispermaceae), Jal jamani, 19969

Extract of fresh leaves is mixed with water and candy and this jelly is eaten.

10. *Convolvulus microphyllus* (Roth) Siem (Convolvulaceae), Shankpushpi, 19573

Paste of leaf and flower is taken.

11. *Corchorus depressus* (L.) Stocks (Tiliaceae), Ondhphali, 19990

The leaves and seeds are crushed with sugarcandy, mixed with curd and taken.

12. *Curcuma domestica* Vahl (Zingiberaceae),Haldi

Rhizome powdered with, catechu, dried ginger, *Butea* gum, seeds of *ammi* and *Tribulus terrestris* made into laddoos and eaten for good health.

13. *Dactyloctenium aegypticum* (L.) Willd. (Poaceae),Makra ghaas, 20009

Seeds locally called 'Sama' are powdered and 'Halwa' is prepared which is eaten.

14. *Eclipta alba* (L.) Hassk. (Asteraceae), Kala Bhangra, 20084

Decoction of leaves is taken with candy to enhance immunity .

15. *Grewia damine* Gaertn. (Tiliaceae),Chabeni

Root powder is mixed with milk or whey and taken.

16. *Mucuna pruriens* (L.) DC. (Fabaceae), Konch, 20068

The seeds are ground with almond, made into laddoos and eaten.

17. *Nymphaea nauchali* Burm. f. (Solanaceae), Kudaiyan

Seed powder is used to prepare laddoos and eaten.

18. *Ocimum basilicum* L. (Lamiaceae), Tulasi, 19394

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Seeds soaked in the water overnight and eaten empty stomach in the morning.

19. *Ocimum canum* Sims. (Lamiaceae), Nagad bavri, 20053

Crushed seeds are mixed with whey and taken.

20. *Pedaliium murex* L. (Pedaliaceae), Dikhana gokharu, 20020

The fruits are powdered with roots of *Capparis sepiaria*, *Bombax ceiba* and *Chlorophytum* are taken orally with water

21. *Tinospora cordifolia* (Willd.) Miers (Menispermaceae), Giloy, 19561

Decoction or plant juice is taken to improve and increase immunity power.

22. *Trachyspermum ammi* (L.) Sprangue (Apiaceae), Ajwain

Seeds are powdered with turmeric, catechu, dried ginger, seeds of *Tribulus terrestris* and *Butea* gum, made into laddoes and eaten for good health.

23. *Trapa natans* L. (Trapaceae), Singhara

Seed powder is used to prepare laddoes and eaten .

24. *Tribulus terrestris* L. (Zygophyllaceae), Gokharu, 20031

Seed powder is used in preparation of laddoes and eaten. Seeds are powdered with turmeric, catechu, dried ginger, seeds of ammi and *Butea* gum, made into laddoes and eaten for good health.

25. *Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal (Solanaceae), Asagandh, 20034

Extract of root is mixed with sugar and milk and taken.

26. *Zingiber officinale* Rosc. (Zingiberaceae), Adarak

Rhizome powdered with, catechu, turmeric, *Butea* gum, seeds of ammi and *Tribulus terrestris* made into laddoes and eaten for good health.

27. *Ziziphus nummularia* (Burm. f.) Wight & Arn. (Rhamnaceae), Jhadber, 20038

Shade dried root bark is powdered, filtered, used to prepare laddoes and eaten to strengthen body.

Result and discussion

During survey 27 plant species belonging to 18 families were reported used as health booster by the aboriginals of Rajasthan.

Plant can be used either whole or in part like root, aerial root, stem, bulblets, gum, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, bark and underground part. The above study reveals that seeds are the most commonly used plant part followed by root.

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The most commonly used parts of plants are mainly dried like seeds, root, root bark, rhizome, bulblets, gum, and fruits due to unavailability over the year. Mostly plant or its part is used in powder form.

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