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Ethnomedicinal plants used for curing various skin diseases in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants are commonly used by tribals and local people in Shopian (Jammu and Kashmir) in the treatment of common skin diseases, such as dandruff, hairfall, and dermatitis. Traditional methods of disease treatment using medicinal plant are predominant among rural and tribal communities of Shopian Kashmir. The district Shopian has a rich variety of flora of medicinal plants with tremendous biological properties. Ethnomedicinal survey with respect to the use of local medicinal plants for curing skin problems was carried out during the summer seasons of 2015-2016. The present investigation reveals that 25 ethnomedicinal plants belonging to 21 families are being commonly used in the treatment of a number of skin diseases. An inventory of traditional knowledge about medicinal plants used in skin diseases by local and tribal people as home remedies/folk medicine has been complied (Table 1).

KEY WORDS: Diversity, ethnomedicine, Shopian, skin diseases, tribals

INTRODUCTION

Traditional herbal practitioners play an important role in the health care in developing countries. Global estimates indicate that over 3/4th of the 5 billion population of the world cannot afford the products of western pharmaceutical industry and they have to depend upon the use of traditional medicines, which are mainly obtained from plants (Sharma, 2010). This fact is well complied by the WHO in a written list of medicinal plants list of over twenty thousand species. As a part of the planning to reduce financial crises on developing countries which spend some 40-50% of their total health budget on drugs, WHO currently supports, recommends and helps the inclusion of herbal drugs in national health-care program because such drugs are commonly available with a cheap price within the reach of a common man and as considered to be much safer than the present synthetic drugs (WHO, 2002).

Ethnobotanists and ethnopharmacologists are documenting traditional medical practices and the influence of local remedies in many regions of the world (Mudasir *et al*, 2009). The central goal of many of these initiatives is to revalidate and promote some old ways of curing and to make people conscious that frequent access to herbal medicines is dependent on the existence of these plants and the ecosystems in which they survive. Validating the efficacy of remedies and returning the results of studies to the people who use them directly is essential.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present ethnomedicinal study has been conducted in several localities of Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is situated in the south-west of Kashmir division (Raza *et al*, 1978). The study has been carried out in some villages and far-flung areas of Shopian district. The far-flung areas are inhabited by different ethnic tribes such as Gujjars, Bakerwals, and Paharis which are rich in traditional knowledge (Bhat *et al*, 2012).

Several field trips were undertaken during the spring and summer seasons of the year 2015-2016, with a view to collect plant of medicinal value and to document the indigenous knowledge (Jain, 1967; Croom, 1983). Information regarding the use of medicinal plants was collected from the local people, hakims and tribal people (Gujjer and Bakerwals). Informants were asked questions in their local language. The information about the use of

Table 1: Medicinal plants used for various skin diseases in Shopian Kashmir

S. No.	Botanical name	Family	Local name	Habit	Habitat	Part(s) used	Used for
1	*Aesulus indica* Hook	Hippocastanceae	Handoon	Tree	Road sides	Fruit	Cracked heel, dandruff
2	*Allium cepa* L.	Lilaceae	Gande	Herb	Cultivated	Bulb	Boil, hairfall
3	*Allium sativum* L.	Lilaceae	Rohan	Herb	Cultivated	Cloves	Alopecia areata
4	*Anagalis arvensis* L.	Primulaceae	Teherisaban	Herb	Shady moist places	Aerial part	Pimples
5	*Arisaema jacquemontii* Blume	Araceae	Haputgogej	Herb	Higher altitudes	Bulb	Skin eruption, boil
6	*Brassica campestris* L.	Brassicaceae	Tilgogul	Herb	Cultivated	Seed	Dandruff, hairfall
7	*Borago officinalis* L.	Boraginaceae	Botin	Herb	Dry terrestrial habitat	Leaves, flowers, seeds	Skin rashes
8	*Colchicum luteum* Baker	Lilaceae	Whirkin posh	Herb	Open slopes	Corm	Dandruff
9	*Cuscuta reflexa* Roxb.	Cuscutaceae	Kuklipot	Parasitic	Growing on willow trees	Whole plant	Skin infections, dandruff
10	*Cydonia oblonga* Mill.	Rosaceae	Bomb chont	Tree	Cultivated	Fruit, seed	Chopped skin, itching
11	*Datura stramonium* L.	Solanaceae	Datur	Herb	Waste places	Seed	Boil
12	*Ficus carica* L.	Moraceae	Anjeer	Tree	Cultivated	Fruit	Dermatitis
13	*Juglans regia* L.	Juglandaceae	Doon- kul	Tree	Cultivated	Drupe, root	Grey hair
14	*Lycopus europaeus*	Lamiaceae	Gagermanz	Herb	Moist places	Aerial part	Skin allergy
15	*Oxalis corniculata* L.	Oxalidaceae	Chok-chin	Herb	Cultivated fields	Whole plant, leaves	Skin allergy
16	*Podophyllum hexandrum* Royle.	Podophyllaceae	Wan wangun	Herb	Higher altitudes	Rhizome, fruit/leaves	Boil
17	*Ranunculus sceleratus* L.	Rananculaceae	Good sochal	Herb	Marshy places	Root	Hypercritic dermatitis
18	*Rheum emodi* Wall. Ex. Meissn	Polygonaceae	Pumb-chalan	Herb	Alpine meadow	Rhizome	Boil
19	*Sagittaria sagittifolia* L.	Allismaceae	Kew	Herb	Water courses	Leaves	Skin rashes
20	*Saussurea sacra*	Asteraceae	Zoogpadshah	Herb	Alpine meadow	Whole plant, root	Pimples, achnes, boil
21	*Thymus serpyllum* L.	Lamiaceac	Ardjavind	Herb	Open slopes	Whole plant, flower	Skin rashes
22	*Urtica diocia* L.	Urticaceae	Soi	Herb	Waste lands	Aerial part, leaves, root	Skin infections, dandruff
23	*Vicia faba* L.	Fabaceae	Bagle	Herb	Cultivated	Whole plant	Skin abrasions
24	*Vitis vinifera* L.	Vitaceae	Dush	Climber	Cultivated	Leaves, fruit	Boil
25	*Xanthium strumarium* L.	Asteraceae	Phaghood	Herb	Waste lands	Leaves, root	Boil

plants as medicine and folklore were recorded by personal interviews with tribals (Gujjar and Bakerwals), Paharis, shepherds (chopans), and old experienced villagers under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the ethnomedicinal survey of different inaccessible areas, in Shopian (Jammu and Kashmir), the author found that the local knowledge on medicinal plants abounds and their use is an important link between the dwelling communities and the biodiversity of the district. The use of effective medicinal plant species is, thus strength within this link. However, these plants cannot meet all the health needs but have been confidently used as home remedies. In the present review, 25 species of plants from 21 families have been recorded which are being potentially exploited by the people of Shopian (Jammu and Kashmir) for various skin diseases. The study shows that among the skin diseases, boil, hair fall, allergy, and dermatitis are the major diseases in the villages and far-flung areas of district Shopian of Jammu and Kashmir. The present paper is a brief account of the value of different ethnomedicinal plants used against the diseases by the villagers and tribals of Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir.

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