Survey of ethnomedicinal plants of Lolab valley of Kashmir for skin diseases

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is based on survey work carried out from July 2006 to May 2007. The observations are based on the interviews of Hakims, herdsmen and old people of villages, which revealed informations pertaining to the use of herbal medicines. Twenty plants have been listed in the paper which are commonly used in skin diseases in Lolab valley of Kashmir. Maximum plants belong to family Asteraceae. The report mentions scientific names, vernacular names of the area, part used and method of application.

Key words: Skin disease, folklore, ethno medicine, Lolab valley.

INTRODUCTION

Location

Lolab valley is in north-east of Kashmir in Kupwara district between 34°26' to 34°40'N latitude and 74°13' to 74°32'E longitude. The valley companies of 20 villages, with Sogam village 16Kms. from Kupwara district as its headquarter.

Climate

The region experiences severe cold during winter with temperature sometimes going down to -7°C especially from Dec. to Feb. with moderate temperature during summer. June-August are hottest with temperature going to a maximum of 35°C.

Rainfall and Humidity

The average annual precipitation of the area is about 935mm and the average humidity is 86.3 at 8.30hrs and 66.5 at 15.30hrs.

Culture and Occupation

The population of the area is predominantly rural in character. There are Gujjar and Bakarval communities living on high slopes who are the most expect collectors of medicinal plants.

Agriculture is the primary occupation of the area, followed by horticulture and cattle farming. Paddy, walnut, apple and cereals are the main crops of the region.

During the last few decades enormous work has been carried out on medicinal plants. A compressive list of medicinal plants of east and south east Asia have been reported¹. Use of Cassia alata in treatment of skin diseases have been investigated². From the present Laborary also work on ethno medicinal plants has been reported³⁴. Preliminary photochemistry of some folklore medicinal plants for their antianflammatory activity has also been carried out⁵.
MATERIAL

Methodology

Ethno botanical survey of Lolab valley was carried out from July 2006 to May 2007. A semi-structural questionnaire method was followed to collect Ethno botanical information, regarding the medicinal herbs used by local inhabitant of the area. Information of the various aspects of plants such as, traditional use, collection method, time of collection and part used for collection has gathered from the local people by visiting the study area and through interviews and discussions with local inhabitants, lake Hakims, local physicians and old people of village. Plants were then collected on folklore information. The outcome of the results were rechecked and compared with literature.

Collected plant material was pressed and dried using blotting papers of about 2 weeks at room temperature. The dried material was disinfected using mercuric chlorides and absolute alcohol. After proper identification the plants were fixed on standard size herbarium sheets which contain a slip having field collection information of each plant. Identification was done at Botany Department University of Kashmir and then it was authenticated by the taxonomist as S.S.L. Jain P.G. College, Vidisha (M.P.) India.

The present paper reports twenty plants used in Lolab valley for skin diseases only.

RESULTS

The plants listed below are in alphabetical order based on folklore information of Lolab valley of Kashmir. The scientific names, vernacular names, family, parts used and methods of use are given.

1. *Acetapa Spica* Linn
   
   Family : Ranunculaceae  
   Local name : Mamera  
   Part used : Fruit & root  
   Method of use : The extract of root and leaf is applied against skin eruptions

2. *Adiantum venustum* D.Don
   
   Family : Filiciniae  
   Local name : Geutheer

3. *Adonis aestivalis* linn.
   
   Family : Ranunculaceae  
   Local name : Kakaredade  
   Part used : Root  
   Method of use : The root is dried crushed mixed with oil and small rounded pebbles are produced which are tied on the skin against Ringworms

4. *Abesculus Indica* colber and camb.
   
   Family : Hippocastanaceae  
   Local name : Handoon  
   Part used : Fruit  
   Method of use : The fruit is roasted and used against frostbite

5. *Calendula officinalis* Linn
   
   Family : Asteraceae  
   Local name : Hamesh Bhar  
   Part used : Flowers  
   Method of use : Flowers applied on burns for healing

6. *Datura Starmonium* Linn
   
   Family : Solanaceae  
   Local name : Datur  
   Part used : Leaf  
   Method of use : Leaves applied as antiseptic on boils and sores

7. *Inula recemosa* HK.F
   
   Family : Asteraceae  
   Local name : Poskar  
   Part used : Root  
   Method of use : The roots are dried crushed and mixed with oil and applied on skin against diseases like, Ringworms, eczema & scabies

8. *Jurineas marcocephala* (Royle) Clarke
   
   Family : Asteraceae  
   Local name : Dhooop  
   Part used : Root  
   Method of use : Bruished roots are applied on skin eruptions
9. *Lotus corniculata* Linn  
Family : Paplionaceae  
Local name : Makhan Booti  
Part used : Whole plant  
Method of use : Vegetative part of plant is crushed & mixed with butter and is very useful in skin diseases  

10. *Marrabium vulgare* Linn  
Family : Lamiaceae  
Local name : Gandsoi  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Decoction of leaf is used against skin infections  

11. *Polygonium hydropiper* Linn  
Family : Polygonaceae  
Local name : Marchwangan Gass  
Part used : Root  
Method of use : The sap of root is used to wash skin eruptions  

12. *Rumex orientali* (Boiss) Bernh  
Family : Polygonaceae  
Local name : Abhuj  
Part used : Root  
Method of use : The roots in the form of paste are applied on boils & other skin troubles  

Family : Asteraceae  
Local name : Poskar  
Part used : Root  
Method of use : Water extract of root is used against skin eruptions  

14. *Saxifraga sibirica* Linn  
Family : Saxigragaceae  
Local name : -  
Part used : Whole plant  
Method of use : The whole plants is crushed and the paste obtained is used for preventions of skin eruptions  

15. *Solanum nigrum* Linn  
Family : Solanaceae  
Local name : Kambii  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Extract of leaf used against skin infections  

16. *Sonchus asper* (Done) Sch.  
Family : Asteraceae  
Local name : Dodal  
Part used : Whole plants  
Method of use : Whole plants is powdered and applied to boils  

17. *Taraxacum officinale* weber  
Family : Asteraceae  
Local name : Handh  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Leaf is used as poultice around/fractured area considered as a good binder  

18. *Thymus serpellum* Linn  
Family : Lamiaceae  
Local name : Javind  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Extract of leaf is used as I scalp conditioner for the treatment of dandruff  

19. *Urtica dioica* Linn  
Family : Urticaceae  
Local name : Soi  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Water extract of leaves has antiseptic properties so used in skin diseases  

20. *Verbascum thapus* Linn  
Family : Scropulariaceae  
Local name : -  
Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Poultice of leaves used to cure frostbite  

**DISCUSSIONS**

Lolab valley of Kashmir is entirely rural, poverty stinken and mostly agro pastoral area. Agriculture is the principle occupation followed by horticulture and cattle farming. The present study reports 20 plant species from the area used in skin diseases only. These plants belong to 11 families out of which Asteraceae is predominating with six, genera followed by two genera each from Ranunculaceae, Lamiaceae, Polygonaceae and Solanaceae and the rest six are from Hippocastanacea, Filicinae, Papilionaceae, Saxifragaceae, Scrophulariceae and urticeae representing one genera each. The study showed that plants of this area are not still well exposed.
Ejaz-Ur Rehman from University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan have reported several plant species based on folklore medicinal knowledge. Similar results have been reported from Kaghan valley of Pakistan, where 12 gymnospermic families used in health care and cultural purposes have been mentiond. Phytotherapy of some medicinal plants has also been reported from paravati valley in western Himalays. The results of the present study report for the Ist time in-situ informations collected from the valley of Kashmir.

The detailed phytochemical study of plants pertaining to skin diseases will be published later on.

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