

## 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, herdsman 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 comprises 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 comprehensive list of medicinal plants of east and south east Asia have been reported<sup>1</sup>. Use of *Cassia alata* in treatment of skin diseases have been investigated<sup>2</sup>. From the present Laboratory also work on ethno medicinal plants has been reported<sup>3-4</sup>. Preliminary photochemistry of some folklore medicinal plants for their antianflammatory activity has also been carried out<sup>5</sup>.

## 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, like 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 Spicta* Linn

Family : Ranunculacea  
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 : Filicinae  
Local name : Geutheer

Part used : Leaf  
Method of use : Fresh juice of leaf is applied on skin eruptions

### 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 : Hippcastanceae  
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 heal ding

### 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 : Dhoop  
Part used : Root  
Method of use : Bruished roots are applied on skin eruptions

- 9. *Lotus corniculata* Linn**  
 Family : Papilionaceae  
 Local name : Makhhan 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
- 13. *Saussurea albescens* (DC). sch**  
 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 : Saxifragaceae  
 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 serpyllum* Linn**  
 Family : Lamiaceae  
 Local name : Javind  
 Part used : Leaf  
 Method of use : Extract of leaf is used as 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 : Scrophulariaceae  
 Local name : -  
 Part used : Leaf  
 Method of use : Poultice of leaves used to cure frostbite

## DISCUSSIONS

Lolab valley of Kashmir is entirely rural, poverty stricken 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 Hippocastanaceae, Filicinae, Papilionaceae, Saxifragaceae, Scrophulariaceae and urticaceae representing one genera each. The study showed that plants of this area are not still well exposed.

Ejaz-Ur Rehman<sup>6</sup> 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 mentioned<sup>7</sup>. Phytotherapy of some medicinal plants has also been reported from paravati valley in western Himalays<sup>8</sup>. The results of the present study report for the 1st 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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