UNREPORTED ETHNOMEDICINAL USES OF PLANTS AS APHRODISIAC FROM THE
FOLK-LORES OF UTTAR PRADESH PLAINS, INDIA

K. K. Khanna, V. Mudgal*, G. Shukla** and P. K. Srivastava

Botanical Survey of India, Allahabad

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with unreported medicinal uses of eighteen plant species (belonging to sixteen families) exploited as aphrodisiac among the folk-lore of Uttar Pradesh plains, India. The data are outcome of ethnobotanical survey of more than 300 villages of nine districts viz., Bahraich, Gonda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh, Raebareli, Sidharthanagar and Sultanpur. Local name of plant, part of plant used, mode of drug preparation, administration and doses are given under each species.

INTRODUCTION

Since antiquity man has always been in quest of searching some formulations/herbs in order to rejuvenate the ageing body so that he can have sexual enjoyment for long span in life. In almost all the literature and ethnic groups of folk-lore of the world, there are a number of known formulations which are extensively employed for the purpose. However, a number of such formulations/herbs which are traditionally employed for centuries amongst various ethnic groups have remained secrets amongst them. Although a number of these have been brought to literature and science for proper scientific provings, several of them still remain secrets of folk-lore. While studying the ethnobotany of Uttar Pradesh plains in India, authors recorded some interesting information of plants used as aphrodisiac hitherto unreported in relevant literature (Watt, 1889-1893; Kirtikar and Basu, 1935; Anonymous, 1948-1976; Chopra et al. 1956, 1969; Uphof, 1959; Jain, 1968-1991; Agarwal, 1986; Anonymous, 1986; Caius, 1986; Nayar et al. 1989). The present paper provides such information of eighteen plant species gathered from nine districts of Uttar Pradesh viz., Bahraich, Gonda, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Mirzapur, Pratapgarh, Raebareli, Sidharthanagar and Sultanpur. These information are broadly aphrodisiac, however, in restricted sense, as referred by the tribal and/or rural medicinemen, relate to enhance the sexual desire in man or check the early semen fall during sexual intercourse or check the premature ejaculation due to erotica.

METHODS

Out of nine districts investigated, two districts viz., Bahraich and Gonda harbour a tribe known as Tharu, one district Mirzapur is inhabited by a number of tribes viz., Bayar, Bind, Chero, Dharkar, Gond, Ko1, Musahar, while rest of the districts are inhabited only by a large number of rural population. In all, more than 300 villages were visited and attempt was made to extract the information from knowledgeable persons or medicinemen of the villages through personal communication and influence. Collection of voucher plant specimens and information thereof were made following the method of Jain (1965) and Jain and Rao (1976). All the information have been presented in the paper under the corresponding plant name which have been arranged alphabetically. The data are ordered as follows: botanical name / name of the family / local name / brief description of mode and part of the plant used in medicine alongwith doses / locality of information/ name of collector and collection number (field number) / notes from literature regarding other ethnomedicinal uses of plants in Uttar Pradesh or India. In each collection number the numerical is prefixed by the term

*Presently at Botanical Survey of India, Howrah.
** Presently at Botany Department, University of Allahabad, Allahabad.
AICRPE, BSI (CC) which has not been provided in the text in order to economise the space. All the specimens have been deposited in the herbarium of Botanical Survey of India, Central Circle, Allahabad (BSA).

RESULTS

1. **Abelmoschus esculentus** (L.) Moench (Malvaceae) *Bhindi.*

   About 5 gm root powder is taken with cow milk once a day for 3 weeks. (Raebareli, Kasrawa: *Srivastava* 321).

   The fruits have been reported to act as abortifacient (Tarafdar, 1983).

2. **Acacia leucophloea** (Roxb.) Willd. (Mimosaceae) *Rewnja.*

   About 20 ml of leaf decoction is given once a day with cow milk for a month, (Jalaun, Saidnagar: *Shukla* 841).

   The root has been reported to act as abortifacient (Maheswari and Singh, 1987) while the bark as astringent (Sebastian and Bhandari, 1984) and to treat ulcer. (Apparananthanam and Chelladurai, 1986).


   In Raebareli district, about 5 gm seed powder is given with water once a day for four months while in Mirzapur district, about 10 gm seeds are boiled in one litre of milk till the milk concentrates to 250 ml. It is given in the morning for two months. (Raebareli, Kasrawa and Mirzapur, Rajapur: *Srivastava* 304 and Khanna 1061).

   Although the plant has been reported to have multifarious medicinal properties but from Uttar Pradesh it has been recorded to treat dysentery (Sexena and Vyas, 1983), leucoderma (Gupta, 1981), piles (Singh, 1988), skin diseases, stomachache, toothache (Rajwar, 1983) and as antifertility (Maheshwari et al. 1980, 1981).

4. **Bacopa monnieri** (L.) Pennell, (Scrophulariaceae) *Jalneem.*

   About 10 gm powder of the whole plant is given twice a day with water for a fortnight. (Jalaun, Saidnagar: *Shukla* 842).

   The whole plant has also been described to treat eczema and ringworm (Sexena and Vyas, 1983) and as laxative (Uniyal, 1968).

5. **Clitorea ternatea** L. (Fabaceae) *Aparajita.*

   About 20 gm of root powder is given once a day with cow milk for two weeks. (Jalaun, Saidnagar: *Shulka* 835).

   Sexena and Vyas (1983) have recorded the root of the plant for the treatment of goitre and leprosy.

6. **Convolvulus prostratus** Forssk. (Convolvulaceae) *Safed dudhi.*

   Whole plant is dried and powdered. About 10 gm powder is taken with cow milk for one month (Hamirpur, Raallia: *Srivastava* 994).

7. **Eclipta alba** (L.) Hassk. (Asteraceae) *Bhangra.*

   Leaves and fruits are dried and powdered. About 10 gm powder is taken with cow milk for two months. (Raebareli, Dalmau: *Srivastava* 309).

   The plant has earlier been reported to treat leucoderma, skin diseases (Purohit et al., 1985), jaundice, wounds, spleen enlargement (Rajwar, 1983), liver complaints (Sharma et al., 1979), malaria (Maheshwari and Singh, 1987), carbuncle (Ved Prakash and Mehtrotra, 1988) and swelling (Maheshwari et al. 1980).

8. **Emblica officinalis** Gaertn. (Euphorbiaceae) *Aonla.*

   About 20 gm dried fruit powder and 25 gm sugar candy are given once a day with cow milk for a month. (Raebareli, Unchahar: *Srivastava* 370).

   Various parts of the plant have been reported from Uttar Pradesh to treat asthma, bronchitis, indigestion (Sharma et al. 1979), constipation (Maheshwari et al. 1980), diabetes, dysentery (Negi et al., 1985), eye diseases (Maheshwari et al., 1986), thirst, wounds, antidote to scorpion sting (Maheshwari and Singh, 1987) and as tonic, laxative, diuretic and cooling effect (Rajwar, 1983).

9. **Farsetia jacquemontii** Hook. f. & Thom. (Brassicaceae) *Faridbooti.*
One teaspoonful of plant decoction is given twice a day for one week. (Gonda, Ramedi: Khanna, 255).


Usually 3-4 fruits are eaten as such twice a day. (Jalaun, Bohadpura: Shukla 843).

Sharma et al., (1979) have reported the treatment of cough and wounds with the leaves of the plant.

11. Indigofera linifolia (L. f.) Retz. (Fabaceae) Ratanjot or Vilayati nil.

In Sultanpur district about 20 ml plant decoction is prescribed with little amount of sugar once a day for a fortnight while in Hamirpur district about 10gm. dried plant powder is referred with a cup of water once a day for a month. (Sultanpur, Kadiipur and Hamirpur, Rahallia: Shukla 117 and Srivastava 995).

The plant has been reported to treat amenorrhoea (Sharma et al., 1979).


About 5 gm leaf powder is taken with cow milk once a day for 21 days (Hamirpur, Girwar: Srivastava 969).

Singh and Pandey (1980) have reported the treatment of diabetes, diarrhoea and toothache from eastern Rajasthan.


About 10 gm powder of the whole plant is given with water once a day for a fortnight. (Gonda, Inchapur: Khanna 244).

The plant has been described to treat wart (Purohit et al., 1985), cuts (Saxena and Vyas, 1983; Shah and Joshi, 1971), swelling (Shah and Joshi, 1971), dysentery (Sharma et al., 1979; Rajwar, 1983), fever (Rajwar, 1983), jaundice (Singh et al., 1980), rickets (Maheshwari et al., 1980, 1981) and stomachache (Maheshwari and Singh, 1984).


Ectocarp of the fruit is dried and powdered. One teaspoonful of the powder is taken twice a day with water for a month (Raebareli, Newazganj: Srivastava 412).

Shah and Joshi (1971) have reported the treatment of cough and pimples with the fruits and leaves of the plant respectively.


Seed oil is massaged over penis. (Jalaun, Bohadpura: Shukla 854).

The leaf has been reported to cure eczema. (Sexena and Vyas, 1981).


One teaspoonful of seed powder is taken with water twice a day for a fortnight. (Raebareli, Newazganj: Srivastava 416).

The bark has been reported to be astringent (Rajwar, 1983) and treat piles (Singh, 1988) while fruits for digestive complaints and leaf to treat blisters in mouth. (Maheshwari and Singh, 1984).

17. Terminalia arjuna (Roxb.) Wt. & Arn. (Combretaceae) Arjun.

About 25gm powder of the dried stem bark is given with 100 ml of cow milk twice a day for a month. (Bahraich, Berdia: Khanna 88).

The bark has earlier been reported to treat dysentery (Maheshwari et al., 1986), heart diseases (Saxena and Vyas, 1983) and as tonic (Saxena and Vyas, 1983; Sharma et al., 1979).


About 10gm powder of the whole plant is given with cow milk thrice a day for a month. (Jalaun, Saidnagar: Shukla 837).

DISCUSSION

It is apparent from the findings that the tribal and rural people of Uttar Pradesh have vast knowledge about the traditional medicinal uses of plants. While living amidst and near the forest they exploit the available plant wealth of their area even for specific cases such as consummate
married life in lieu of other tonic/ fruits available in other areas. Non-availability of such medicinal uses of these plants in literature reveals the distinctiveness of the rural society. Moreover, the findings are significant since the efficacy of these plants have been confidently claimed for the purpose reported in the paper and hence warrant the need of detailed pharmacological investigations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors are grateful to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi for providing financial assistance under All India Coordinated Research Project on Ethnobiology and to the Director, Botanical Survey of India, Calcutta for facilities.

REFERENCES


——— AND ———. Traditional phytotherapy amongst the Kol tribe of Banda district, Uttar Pradesh. Ibid. 9 : 165-171. 1987.


