

PRACTICE OF ETHNO-MEDICINES IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AMONG THE HIRAS OF BAMUNA VILLAGE OF BARPETA DISTRICT, ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

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Key words

Ethno-medicine, Health care, Hira.

The Present study has focused on practice of ethno-medicine in primary health care system among the Hira (pottery maker) community of Bamuna village. People use some locally available plants for curing of several kinds of diseases. In this study 40 numbers of medicinal plants were collected from the village. Most of the medicines are extracted from several parts of plants like stem, fruit, leaf, flower, seed etc. The study reveals that maximum no of medicinal plants are used for curing of several diseases such as dysentery, cough, kidney problem piles, jaundice, sinusitis, respiratory disorder, fever, skin disease, hair problem etc.

INTRODUCTION

It is known to all of us that 'health is wealth' and we should sensitise self as well as others about health. "Health is a prerequisite for human development and is an essential component for the wellbeing of mankind" (Mojumdar, Kar and Roy 2003, 110). Every group of people has adopted some indigenous method for health care and ethno-medicine is a system to help the human body to restore its health and well being. "Ethno-medicine refers to the study of traditional medical practice which is concerned with the cultural interpretation of health, diseases and illness and also addresses the health care seeking process and healing practices. The practice of ethno-medicine is a complex multidisciplinary system constituting the use of plants, spirituality and natural

environment and has been the source of healing for people for millennia. It treats illness as a cultural category” (Das 2015 in M. Goswami and G.K. Sarma eds. 2015: 101). We all know that, Assam is the meeting point of different tribes and caste population. They are the ecosystem people who live in harmony with the nature and maintain a close link between man and environment. For that the health of the tribal and caste people of Assam are mostly connected with the socio-cultural and magico-religious practices. They practice ethno-medicine in primary health care system. The Hiras of Bamuna village is also not left behind in this matter. Hiras are one of the sixteenth scheduled castes of Assam. They make pottery by hand. They are distributed in different parts of Assam along with Bamuna village of Barpeta.

AREA OF STUDY

Barpeta district has the unique distinction of carrying traditional culture by its honorable possession of *kirtangbar* (place of worship) of entire Assam. The population of the town is composed mostly of Assamese Hindus. The Muslims form a small minority of the town population. There are also a number of Bengali Hindu families. The schedule caste population is 52,452 in the district (Sarmah 2001, 55). For the purpose of our present study a village inhabited by the Hiras, a schedule caste village near Barpeta town which is Bamuna village has been selected. Bamuna Village is situated about 3 K.M. north-east from Barpeta town. The village is inhabited by people belonging to various castes and among them Hiras are also worth mentioning. Bamuna is bounded in the north by Keot Para, in the south Sundardia, in the east Pahumara River and in the west Chaulkhowa River. According to rough estimate the village covers an area of ½ sq. km (Goswami, 2019: 27–28).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are

1. To know the use of traditional herbal medicine among the Hiras of Barpeta town.
2. To highlight the practice of ethno-medicine in primary health care system among the community.

METHODOLOGY

The study is based mainly on primary sources of information. It includes personal interview and observation method. Apart from these, some books and journals are

also used. Herbariums were made and collected plants were identified by following the procedure of Jain and Rao (1977).

DISCUSSION

The believes, traditions and customs handed down through many generations usually play a major role in determining individual and community health care in most of the Indian society (Bhagabati 1972, 74). The concept of health varies from one society to another and especially in case of less advanced societies have link with religion. Pottery making is the main occupation among the Hiras. Some younger generations are doing jobs and other business also. During the survey it was observed that the people have their own concept about some diseases and its treatment. Aged person of these area still believe that diseases are caused by evil spirit and in spite of modern facilities available at Barpeta town, they still practice their own indigenous techniques of treatment. It is observed that the younger section use to visit doctor in the time of illness. Several medicinal plants are available in this area. Though medical facilities are available at Barpeta town, they frequently use the plants as first aid. They believe that herbal medicine has no side effect and it is free of cost. It was also found that, though the Hira people use several medicinal plants, all plants are not available in this area. They collect these from nearby areas also. Here an attempt has been made to mention the mostly used plants along with botanical name, family, local name, part used and use for remedy of several diseases.

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Botanical Name</i>	<i>Local Name</i>	<i>Part Used</i>	<i>Use of plans</i>
1	Alternanthera sessile R.Br	Matikanduri	Leaves	Used as effective hair tonic
2	Centella asiatica (Linn) Urban	Bor manimuni	Whole plant	Treatment for dysentery , stomach problem and nerve problem
3	Bryophyllum pinnatum Oken	Pategaja	Leaves	Curing in urinary problem and blood dysentery
4	Basella alba (Linn)	Puisaak	Leaves	Treatment for piles disease
5	Asparagus recemosus	Satmul	Root	Used for treatment of infertility
6	Amaranthus viridis Linn	Khutra	Whole plant	Used for overcome impotency

7	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i> Linn	Kola Kachu	Leaves and roots	Curing for diseases like Pharyngitis
8	<i>Zingiber Officinale</i>	Ada	Rhizome	For Curing of cough
9	<i>Ipomea aquatic</i>	Kolmou	Leaves	Used for treatment of menstrual Problem
10	<i>Oldenlandia corymbosa</i> Linn	Bon jaluk	Whole plant	Curing for jaundice fever and bilious infection
11	<i>Physalis minima</i> Linn	Kopal phuta	Fruit	Used as diuretic and Purgative
12	<i>Cannabis sativa</i> Linn	Bhang	Leaves and flower	Used as sedative and analgesic, also it is used to reduce glucose level in blood
13	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> Linn	Chirota	Leaves	Used for treatment anti helmentics and asthma
14	<i>Solamum</i> Linn	Tit Bhekuri	Roots	Treatment for toothache, asthma
15	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> Linn	Ogaro	Roots and leaves	Treatment for malaria fever.
16	<i>Ipomoea quamoclit</i> Linn	Kunjalata	Leaves	Used in treatment Piles
17	<i>Hibiscus subdariffa</i> Linn	Mesta tenga	Fruit	Used for treatment of dysentery fever.
18	<i>Nasturtium indicum</i> Linn	Godhuli Gopal	Roots	Used for treatment of dropsy
19	<i>Leucas aspera</i> Spreng	Duron bon	Whole plant	Treatment for Sinusitis
20	<i>Ocimum sanctum</i> (Linn)	Tulsi	Leaves seeds	Treatment for headache, dysentery, It is used as insect repellent
21	<i>Minosa pudica</i> Linn	Lajukilota	Leaves	Treatment for piles
22	<i>Asparagus officinalis</i> Linn	Sotomool	Stem, Roots	Used in Urinary disorder, hysteria
23	<i>Lawsonia inermis</i> Linn	Jetuka	Leaves	Used for skin diseases and also promote thickness of hair
24	<i>Boerhavia repens</i> Linn	Ponownowa	Leaves, Roots	Used for treatment in anaemia, asthma, and interval inflammation.
25	<i>Tabernaemontana coronaria</i>	Kathanda	Leaves, Flowe	Used in headache pain
26	<i>Murraya koenigii</i> (Linn) Spreng.	Narasingha	Leaves	Treatment for diarrhoea, dysentery & digestion problem

27	Bryophyllum Pinnatum	Pategaza	Leaf	Used for treatment of anaemia
28	Tamarindus indica Linn	Teteli	Flower	Treatment for infertility problem
29	Diplazium esculentum	Dhekia	Leaves	Used for increasing of sexual power and treatment for urinary disorder
30	Datura stramonium (Linn)	Bogadhotura	Fruit	Treatment for asthma and alopecia
31	Citrus aurantifolia	Kajinemu	Fruit	Used for treatment for vomiting and diarrhoea
32	Curcuma domestica	Haladhi	Rhizome, Leaves	Used as antiseptic, also treatment for caught & fever
34	Catharanthus roseus (Linn)	Nayantora	Leaves, Flower	Used in treatment for malignant tumour
35	Aegle marmelos (Linn)	Bel	Root, Fruit	Used in seminal weakness, diarrhoea etc.
36	Aloevera (Linn)	Salkuwari	Leaves	Treatment for skin born disease and stomach problem
37	Terminalia chebula	Silikha	Fruit	Used as blood purifier
38	Syzgium cumini	Jam	Seeds, Fruit	Used in diabetes mellitus and treatment for piles
39	Vitex negundo (Linn)	Pachatia	Leaves	Treatment for fever and body weakness
40	Azadirachta indica	Neem	Leaves	Used for treatment for Skin disease and diarrhoea

FINDINGS

In the present study it is found that most of medicinal plants are used for treatment or curing several disease such as cough, dysentery diarrhoea, jaundice, piles, asthma, urinary trouble, anaemia, infertility problem, repertory disorder, sinusitis, headache pain, fever etc. Moreover juice of some parts of plants is applied as tonic for improvement of hair, skin, mental booster etc. Most of the community of people consumed the medicine as spice, delicacy, juice etc. From the survey it was also observed that most of people share their own knowledge due to their own believes. Different Parts of plants specially leaf, root, flower, stem, seeds, fruits were utilized for preparation of medicine & tonic. It is proved that the practice of ethno–medicine forms an inseparable part in the life of the Hira people of Bamuna village. People

of this area have their own concept about health and health care. They still believe that some of the diseases are caused by supernatural power. Most frequently they use different plants for medical purposes though modern medical facilities are available in the town.

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