



Indigenous Practices Used by Bhotia Tribe in Kumaun for Prenatal and Postnatal Care

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ABSTRACT

Kumaun Himalaya of Uttarakhand is known for its rich diversity of ethnomedicinal plant. It is inhabitant of various indigenous groups includes Bhotia, Tharu, Boxa and Van rawat. The present study aims to highlight the indigenous practices prevalent among Bhotia tribe of Kumaun of Uttarakhand for prenatal and postnatal care in women. In backward areas of Kumaun where modern facilities are not reachable fast, the tribe prefers their traditional knowledge for curing their ailments. It was observed that 15 plant species of 13 families were used by tribe for curing women health related problem.

KEYWORDS : Ethnomedicinal plant, Bhotia tribe, Kumaun, Prenatal and Postnatal care

Introduction

The Indian Himalayans region has rich ethnic diversity and heritage of traditional medicinal system. The Kumaun region of Uttarakhand is inhabitant of Bhotia, Tharu, Boxa and Van Raji tribes. The Bhotia tribe is third largest tribe residing in remote thick forest of the Dharcula and Munsyari Block of Pithoragarh district of Kumaun, Uttarakhand. Due to inadequate access of modern medicinal facilities in the rural area the tribes are still dependent on the indigenous medicinal system to cure various ailments which in one or other way helps in maintaining the traditional medicinal practices.

Women are the backbone of the family. The health aspect of women has an important impact on health status of children, family and community. Prenatal care and post natal care are necessary assistance given to a mother to maintain her health. Prenatal care is related to the easy delivery and birth of healthy child whereas postnatal care refers the recovery of mother health after delivery. All over the world it is estimated that about 210 million women become pregnant every year. Out of these 13.33% (28 million) of women covered by developed countries and remaining huge portion (86.66%) women belong to developing countries including India^[13, 11]. Most of the maternal problems and deaths can be prevented or reduced if women had access to, or visited maternal health services during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period^[7, 12]. The present work is related to the indigenous knowledge and ethnomedicinal importance plants used by Bhotia community for mother care.

Some ethnobotanists tried to gather traditional knowledge from the Kumaun region^[1, 2, 10, 6, 9, 3, 4, 8 & 5]. But insufficient work is done in ethnic mother care among Bhotia tribe. Therefore the aim of present work is to assess the availability of traditionally used flora for mother care during prenatal and post natal period among Bhotia tribe of Kumaun region of Uttarakhand.

Materials and methods

Present study is based on extensive and intensive field surveys made during 2013-14. The data of ethnomedicinal flora were collected from various villages of Munsyari block of Pithoragarh district in Kumaun, Uttarakhand. During the survey, the information is collected by interaction with old woman, experienced woman who practices the child birth at home or medicine man in the tribal communities. During survey it was observed that respondents are mostly women above 45 years. The collected voucher specimens were processed according to usual methods for herbarium preparations and submitted to M.B. Govt. P.G College, Haldwani. The plants are tabulated alphabetically by family, followed by their botanical names, local name, part used and ethnobotanical observation.

Result and discussion

During the study it is investigated that the medicinal uses of plant species and traditional knowledge are still preserved by the indig-

enous community in Kumaun region. The first-hand information is collected regarding the preparation and administration of the crude drugs from tribal woman among Bhotia tribe. The sole purpose of present study is to assess the maternal health status includes menstrual issues, abortion, miscarriages and problem during and after delivery etc.

During the survey, the documentation of 16 plant species belonging to 14 families is collected from study sites. From the collected data it is reported that maximum representative of species belong to Apiaceae and Orchidaceae (2 species each) families followed by Acoraceae, Asteraceae, Betulaceae, Combretaceae, Fabaceae, Liliaceae, Ranunculaceae, Saxifragaceae, Scrophularaceae, Taxaceae and Valerianaceae (1 species each) and maximum species are herbs followed by trees and climbers: Herb (10) > Tree (3) > Climber (2).

The data collected during survey indicate that the reported species are used to enhance lactation, to bring abortion, prevent miscarriage, cure menstrual disorder, conceiving pregnancy, cure leucorrhoea, contraceptive, prevent excessive bleeding, to increase body strength of women during labour pain and after delivery etc. On the basis of plant parts used by the local people, it was observed that roots of 9 species, leaves of 01 species, fruits of 1 species, bark of 02 species, seeds of 03 species and fruit of 1 species is used to treat natal problem. The plant parts are used in form of decoction, powder and infusion etc.

Ethnomedicinal plants species used for mother care among Bhotia tribe of Pithoragarh districts of Kumaun (Uttarakhand)

S.no	Plant botanical name	Local name	Part used	Preparation	Disease
	<i>Aconitum heterophyllum</i> Wall.	Atees	RT	DE	Decoction of <i>Aconitum</i> and <i>Picrorrhiza kurrao</i> root- for pregnancy, family planning, increase body strength
	<i>Acorus calamus</i> L.	Buch	RT	INF & PW	To bring about an abortion.
	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Karuwa	RT	PW	To enhance lactation.
	<i>Bergenia ligulata</i> (Wall.) Engl.	Gyun-pati	RT	PW	As substitute of tea for increasing strength during and after delivery.
	<i>Betula utilis</i> D.Don	Bhoj-patra.	BRK	INF	Infusion of bark with seed kernels of <i>Prunus persica</i> -for conceiving pregnancy.

	<i>Carum carvi</i> L.	Thoya	SD	INF	To enhance lactation
	<i>Dactylorhiza hatagirea</i> (D.Don) Soo	Hatajari, salampanja	RT	DE	To prevent miscarriage, to increase body strength of women during labour pain.
	<i>Eulophia campestris</i> Wall.	Salam misri	RT	DE	Enhancing conceiving pregnancy and body strength of women after delivery.
	<i>Nardostachys grandiflora</i> DC.	Jatamasi	RT	DE	To increase body strength, as contraceptive
	<i>Saussurea costus</i> (Falc.) Lipsch.	Koot	RT	PW or DE	To regulate irregular menstruation period
	<i>Trachyspermum ammi</i> Sprague	Ajwain	SD	INF	Enhance lactation
	<i>Taxus baccata</i> L.	Thuner	BRK	PW	<i>Taxus baccata</i> (Bark) with <i>Cinnamomum tamala</i> , <i>Saussurea costus</i> (root) -Substitutes of tea given to mother to increase the body strength of the mother after delivery
	<i>Macrotyloma uniflorum</i> (Lam.) Verdc.	Gahat dal	SD	CK	For removing of impure blood from women body after giving birth to child.
	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i> L.	Akalveer	LF, RT	DE	To prevent excessive bleeding after giving birth to child.
	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.	Hada	FRT	PW	Mixture of fruit of <i>Terminalia chebula</i> & <i>Phyllanthus emblica</i> -Leucorrhoea & to get relief from pain during mensuration period

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Abbreviations: BRK-Bark, CK-Cook, SD-Seed, PW-Powder, INF-Infusion, DE-Decoction, BRK-Bark, SD-Seed, RT-Root, LF-Leaf, FRT-Fruit

Conclusion

Medicinal plants play a vital role in primary health care system of the rural people. Even today indigenous communities use flora to a large extent as they are easily available and can use frequently. This indigenous knowledge about medicinal plants and therapies is passed orally from generation to generation. But these valuable plant species are now in border of extinct so it is necessary to create awareness among the local people and conservation programs to protect these valuable medicinal plant in verge of extinct due to their over exploitation.

Acknowledgments

Authors are thankful to the Principal of P.N.G Govt. P.G. College, Ramnagar for encouragement and providing facilities and cordially thanks to medicine men, women and local people among Bhotia tribe for sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience to complete our ethnobotanical research during survey.

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