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Herbal medicines and Indigenous knowledge

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Abstract- The tribes of Jharkhand are men of forest. They live in the villages and forest and depend mostly upon traditional medicine for their primary health care needs and this therapy involves the use of plant extracts or their active principles. They have great amount of indigenous knowledge for different types of diseases here plants are mentioned which are used for skin diseases.

Key words: Skin diseases, herbal medicines, tribes, Indigenous knowledge, nature

INTRODUCTION

Herbal medicine is based upon the premise that plants contain natural substances that can promote health and alleviate illness modern drugs are often viewed as impersonal, emphasising crisis investigations.¹

They are not only expensive but many of them bring about side effects which are sometime dangerous than the disease themselves.

Herbal medicine

Nowadays the population is increasing so much and side by side pollution is also affecting the nature. 80% population of Jharkhand live in village and depend only upon traditional medicine for their primary healthcare needs and major part of this therapy involves the use of plant extracts or their active principles.^{2,3}

The people of Jharkhand suffers from skin disease quite frequently. There are several factors associated to the cause of skin disease.

- ◆ Effect of Sun rays
- ◆ Effect of pollen allergy
- ◆ Effect of poor nutrients
- ◆ Effect of contaminated water
- ◆ Effect of environmental factors

The following Herbal plants are used by the people which is found in their native place

NEEM (*Azadirachta indica*)

The local people of Jharkhand worship this tree. They plant it in front of their courtyard. There are many reasons to worship this plant which has been scientifically proven. It belongs to the family Meliaceae.

The leaf of *Azadirachta indica* purifies the air. The fresh air is good for health which is scientifically right.

The whole parts of the plants are used as medicine. The mixture of leaf powder is used for treatment in leprosy as per herbal doctor's advice. The pastes of leaves are used in wounds which help in healing. The Neem oil is very useful in skin disease.⁴

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At the time of chicken pox the people use its paste as ointment and also a fan for the patients. As precaution against chicken Pox the people use its young leaves and flowers as vegetables.

Neem toothpaste also has medicinal uses. The Gum diseases or Gingivitis is cured by Neem toothpaste and neem brush.

The different parts of plants such as leaf, twigs are also kept in pots of corn for storing corns for long duration as fungal free corn

BAKAIN CHINA TREE (*Melia azedarach*)

Melia azedarach belongs to the same family meliaceae and is also of same nature. It also used as antifungal for keeping the corn.

The mixture of leaves of *Melia azedarach* is useful in leprosy which is one of the most dangerous skin disease.

KARANJ, *Millettia pinnata* (L)

Karanj belongs to the family fabaceae. It is found everywhere particularly in Jharkhand. All parts of the plants are used for medicinal purposes.

The oil of *Millettia pinnata* is much useful in all types of skin diseases. The mixture of camphor and Karanj oil is useful in skin infection. The flowers and Karanj seed powder is an excellent manure as well as antifungal agent. It is a good mosquito repellent.⁵

People using datwan of Karanj as toothbrush need not visit a dentist. The carries tooth and bleeding gum like diseases have been cured simultaneously by this method. Timber of Karanj is also valuable as it is highly antagonistic to white ants

BRAHMI

Brahmi booti which is commonly known as beng sag by the local people. The plant is herbaceous and belongs to the family Apiaceae. Botanical name is *Centella asiatica*. This is useful in skin diseases. Normally people eat it as vegetable. The root has the most medicinal value. At the

time of jaundice people use it as Sherbat in empty stomach. This herb can purify the blood & increase memory. It is used as antibiotic.

SHEESHAM

Dalbergia latifolia belongs to the family fabaceae. This plant is planted along the roadside for shade. Oil from the wood and leaves are used in eczema. Leave of sheesham are used in acute stage of gonorrhoea. Sheesham is also a strong wood for timber.

SINDWAIR

Sinduair's botanical name is *Vitex negundo* and belongs to the family lamiaceae. This plant is used for skin diseases like edema etc. The plant is boiled with neem and used for bathing the mother and child post delivery. Seeds and roots are used in treatment of excessive vaginal discharge, pruritus rheumatism etc. *Vitex negundo* is used for treating stored garlic, rice against pests.

The people of Jharkhand village knowingly or unknowingly use these native herbal medicines in their meals which keep them healthy in comparison to town people and they build strong immunity against any diseases.

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