

ETHNOMEDICINE OF BHIL TRIBE OF JHABUA DISTRICT, M. P.**

**** This paper was presented in the Tenth Conference of All-India Seminar on "Anthropology : Theory and Applications in Third World Countries" Lucknow (1984)**

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Received: August 14, 1985

Accepted: December 8, 1985

ABSTRACT: *The Bhils are inhabitants of Dhar, Jhabua, Khargone and Ratlam districts of Madhya Pradesh. A large number of Bhils live in the neighbouring States of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. They constitute the third largest tribe of India; the first two being Gonds and Santhals. They utilize a large number of plant species occurring wild in the district as herbal remedies in various diseases and ailments. An ethno-medico-botanical survey was conducted in the tribal blocks. Viz. Kathiware, Alirajpur and Sodhwa blocks of Jhabua district, M. P. The authors have gathered first-hand information on seventy – five plant species and their mode of therapeutic uses from the tribal medicine men 'Badwa' and other experienced tribals. The present study has brought of light some interesting data on potential medicinal plants which will be screened for determining their therapeutic and pharmacodynamic properties.*

INTRODUCTION

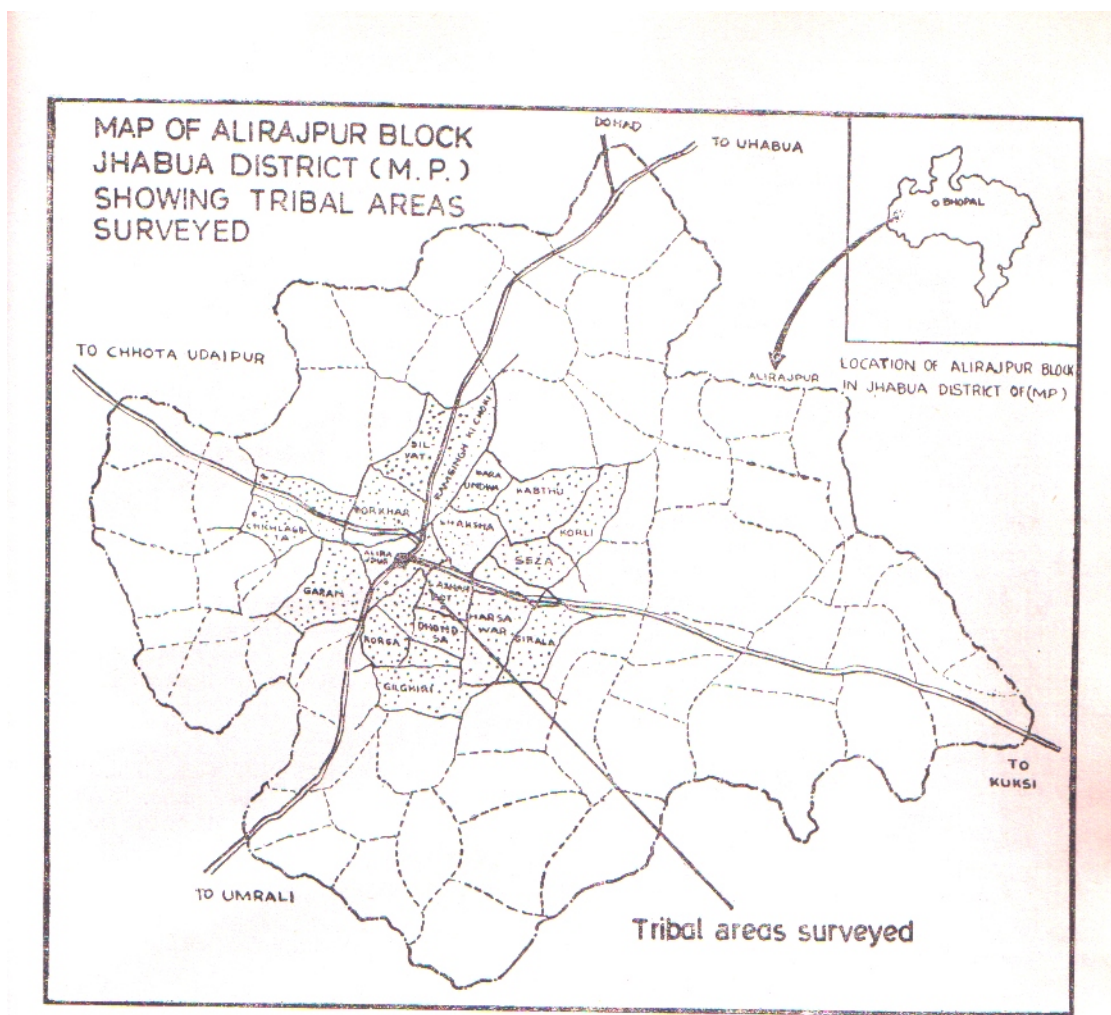
The district is bound by Ratlam district in north, Dhar district in east and the state boundary of Maharashtra in the south, Gujarat in the west, and in north – west portion by Rajasthan. Geographically, the area lies under Malva flanks and is traversed by the Vindhyan series towards north, Narmada basin towards south, while its western part is touched by the Aravallis. The total area of the district comprising 6772 sq.km. is divided into five tehsils, viz. Jhabua, Thandala, Petlawad, Jobat and Alirajpur (Map). The area under study is inhabited by Bhils, one of the most important and third largest tribe of India. The name *Bhil* has been derived from the Dravidian word bil or vil meaning a bow.

The language spoken by the tribes is Bhili which is influenced by neighbouring States; hence the words from Gujarat, Rajasthani and Marathi languages are quite frequent. The tribals utilize a large number of plant species occurring wild in the district as herbal remedies in various diseases and ailments. An ethno – medico – botanical survey was conducted in the tribal villages of Jhabua district during the month of September 1983 and about twenty tribal villages were surveyed. The first – hand information on seventyfive plants and the mode of therapeutic uses and local names were gathered from the tribal medicinemen 'Badwa' and other experienced tribals.

METHODOLOGY

An ethno – medico – botanical survey was conducted in twenty tribal villages, viz. Kathiwada, Haror, Mandar, Aamkhunt, Kadwal, Golamba, Kaberisel, Aghran, Nakati, Dungeregaon, Sandali, Majhiri,

Chichalgura, Alirajpur, Galont, Ambi, Rajbhavan, Basdal, Kanthari, Pipalyawat of Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh, with a view to gather information on the traditional uses of ethnomedicinal plants.



The Bhil medicinemen 'Badwa' keep secrecy about medicinal uses of herbs, but by developing closer contacts they reveal the information about the indigenous system of medicine. The data gathered from a particular village were repeatedly confirmed in other villages. The plant species studied

are arranged alphabetically along with their family, locality, local name, tribal uses and the field number. The voucher specimens under EBH numbers are housed in the Ethnobotanical Herbarium and Museum of National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow.

1. *Achyranthes aspera* Linn. (Amaranthaceae)
Locality: Morgha, *Local name* : Andijhara.

The root decoction is given in fever and paste of leaves in 'Sukha Rog'. (EBH 1913).

2. *Adiantum philippense* Linn.
Locality : Mandhar, *Local name* : Kajaria

The plant ash is mixed with cow's *ghee* and applied on the face in the treatment of pimples (EBH 1970).

3. *Aegle marmelos* (L.) Corr. (Rutaceae)
Locality : Mandhar, *Local name* : Bela

The pulp of ripe fruit is used in stomach disorders (EBH 1972).

4. *Aloe barbadensis* Mill.
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Pathi

The succulent leaves are crushed and mixed with turmeric and the paste is applied on the eruptions on any part of the body (EBH 2532).

5. *Amorphophallus campanulatus* Blume: ex DC. (Araceae)
Locality : Mandhar, *Local name* : Bhabdi.

The tubers are crushed and applied in cases of snake bite (EBH 1968).

6. *Anisomeles indica* (L.) O Ktze.
Locality : Garath, *Local name* : Kuschor.

About 200 to 300ml. of decoction of leaves is given three times every day to the cattle in inflammations (EBH 2514).

7. *Asparagus racemosus* Willd.
Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Sarwari

The root paste mixed with water is given in the morning upto 15 days to increase the potency (EBH 1946).

8. *Azadirachta indica* (Linn.) A. Juss. (Meliaceae)
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Neem

It is believed that on brushing the teeth daily with the stick, the body becomes resistant against snake bite (EBH 2535).

9. *Balanites aegyptiaca* Delile (Simaroubaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Hingry.

The bark paste is applied on the face to reduce the swellings on the face. The paste mixed with water is also given four times in a day against discharge of yellowish urine (EBH 2519).

10. *Bauhinia malabarica* Nees (Caesalpiniaceae)

Locality : Morgha, *Local name* : Dharsinghar.

The stem bark paste is given in blood dysentery and loose motions, once in a day, till it is cured (EBH 1911).

11. *Biophytum sensitivum* DC. (Oxalidaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Lajuri (Lajwanti)

The leaf powder is given to decrease sexuality (EBH 1919).

12. *Boerhavia diffusa* Linn. (Nyctaginaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Jhinjuri

The root paste is given in cases of blood dysentery two times a day, in empty stomach (EBH 2522).

13. *Bombax ceiba* Linn. (Bombaceaceae)

Locality : Kewara, *Local name* : Semal

The roots of young seedlings are chewed for more vitality. The flowers are also given against semen discharge (EBH 1907).

14. *Borassus flabellifer* (Linn.) (Palmae)

Locality : Garath, *Local name* : Tari (Tar)

The pulp of heartwood is given to ladies one or two times only for inducing abortion (EBH 2515).

15. *Caesalpinia bonduc* (Linn.) Roxb. (Caesalpiniaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Gattar

The seed powder is given to ladies against bleeding (EBH 1928)

16. *Calotropis gigantea* (Willd.) Ait, (Asclepiadaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Ankaa

The milky latex is applied on the inflamed parts of the body to reduce pain and swellings (EBH 1947)

17. *Careya arborea* Roxb. (Lecythidaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Kumbhi

The leaf paste is applied on the face to reduce the swellings (EBH 1918).

18. *Carissa opaca* Stapf ex Haines (Apocynaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Karonda

The juice of root bark is given in fever (EBH 2538).

19. *Cassia glauca* Lamk. (Caesalpiniaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Kamarsothi

The beads made from wood are hanged in neck to cure jaundice (EBH 1958).

20. *C. tora* Linn. (Caesalpiniaceae)

Locality : Kewara, *Local name* : Puwaria

The seeds are crushed with water and applied in eczema (EBH 1905).

21. *Celtis australis* Linn. (Ulmaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Ankor

The whole plant is crushed and after mixing with some jaggery, it is made into nine small pills; one pill in a day is given against leprosy (EBH 2521).

22. *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd. (Celastraceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Kangarni

The seed oil is applied in eczema (EBH 1950).

23. *Centella asiatica* (Linn.) Urb. (Apiaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Brahmi

The decoction of the plant is given against discharge of yellowish urine (EBH 1930).

24. *Cheilanthes farinosa* Kaulf. (Adiantaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Sonapali

The root paste is applied and eaten to cure eczema and stomachache (EBH 2580).

25. *Cissampelos pareira* Linn. (Menispermaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Phar.

The root paste is used in healing of wounds (EBH 1957).

26. *Cissus quadrangularis* (Linn.) (Vitaceae)

Locality : Kaversale gaon, *Local name* : Gathan

The entire plant Crushed into paste is eaten and applied on bone fracture. The wound heals shortly (EBH 1940).

27. *C. trifolia* (L.) Domin (Vitaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Tulangri

The bark paste is mixed with salt and kept inside a cloth piece and applied externally on the throat during dryness of the throat (EBH 2520).

28. *Crinum latifolium* Linn. (Amaryllidaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Barapunjania

The bulbous root is slightly warmed and is applied externally in stomachache. The juice of bulbous root is also given to animals in fever (EBH 1951).

29. *Costus speciosus* (Koenig). Sm (Zingiberaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Kanda

The root paste is given to cattle in fever, once a day upto two days (EBH 1948).

30. *Croton oblongifolius* Roxb. (Euphorbiaceae)

Locality : Morgha, *Local name* : Jangli arandi

The paste made from roots ca 8 cm. long with 1.5 cm. girth is given in dysentery and in vomiting for one or two alternate days (EBH 1910).

31. *Curculigo orchioides* Gaertn.(Zingiberaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Kali musli

The root paste mixed with ghee is given to increase potency (EBH 1923).

32. *Curcuma angustifolia* Roxb. (Zingiberaceae)

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Hanhaldi

The rhizome paste mixed with milk is given in empty stomach in cases of fever, two times in a day upto seven days (EBH 1956).

33. *Desmodium gangeticum* DC. (Fabaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Sisri

The root paste mixed with water is given in dysentery upto three times in a day (EBH 1924).

34. *Dillenia pentagyna* Roxb. (Dilleniaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Kelia sag

The stem bark is powdered and mixed with water and after filtration, 'Misri' is added to the filtrate. This mixture is then given to ladies for easy delivery, two times in a day upto three weeks (EBH 1931).

35. *Echinops echinatus* Roxb. (Asteraceae)
Locality : Morgha, *Local name* : Utkati

The root or stem ca 8 cm. long is crushed and the paste mixed with water, is given once to pregnant ladies for easy delivery (EBH 1909).

36. *Euphorbia acaulis* Roxb. (Euphorbiaceae)
Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Khargoni

The root paste is small quantity is dissolved in water and is given to animals in dysentery and in fever, only once or rarely two times (EBH 1953).

37. *E. hirta* Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Doodamrikase.

The milky latex is rubbed externally on eyes and applied in scorpion bite (EBH 1916).

38. *Ficus religiosa* Linn. (Moraceae)
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Pipli

The young leaves are used in snake bite. It is believed that the leaf petiole when inserted in both the ears, sucks poison from the body. About twenty pairs of leaves are used alternatively to take out the poison from the body (EBH 2528).

39. *Flacourtia indica* (Burm. f.) Merr. (Flacourtiaceae)
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Dollar

The root paste is applied externally in skin diseases (EBH 2526).

40. *Gloriosa superba* Linn. (Liliaceae)
Locality : Navagaon, *Local name* : Radagoddi.

The root and flower paste is used for killing the mouse and birds in crop fields (EBH 1980).

41. *Grewia rhamnifolia* Heyne (Tiliaceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Shyamus.

On chewing 5 – 6 leaves for twenty days, the semen becomes concentrated (EBH 1920).

42. *Habenaria commelinifolia* Wall (Orchidaceae).
Locality : Chatlyapani *Local name* : Ankra

The tuber paste is applied on wounds in snake bite (EBH 1969).

43. *Helicteres isora* Linn. (Sterculiaceae)
Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Tehari

The aqueous extract of the seed in small quantity is given to children in dysentery (EBH 1954).

44. *Hemidesmus indicus* R. Br. (Asclepiadaceae)
Locality : Chatlyapani, *Local name* : Dudhi.

The root paste mixed with water is given in small quantity to children in dysentery (EBH 1977).

45. *Holarrhena pubescens* Wall. ex G. Don Syn. *H. Antidysenterica* Wall. ex DC. (Apocynaceae)
Locality : Ghunt, *Local name* : Kudhi

The fruit paste is given in stomachache (EBH 1962).

46. *Ichnocarpus frutescens* (L.) R. Br. (Apocynaceae)
Locality : Kewara, *Local name* : Dudhi

The root paste is applied on body to cure fever (EBH 1902).

47. *Jatropha curcas* Linn. (Euphorbiaceae)
Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Ratanjoti

The stem is used as tooth brush to relieve tooth – ache (EBH 1942).

48. *Leptodermis lanceolatus* Wall. (Rubiaceae).
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Baramujara

The root paste is used in the treatment of boils and blisters in mouth and throat (EBH 1922).

49. *Loranthus obtusatus* Wall. (Loranthaceae)
Locality : Ghunt, *Local name* : Vanda

The whole plant is crushed and the paste is applied on bone fracture (EBH 1966).

50. *Mahuca longifolia* (Koen.) Macb. Var *latifolia* (Roxb.) Chev. (Sapotaceae)
Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Mahua

The oil cake is burnt inside the room to keep away snakes (EBH 1961).

51. *Martynia annua* Linn. (Martyniaceae)
Locality : Navagaon, *Local name* : Bichia

The seed oil is applied in case of eczema (EBH 1981).

52. *Mitragyna parvifolia* (Roxb.) Korth. (Rubiaceae)
Locality : Padola, *Local name* : Kalmi

The leaf decoction is given for sneezing to cure headache. The stem bark boiled with water, filtered and after mixing with sugar, it is given to ladies in leucorrhoea till cure (EBH 1991).

53. *Momordica charantia*. Linn. (Cucurbitaceae).
Locality : Garath, *Local name* : Bankarela.

The juice of the fruits is given in diabetes till it is cured (EBH 2512).

54. *Nelsonia canescens* Roxb. (Acanthaceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Mujari

The root paste is used in the treatment of boils and blisters on the tongue and in the throat (EBH 1921).

55. *Ocimum americanum* Linn. (Lamiaceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Tulsi

The leaves are crushed and mixed with salt, and eaten to increase the taste of tongue (EBH 1933).

56. *O. basilicum* Linn. (Lamiaceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Kali

The leaf decoction mixed with saline water is used to keep away the snakes (EBH 1929).

57. *Oldenlandia pumil* (L. F.) DC. Syn. *O. crystalline* Roxb. (Rubiaceae).
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Ratwa

The root paste is applied and eaten to cure eczema and stomachache (EBH 2524).

58. *Phoenix acaulis* Roxb. (Arecaceae)
Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Khajoor.

The heartwood is given to ladies for increasing lactation after child birth (EBH 2516).

59. *Physalis minima* Linn. (Solanceae)
Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Popati

Two and a half leaves are eaten to cure fever (EBH 1915).

60. *Pueraria tuberosa* (Roxb) D. C. (Fabaceae).

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Gajua

The tubers are given to ladies and animals to increase the secretion of milk (EBH 1955).

61. *Ricinus communis* Linn. (Euphorbiaceae).

Locality : Padola, *Local name* : Andia

The oil is purgative and is supposed to be a wormicide (EBH 1995).

62. *Solanum incanum* Linn. (Solanaceae).

Locality : Padola, *Local name* : Katti

The seed powder is applied inside the mouth to cure toothache (EBH 2508).

63. *Soymida febrifuga* Juss. (Meliaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Rohan

The stem bark boiled with water is used to give bath to fractured persons till it is cured (EBH 1932).

64. *Shutteria hirsute* Baker (Fabaceae)

Locality : Kewara, *Local name* : Siwaria

The seed powder is applied inside the eyes to reduce inflammation and eye pain (EBH 1906)

65. *Sterculia villosa* Roxb (Sterculiaceae)

Locality : Chatlyapani, *Local name* : Kudawala

The root paste is given only and also applied on the inflamed parts of the body to reduce swellings (EBH 1974)

66. *Tacca leontopetaloides* (Linn.) O. Ktze. (Taccaceae)

Locality : Padola, *Local name* : Barwa

The tuber paste is applied in headache and in body pain (EBH 1989)

67. *Mimusops hexandra* Roxb. (Sapotaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Khirni

The stem bark boiled with water is used for bathing upto four days once in a day to cure bodyache (EBH 2569)

68. *Trichosanthes cucumerina* Linn. (Cucurbitaceae)

Locality : Kadwal, *Local name* : Tambakasri

The fruits are kept in water for 12 hours and used to give bath to patients suffering from jaundice (EBH 1927).

69. *Tridax procumbens* Linn. (Asteraceae)

Locality : Kewara, *Local name* : Gobra

The paste of whole plant is used to stop bleeding caused by any outer stroke (EBH 1901).

70. *Ventilago denticulate* Willd. (Rhamnaceae)

Locality : Alirajpur, *Local name* : Ghurbela

The stem bark paste mixed with sugar is given two times in a day for cooling effect (EBH 2571).

71. *Wrightia tinctoria* R. Br. (Apocynaceae)

Locality : Kaversalegaon, *Local name* : Ghurar

The leaves and twigs are crushed into powder and is used as fish poison (EBH 1939).

72. *Xanthum strumarium* Linn. (Asteraceae).

Locality : Kharwali, *Local name* : Gharia

The seed paste is applied in forehead to cure headache (EBH 1943).

73. *Xeromphis spinosa* (Thunb.) Keay (Rubiaceae).

Locality : Chatlyapani, *Local name* : Gali

The fruit paste is mixed with water and used as fish poison (EBH 1971).

74. *X. uliginosa* (Retz.) Mahesh (Rubiaceae).

Locality : Haror, *Local name* : Gagri

The root paste is given in dysentery (EBH 1952).

75. *Zingiber roseum* Rosc. (Zingiberaceae)

Locality : Chatlyapani, *Local name* : Jangliaadaa

The rhizome paste is applied on the body and the juice of the rhizome is given three times in a day to cure general fever (EBH 1967).

Conclusion:

The ethnobotanical studies have often led to the discovery of important drug plants. The

present studies reveal that the plant resources of Jhabua district are rich in

vegetable raw materials, and can form the basis for establishing agro – and forest – based cottage industries for the extraction of oils, collection of herbal drugs, etc. These will also generate employment for the tribal and rural populations of the country. India, with its wide variety of vegetational types and ethnic races affords ample scope for

fruitful researches on folklore medicine. It is, therefore, necessary that all the tribal regions of the country should be thoroughly explored from this point of view. The data thus collected could be systematically screened by the phytochemists and pharmacologists.

Acknowledgements:

The authors are grateful to the Department of Environment, Government of India, New Delhi for providing financial assistance under MAB Programme. Thanks are also

due to the Forest Department, Jhabua and Block Development Officer, Kathiwads for help during ethnobotanical surveys of the tribal villages and forest areas of the district.

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