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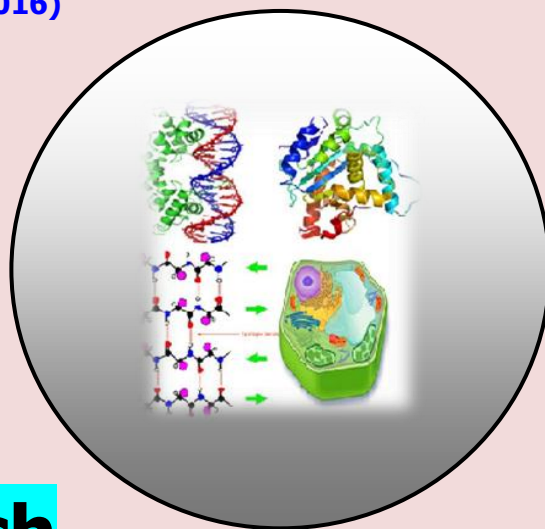
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RESEARCH PAPER

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Studies on Some Medicinal Plants used by Tharu Tribes in Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The Tharu people are an indigenous ethnic group who has lived in the lowlands of Nepal for centuries. Until recently, the region was covered by a thick malarial jungle that kept away outsiders and guaranteed the tharus free but difficult lives. Their relative isolation led them to develop a distinct and self-sufficient society with their own language, religion, and culture differing from the hill people in the north. Interai region of UP, the tharu tribe uses many plant species for healthcare practices and has enormous knowledge about their medicinal usage. The knowledge, which is mostly undocumented, is transmitted orally from generation to generation among them. The present paper deals with detail of the plant used by tharu tribes of Uttar Pradesh especially from the terai region.

Keywords: Tharu, Tribes, Terai and Ethno botany.

INTRODUCTION

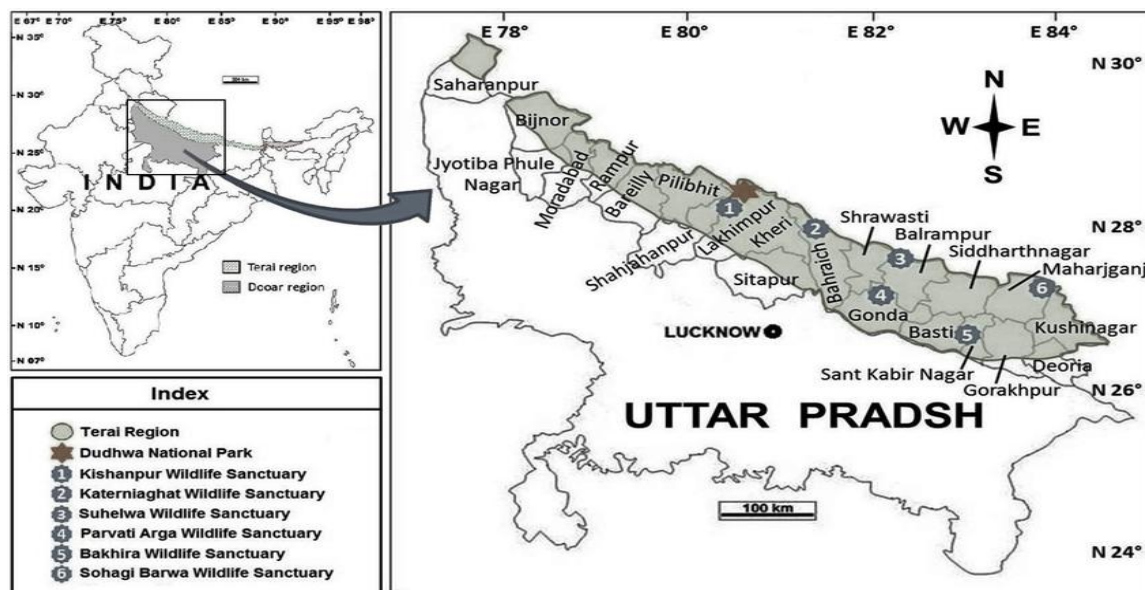
Tharu people are an ethnic group indigenous to the southern foothills of the Himalayas; most of the Tharu people live in Terai region of UP, Uttarakhand and Bihar. Some Tharu groups also live in the Terai region of Nepal. Tharu families worked under the system of bonded labour known as Kamaiya which existed in Nepal since the 18th century; following the Unification of Nepal when members of the ruling elite families of Terai received land grants in those region and were entitled to collect revenue from those who cultivated the land. In 1854, Jung Bahadur Rana, the then Nepalese PM, enforced the Muluki Ain (General Code) which classified both Hindus and Non-Hindus castes based on their habits of food and drink. Tharu people were categorized under "Paani Chalne Masinya Matwali" (touchable enslavable alcohol drinking group) together with several other alcohol drinking ethnic minorities (Gurung 2005, Krauskopff 2007). The Tharu people themselves say that they are a people of the forest. In Chitwan, they have lived in the forests for hundreds of years practicing a short fallow shifting cultivation. They plant rice, mustard, corn and lentils, but also collect forest products such as wild fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants and materials to build their houses; hunt deer, rabbit and wild boar, and go fishing in the rivers and oxbow lakes (McLean 1999). According to a survey of 2001 Tharu constituted 77.4% of the total tribal population of Uttar Pradesh with a population of 83,544. The Tharu were famous for their ability to survive in the most malarial parts of the Terai that were deadly to outsiders. In 1902, a British observer noted: "Plainsmen and paharis generally die if they sleep in the Terai before November or after June.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Extensive and intensive survey during 2016-2017 was made in Tharu areas of terai region of Balrampur District covering 22 villages to collect the ethno medicinal information. All the information's and associated folk claims

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were collected either by contacting the local healers (*Guruwa*), village headmen, or by persons having through knowledge about the medicinal plants and plant part used for curing definite disease. Identification of plant was carried out by Dr. R K Pandey and Dr. Vivek Singh, Associate Professor, Department of Botany, Sri JNPG College, Lucknow.



RESULT AND DIUSCUSSION

Kumar et al 2006 have already discussed some plants used by tharu tribes. The list of some plants used by tharu tribes for medicinal purposes is as follows-

Achyranthes aspera L. Family -Amaranthaceae; Vernacular names-Latzeera, Lahchichi Apang, Chirchra, Chirehitta, Latjira, Onga.



Achyranthes aspera is an erect, sometimes sprawling, long-lived herb which can grow up to 2 m tall, with stems becoming woody at the base. Its short-stalked leaves are opposite, simple and egg-shaped; they can be densely to sparsely hairy and are dark green above and paler below, with young leaves often silvery. The small greenish-white flowers, often tinged with purple-red, form terminal spikes, dense at first but elongating up to 60 cm long. As the flowers age, they bend downwards and become pressed closely against the stem. The fruits are small one-seeded capsules, orange to reddish purple or straw-brown; with their pointed tips, they readily adhere to animals and clothing.

Uses: Pills made from leaves and *gur* (jaggery) are given orally twice a day in intermittent fever. Root is tied with the left side of woman hair for easy delivery. Root piece is worn in right ear to keep scorpions away. Root is tied in the waist to cure dysentery.

Aegle mormelos (L). Family-Rutaceae; Vernacular name -*Bael*

Uses: Twig with fruit intact is hung on the southern wall of home after delivery to keep evil spirits away. Stem wood is kept burning at the door of delivery room to protect the new born and mother from evil spirits. Leaves called Baelpatri used to worship Lord Shiva.



Ricinus communis L. Family-Euphorbiaceae, Vernacular names- Andi, Rendim, Arandi.

Uses: Leaves are wrapped on the injured part of body in case of boon fracture and dislocation. Slightly worm leaf coated with mustered oil is applied externally on chest and stomach to cure pneumonia.

Tamarindus indica L. Family -Caesalpiniaceae); Vernacular name-Imli. It is a large perennial tree most common in North India. Deliciously tangy and one of the most highly prized natural foods in India, tamarind or imli is popular for its exceptionally unique flavour. Its tart-sweet taste is loved by Indians of all ages and has carved a special place for itself in millions of households across the country.

Uses: Tender twigs made into ring are worn into left index finger of woman for easy delivery.

Tinospora cordifolia L. Family – Menispermaceae, Vernacular names-Gurch, Giloy

It is a large, deciduous extensively spreading climbing shrub with several elongated twining branches. Leaves simple, alternate, exstipulate, long petioles up to 15 cm long, roundish, pulvinate, both at the base and apex with the basal one longer and twisted partially and half way around.

Uses: boiled aerial roots are taken in fever. Aerial roots pieces are worn around neck to cure jaundice and snakebite.

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