

**ETHNOMEDICINAL
KNOW-HOW OF
INDIAN TRIBALS**

ETHNOBOTANY AND MEDICINAL PLANTS OF INDIA AND NEPAL

Volume - 3

Editor

V. SINGH



SCIENTIFIC PUBLISHERS (INDIA)
P.O. BOX 91 JODHPUR

Published by:
Tanay Sharma
Scientific Publishers (India)
5-A, New Pali Road,
P.O. Box 91
Jodhpur - 342 001 (India)
E-mail: info@scientificpub.com
www.scientificpub.com

© Scientific Publishers (India), 2009

ISBN: 978-81-7233-603-5 (Vol. 3)
978-81-7233-605-9 (Set)

Reprint from: *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.*
Vol. 33 (Suppl.) 2009

Lasertype set: Rajesh Ojha
Printed in India

OTHER BOOKS

Title	Author
A Manual of Ethnobotany 2 nd Ed.	<i>Jain, S.K.</i>
Betelvine Cultivation and Management of Diseases	<i>Chaurasia, J.P.</i>
Bibliography of Indian Ethnobotany, 2002	<i>Jain, S.K.</i>
Biodiversity and Sustainable Utilization of Biological Resource	<i>Sahu, T.R. et al.</i>
Biodiversity and Vegetation of Pachmarhi Hills	<i>Singh, V.P. et al.</i>
Biodiversity of Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan	<i>Singh, V. et al.</i>
Dictionary of Indian Alchemy	<i>Saroya, A.P. Singh</i>
Ethnic Aphrodisiac Plants	<i>Sood, S.K. et al.</i>
Ethnic Indian Plants in Cure Diabetes	<i>Sood, S.K. et al.</i>
Ethnobotany and Medicinal Plants of India and Nepal Vol. 1-2	<i>Singh, V. et al.</i>
Ethnobotany and Medicinal Plants of Indian Subcontinent	<i>Maheshwari, J.K.</i>
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Flora of Andhra Pradesh Vol. 1-5	<i>Pullaiah, T. et al.</i>
Floristic Biodiversity of Barda Hills and its Surrounding	<i>Nagar, P.S.</i>
Flowering Plants of Thrissur Forest	<i>Sasidharan, N. et al</i>
Flowers and Vegetables of India	<i>Sud, R.K. et al.</i>
Glossary of Medicinal Plants used in Ayurveda	<i>Saroya, A.P. Singh</i>
Handbook of Indian Medicinal Plants	<i>Joshi, M.C.</i>
Identification of Common Indian Medicinal Plants	<i>Naik, V.N.</i>
Indian Folk Medicines and Other Plant-based Products	<i>Singh, V.</i>
Leafy and Edible Plants of North-East India	<i>Kumar, S.</i>
Monograph on Indian <i>Leucas</i> R.Br. (Dronapushpi) Lamiaceae	<i>Singh, V.</i>
Monograph on Indian Subtribe Cassiinae (Caesalpiniaceae)	<i>Singh, V.</i>
Phytotherapeutic Wisdom of Indian Rurals Aboriginals	<i>Singh, V.</i>
The Economic Plants of North East India	<i>Kumar, S.</i>
The Flora of Jabalpur	<i>Oommachan M. et al.</i>
The Poisonous Plants of Bombay	<i>Kirtikar, K.R.</i>
Wetland Phytodiversity: A complete guide to Indian Helobiaeae	<i>Guha, Ratna et al.</i>

EDITORIAL

Plants have been used as a source of medicine from ancient times. During last two decades revolutionary efforts have been observed in phytotherapeutic treatment of various ailments. It is fascinating to see that when the era of 'Telemedicine' is coming up and probably arrived at the most modern doors, the people living in far-flung villages are still healed at nature's own dispensary. With the fast progress of technology, new horizons of medicine are opening up with newer medical skills. The fusion of ethnobotanical data with modern scientific and medical technology can give us cost effective and potential new drugs. As such, traditional medicine is of contemporary relevance in India to achieve self reliance in primary health care needs. The survival of age old traditional systems of medicine in India is based on strong belief in the efficacy and success of herbal medicines. It is, therefore, the world has turned its eyes towards old wisdom of the tribals and their life style vexed with allopathic treatment and its side effects; the modern society believes in the use of plants and their products as a source of natural medicine in the sharp contrast to the synthetic drugs. It has resulted in the revival of Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine, their rediscovery and significances.

Consequently, the present century has witnessed the emergence of ethnobotany as a distinct branch of natural science. All over the world there has been an increasing interest in scientific study of man and plant interaction in natural environment among various indigenous people. Medicinal plants are the local heritage with global importance. The interaction of tribals with the ambient vegetation for centuries helped them to evolve sound oral knowledge system of utility of plants. Since, such oral traditions are mainly based on local plant resources, they are different from region to region and at many occasions from tribe to tribe of the same region. Ethnobotanical survey and investigations on surveyed plants of tribal claims, hence, have gained today remarkable significance.

However, the ethnomedicinal claims should be validated by scientific and clinical (phytochemical and pharmacological) investigations for their global acceptance. Documentation of ethnomedicinal data is the first step in such development process. In spite that usually tribals are quite adverse to share their knowledge with any outsider, the ethnobotanists throughout world are working to document this traditional treasure.

The second face of coin is that natural vegetation has come under threat due to over-exploitation and other developmental activities. Conservation

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biologists warn that twenty five per cent of total life forms could become extinct during next twenty to thirty years due to onslaught on the forests, collection of timber, fuelwood, food plants, and commercial exploitation of medicinal plants have provided a great deal of vulnerability to individual species. The scientific/botanical surveys/collection in some cases become the medium by which biopiracy of commercially lucrative plants takes place. Therefore, efforts should be made to impart environmental education to the local communities with due emphases on conservation of forest resources, particularly medicinal plants which provide real medical support in every day life.

Further, to reduce pressure on wild plant wealth, the cultivation of medicinal plants in their suitable agro-climates may be adopted as early as possible. But, to achieve the goal, knowledge about the agro-technology need to be developed and extended to the farmers. Assured marketing of produce may further result in successful cultivation of medicinal plants.

This way we can nurture nature for the future to same extent.

V. Singh
Chief Editor

About the book

The present book "Ethnobotany and Medicinal Plants of India and Nepal" is next publication in the series on Indian Medicinal Plants. The contributors of the papers in this book are well known Indian Ethnobotanists who have furnished authenticated data for further scientific and clinical tests. The information about the medicinal plants spread over 325 pages, covers various tribal communities from north to south and east to west and different ailments cured in nature's dispensary. Beautiful photographs of some medicinal plants have also been provided by some contributors.

The information furnished in the book will be useful for controlling biopiracy, backing conservation strategies and facilitate better understanding of phytotherapy research.

About the editor

Dr. V. Singh, ex Additional Director of Botanical Survey of India, is devoted the study of Indian biodiversity for last 40 years. He has contributed about 12 books and more than 100 research papers in different fields of botany, including medicinal aspects. He has also been associated with editorial work for last more than thirty years. Recently, he has edited the books like "Ethnobotany and Medicinal Plants of India and Nepal", "Indian Folk Medicines and other plant based products" and "Phytotherapeutic Wisdom of Indian aboriginal/rurals". The present book "Ethnomedicinal Know-How of Indian Tribals" is next in the series on medicinal plants. It is hoped that information furnished in the book will not only provide basic data for chemical analysis of selected medicinal plants being used in tribal medication for centuries, but also help the conservationists in preservation of traditional knowledge and plant resources.

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