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Research Article

STUDIES ON ETHNOMEDICINAL ASPECTS OF FAMILY CUCURBITACEAE IN NORTH GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

In present account, 24 plant taxa of Family Cucurbitaceae are enumerated; which used by tribal and rural people of Gujarat. The plants have been used for medical purpose since antiquity. There are altogether 28 tribes recognized in Gujarat State.

Keywords: Ethnomedicine, Medicinal Plant, Cucurbitaceae, North Gujarat

INTRODUCTION

Gujarat State is divided geographically into five regions i.e. North Gujarat, Central Gujarat, South Gujarat, Kuchchh and Saurashtra. The vegetation of Gujarat is found in arid, semi-arid and evergreen dry-wet locations. The Family Cucurbitaceae has the characteristics of tendrillar climbers with pepo (berry) type of fruits. The members of family Cucurbitaceae mostly found among hedges.^{5,6,7}

The pioneer monumental work on floristic and folk medicine in Gujarat, Particularly in the Barda Hills of Saurashtra and Kutch done by Thaker (1910, 1926). In Gujarat floristic works have been done by Cooke (1903), Shah (1978), Bhandari (1978) and Bole and Pathak (1988). At national level tremendous works on ethnobotany have been done by Jain (1991). While in Gujarat, works on ethnobotany have been done by a number of workers, among them few; Bhatt et al (2001, 2002, 2003), Bhatt & Mitaliya (1998, 1999, 2000), Patel (2000), Mitaliya and Bhatt (2003), and Patel (2004) notable in this respect.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to collect ethnomedicinal data on members of family Cucurbitaceae, regular field trips were organized and interviews held with tribal and rural people of Gujarat who use plants as medicine. In the enumeration the taxa of family Cucurbitaceae are arranged alphabetically. The local names are also given for each taxa. Followed by the medicinal uses

of plants as gathered from various tribal and local people during the field trips in North Gujarat.

ENUMERATION

Benincasa hispida (Thunb.) Cong. (Safed kolu)

Fruit is employed as vegetable and sweet in epilepsy, insanity, amnesia to increase memory power, fatigue, sexual debility, calculi, gonorrhoea, stragury etc.

Citrullus colocynthis Schrad. (Indravarna)

Roots are given in jaundice, skin disorders, urticaria, rheumatism, piles etc.

Fruit is employed in low doses in cases of jaundice, calculi, worms, diabetes, rheumatism, enlargement of spleen etc.

Citrullus lanatus (Thumb.) Matsumara & Nakai (Tarbuch)

Ripe fruit-pulp is used in thirst, general debility, anorexia, calculi, acidity etc.

Seeds are given in strangury, calculi and worms etc.

Coccinia grandis (Linn.) Voight (Tindora)

Root and leaves are given in diabetes, fevers and worms.

Fruits are given in spermatorrhoea, dysuria, calculi, general debility etc.

Corallocarpus epigaeus (Arn.) Cl. (Kadvi nai)

Tuberous root is given in low does in case of diabetes, piles, urticaria, calculi, sprue, toxemia, jaundice etc.

Ctenolepis cerasiformis (Stocks) Hk. F. (Ankh-futamani)

Fruits are used in calculi, strangury, diabetes, spure, ophthalmic etc.

Cucumis callosus Cong. (Gay-vasukada)

Fruit is employed in low does in cases of constipation, piles, urticaria, jaundice, amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea, calculi etc.

Fruits are used for making dry salty pickles.

Cucumis melo var. melov (Sakkar teti)

Fruits are useful in calculi, strangury, thirst, anorexia, acidity, erysipelas

Cucumis melo var. momordica Roxb. (Chibhdu)

Ripe fruit is employed in calculi, fatigue, strangury, anorexia, sexual debility.

Seeds are useful in calculi, strangury etc.

Cucumis prophetarum L. (Kantala indrana)

Fruit is given in low doses in cases of jaundice, urticaria, piles, calculi, constipation, skin orders, toxiemia, rheumatism, diabetes etc.

Cucumis sativus Linn. (Kakdi)

Unripe fruits are used in anorexia, constipation, calculi, strangury, sunburn, piles etc.

Seeds are given in calculi.

Cucurbita maxima Duch. (Lal kolu)

Fruit used as vegetable and useful in calculi, strangury, general debility, sexual debility etc.

Seeds are given in worms, calculi etc.

Cucurbita pepo Linn. (Sakar kolu)

Fruit is employed as vegetable in calculi, fatigue, rheumatism, sexual debility etc.

Diplocyclos palmatus (L.) Jeff. (Shivlingi)

Seeds are given in women to help conception.

Leaves are used in colic, fever, delirium, paralysis of tongue, piles etc.

Lagenaria leucantha (Duch.) Rusby (Dudhi)

Fruit of sweet variety is useful in calculi, to increase memory power, anaemia, general debility, to control cholesterol, piles, fatigue etc.

Fruit of bitter variety is given in jaundice, calculi, fevers etc.

Luffa acutangula (L.) Roxb. Var. amara (Kadva turiya)

Fruit is given in low does in cases of fevers, jaundice, calculi, diabetes, skin disorders etc.

Luffa acutangula (L.) Roxb. Var. acutangula (Mitha turiya)

Unripe fruits are used as vegetable and useful in strangury, calculi, constipation, piles, cystitis etc.

Luffa cylindrical (L.) Roem (Galka)

Unripe fruits are used as vegetable and useful in anorexia, indigestion, calculi, fatigue, piles etc.

Luffa echnata Roxb. (Kukadvel)

Dry fruit is given in minute doses in cases of jaundice, enlargement of liver, toxiemia, urticaria, calculi etc.

Melothria maderaspatana (Linn.) Cogn. (Chanak Chibhdi)

Small globose fruits are employed in anorexia, calculi, spermatorrhoea, indigestion, fatigue, sexual debility etc.

Momordica balsamina L. (Jangli karela)

Fruits are given in skin disorders, jaundice, calculi, worms, diabetes, fevers, toxiemia etc.

Momordica charanatia L. (Karela)

Leaves are employed in fevers, diabetes, calculi etc.

Unripe fruits are used in diabetes, jaundice, worms, anorexia, fevers, calculi etc.

Seeds are given in worms, calculi etc.

Momordica dioica Roxb. (Kankoda, Kantola)

Tuberous root of male plant is employed in diabetes, piles, calculi, fevers etc.

Unripe fruits are used as vegetable, and useful in fevers, anorexia, jaundice, diabetes, calculi etc.

Trichosanthes cucumerina Linn. (Kadvi paraval)

Leaves and fruits are given in low doses in case of fevers, toxiemia, jaundice, diabetes, calculi, piles, worms etc.

Trichosanthes dioica Roxb. Ex. Willd. (Parval)

Unripe fruits are used as vegetable and useful in anorexia, fevers, jaundice, calculi, piles, worms, diabetes etc.

Trichosanthes tricuspidata Lour. (Rata indrana)

Fruit is given in low doses in cases of asthma, piles, urticaria, epilepsy, rheumatism, dysmenorrhoea, diabetes, calculi, fevers, jaundice etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research articles, 24 plant taxa belonging to family Cucurbitaceae are enumerated, which are normally used by tribal and rural people of North Gujarat. The plant taxa of family Cucurbitaceae are equally distributed in all types of soil in North Gujarat. Some plant taxa of family Cucurbitaceae are cultivated in farms as well, for example, *Benincasa hispida*, *Coccinia grandis*, *Citrullus lanatus*, *Cucumis melo var. melo*, *Cucumis melo var. momordica*, *Cucumis sativus*, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Cucurbita pepo*, *Lagenaria leucantha*, *Momordica charantia*, *Momordica dioica*, *Luffa acutangula var. acutangula*, *Luffa cylindrical* and *Trichosanthes dioica*.

The members of family Cucurbitaceae are annual or perennial tendrillar, climbers. Many plant species are used as vegetable by its ripe or unripe fruits. Some perennial plant taxa bear tuberous roots. Members of family Cucurbitaceae possess diuretic and laxative properties.

Ripe or Unripe fruits are all plants species are used in various medicinal for various diseases like piles, asthma, epilepsy, rheumatism, calculi, dysmenorrhoea, diabetes, jaundice, fevers. Seeds are used in strangury, worms and calculi.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, 24 plant taxa belonging to family Cucurbitaceae are enumerated, which are normally used by tribal and rural people of North Gujarat. Many plant species are used as vegetable by its ripe or unripe fruits. Some perennial plant taxa bear tuberous roots, so the Members of family Cucurbitaceae could be a good point for researchers for further future pharmacological studies.

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