

Traditional Medicinal Wisdom of Baiga – A Case Study of Sidhi District of Madhya Pradesh

Paper Submission: 10/10/2020, Date of Acceptance: 25/10/2020, Date of Publication: 26/10/2020



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Abstract

Baiga is one of the 75 PVTGs and is basically found in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and certain pocket of Jharkhand. This tribe is basically nomadic and they still preserve their tradition and culture. For most of their day today need they depend upon forest and vegetation although primitive in nature, there therapeutic system is totally dependent upon plants and plants products. The treatment of different diseases is mostly done by elderly people of that tribe, Dewar and Guniya. They do not prefer consulting allopathic doctor. The present study deals with traditional medicinal wisdom of Baiga tribe of Sidhi district of MP. Habitat of Baiga and adjacent area were extensively survey and medicinal plant were collected, identified with the available key. Elderly Baiga person, Dewar and Guniya were consulted to collect information about plants use in different disease and their mode of administration. The present paper deals with ethno-medicine use by the Baiga tribe to cure various diseases like jaundices, dysmenorrhoea, Filaria, Lecukeria, malaria, cough and clod and snake bite. Parentage use of various plant part is also reported. In nut cell the paper help in understanding the concept of health, illness and perception as well as treatment of various diseases.

Keywords: Baiga, Traditional Wisdom, Ethno-Medicine, Illness, Diseases.

Introduction

The Baiga is one of the 75 particularly Vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in India. Basically Baigas was a nomadic tribe practicing shifting cultivation. They are hunters and food gatherers. The Baiga is patrilineal, patriarchal, and patrilocal society. The Baiga society is divided into various endogamous subgroups known as Jat. Every Baiga Jat has its own set of Garh and Goti. Goti is an exogamous territorial subgroup. The Baiga are divided into thirteen subgroups out of six subgroups like Bijhiwar, Narotia, Bharotiya, Nahar, Rai Bhaina, and Kadh Bhina are present in studied area. Tattooing is an integral part of their lifestyle. The Baiga priest known as Dewar. The Guniya functioned as a medicine man and resource person in the Baiga village. Guniya is a person who works as a sorcerer and traditional local healer who follow magico-religious practices with or without ethnomedicine. The Baiga culture had gradually changed due to continuous migration, cultural contact, the impact of neighboring communities, the effect of modernization and urbanization, various types of development programs implemented by the government, economical and technological changes, modernization, etc. They belong to their culture their own man treats diseases and protects their health. Modern healers fail to understand the socio-cultural peculiarity of the Baiga tribe. They try to treat them in the conventional method, which often does not suit them. Further availability and accessibility of health infrastructure are also poor. The distinguishing characteristics of the Baigas are namely the long wavy hairs with bun, full-body tattoo marks of Baigin (special tattoo on the forehead), the cult of magic, ancient customs of medicine, healing practices, Bewar (shifting cultivation), their exquisite hunting skills, etc. The Baigas are found in different parts of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. The major population of the Baiga tribe is found in Shahdol, Umariya, Singrauli, Mandla, Dindori, Anuppur, Sidhi, Balaghat, Kabir Dham of Madhya Pradesh and Bilaspur, Koriya, Ambikapur of Chhattisgarh. Baiga Chak situated in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh is famous to know their way of life and culture.

After knowing the side effect of antibiotics and steroids, throughout the world, people are once again inclined towards herbal medicine. In India alone industry of herbal medicine, approximately 177000 metric tone worth Rs 4000Crore. The issue of biopiracy is also a vital point of concern and is instigating the study of Ethnomedicine of different areas.

Traditional wisdom in contrast to conventional knowledge. Traditional knowledge is often in non documented form. It normally passes from one generation to the other generation by word of mouth and is confiding in a community. Traditional Knowledge generally evolved in thousands of years and take its shape.

Illness refers to a person's perceptions and lived experience of sickness or being "dis-eased" - that is, in a socially devalued state including but not limited to, Disease. Illness includes psychological and social dimension as well.

Disease refers only to outward objective clinical manifestation of abnormality of physical function or infection by a pathogen in an individual or host. The disease is concerned with biological phenomena, pathological abnormalities in organs, and organ systems.

In the Anthropological perspective by Ethno-medical approach Anthropologists study, how the members of a culture think about disease and organize themselves toward medical treatment and the social organize treatment itself. This approach focus on the classification and cultural meaning of Psychosomatic Illness. The health-seeking behaviors of people suffering from illness and the theories, training, and practice of healers. The study of cultural knowledge about the illness and its linkages to differential diagnosis and curative action is called Ethno-medicine.

Objectives of this Study

The Aims and Objectives of Present research paper are as follows:

1. To document the Traditional medicinal wisdom of Baiga tribe.
2. To examine the use of ethno-medicine by the Baiga tribe to cure various diseases and illness.

The Study Area

Sidhi is one of the remotest districts of Madhya Pradesh. Sidhi is situated in Baghelkhand region and northeastern part of the state. District Sidhi is extending between latitude 23°47' and 24°42' North and longitudes 81 °17' and 82° 48' East. It is the fourth largest district of Madhya Pradesh in respect of area which is 3.41 % of the total area of the state. The District can be divided into three physical divisions, namely, the Vinjh Scraps, the Son Valley and the Southern Plateau. Sidhi district is a repository of natural historical and cultural history. On one side the spectrum of its floristic socio-cultural diversity and ethnic history of tribal, the district has a panoramic view of the Kaimur, Kehejua and Ranimunda hills.

Review of Literature

Detailed documentation of sociological, anthropological, and economic spheres of Baigas'

lives has been depicted by legendary British scholar Dr. Verrier Elwin (1939, 1943). Besides the work of Russell and HiraLal (1919), Philip McEldowney's (1980) Ph.D. thesis on Baigas and books by Gadgil and Guha (1993, 1995) have also made substantive contributions to building the corpus of knowledge related to the Baiga tribe. Verrier Elwin (1939) in his book *The Baiga* made an intrinsically Indian ethnic expression about the livelihoods of the Baigas. He wrote that Baigas was like the bare holy cows of India who were timid, innocuous, and did not have any foresight to plan for their livelihoods; for they were dependent on the there and then unlimited resources of the forests, wherever they lived. However, since Elwin wrote his book, through the seven and a half decades of a complex acculturation process, the contemporary Baigas has changed significantly, not only into street-smart human beings but also as an indigenous tribal community that is very conscious and protective of its limited available portfolio of just four to five livelihoods. MC Eldowney (1980) refers to a study conducted in 1888 by the district administration, which investigated the earnings of a Baiga family in Balaghat district, who made bamboo baskets to earn money to buy food.

Napit (2016) has reported 208 plants and their specific features. Besides information of land and people and ethnomedicinal use of 208 plants species, indices of use, families, and local names. He has presented in detail the history of Baigas and their culture, ethnobotanical knowledge and practices, medicinal plants used by Baigas in disease and about the medicinal value of plant parts.

Ahirwar (2015A, 2015B, 2015C, 2014 and 2011) have reported nearly 48 medicinal plants with their local name and the specific part used by tribal people to treat various diseases. They have also clearly mentioned the mode of administration of all those plants. Similarly, Bramhe (2016) has extensively served the forest area of Balaghat and prepared an inventory of various plants naturally found in that area and use the Baiga Baiga tribe for different purposes. Apart from medicinal needs, Baiga fulfills almost all requirements of their life i.e. food, fodder, fiber, dyes from non-timber forest products of their area. Kapale (2012) has presented a detailed knowledge of ethnomedicine utilized by the Baiga tribe of Madhya Pradesh. Singh & Deewan (2018) have studied in detail the ethnomedicine and treatment practice of the Baiga tribe and also highlighted the role of biodiversity conservation. As they draw almost all requirements of their livelihood, they are equally interested in conserving them and using them in a sustainable way. They have underlined that both ethnomedicine and faith healing are quite common and they find the answer to all disease in these two practices. They have further specified that not only curative but preventive measures are also practiced with the help of ethnomedicine prevalent in their area. Most of their knowledge regarding traditional medicine is hereditary and passed from one generation to the other generation.

Ram Babu & Panda (2016) have reported that the Baiga community has some priest who is an

expert in plant medicine. This community mostly lives in the forest and whatever cultivation they do by shifting cultivation or slash and burn cultivation. Kumar (2016) has specifically studied maternal and child health in particular among the Baiga tribe.

Material & Method

For the present paper primary Anthropological techniques of data collection such as observation, Interview, Interview Schedule, Case study, and photography. By using key informants, Focused Group Discussion and Case Study has been conducted during the fieldwork. Traditional healers and priests of Baiga society were interviewed in order to collect the details regarding the health and healing world view, traditional medicinal wisdom, practice, and

beliefs of Baigas. I have collected secondary data through published records (book, journals & thesis).

In addition to that Primary literature survey related to habitation of Baigs was done and the specific location was identified. Kushmi block of sidhi district was selected for conducting fieldwork. A grid of 500 meters and 500 meters was led to undertake fieldwork. Plants were collected, photographed, and herbarium was prepared (Without damaging the vegetation). Plants were identifying with the available key presented by Mudgalkhana and Hajara 1997 of a botanical survey of India. Dewar, Guniya, and local healers were interviewed and different uses of the medicinal plant collected were noted down. The information thus gathered was cross-checked with other available resources

Ethno-medicinal Plant used by Baigas

1) For Jaundice

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of administration
1	<i>Andrographis pariculata</i> Nees	Kalmegh, Kirayat	Acanthaceae	Leaf	The use decoction of whole plant is useful. Generally, leaf paste
2	<i>Alternanthera Sessilis</i> , Linn.	Kachri	Amaranthaceae	Leaf	The paste of leaves along with Bhuiamla plant is given orally
3	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i>	Punarnava	Nyctaginaceae	Root	The root paste is
4	<i>Hydrocotyl asiatica</i> , L	Brahmibuti, Thamkuni	Apiaceae	Leaf Root	Fresh or Shade dried leaf
5	<i>Leucus aspera</i>	Ghalghasi Halkusi	Lamiaceae	Leaf	Leaf paste with black pepper seeds is used
6	<i>Oroxylon indicum</i>	SonaGachha	Bignoniaceae	Bark	The bark of the tree
7	<i>Phyllanthus nirui</i> L	Bhuiamla, Jaramla	Euphorbiaceae	Root	Root paste is used.
8.	<i>Scoparia dulcis</i> L	Banchini	Scrophulariaceae	Flower	Flower is used
9.	<i>Streblus asper</i> L	Shaora/Shehur	Moraceae	Stem bark	Stembark paste with curd is
10.	<i>Thalictrum Foliosum</i> DC	Mamira	Ranunculaceae	Root	Root Juice is used
11.	<i>Trichosanthes tricuspidata</i> Lour	Bagdor	Cucurbitaceae	Fruit	Fruit Paste is applied all over
12.	<i>Marsdenia tenacissima</i> Moon	Chinahur	Asclepiadaceae	Root	Root powder is used

Fordysmenorrhoea

S.No	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of uses
1	<i>Alroma augusta</i> L	UlatKambal	Sterculiaceae	Root bark Stem bark	Rootbark as well asstem barks
2	<i>Aloe indica</i> Wild	GhritKumari	Liliaceae	Leaf	Leaf with turmeric powder and salt is used
3	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i> L	Bat/Bar	Moraceae	Root bark	Root bark with milk of goat is used
4	<i>Ficus religiosa</i> L	Peepal	Moraceae	Root bark Stem bark	Root bark or Stembark is used
5	<i>Ficus infectoria</i> Roxb	Pakar	Moraceae	Stem bark	Decoction of stem bark and Latex is used.
6	<i>Saraca indica</i> L	Ashok	Caesalpiniaceae	Stembark	Decoction of stem bark and Latex is used.
7	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> L	Berel/Bariar	Malvaceae	Stembark	Decoction of stem bark is

3. For Filaria

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of uses
1	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i> L	Kasunda/ Kalkasunda	Caesalpiniaceae	Root	Decoction of the root is Useful. With black pepper it is more effective.
2	<i>Streblus asper</i> L	Shaora/ Shehur	Moraceae	Stem bark	Stem bark decoction is useful. The paste of the stem bark is applied locally on fissured swollen leg of a filarial patient.

4. For Leucorrhoea

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of uses
1	<i>Adhatoda visica</i> Nees	Basak/Adalsa	Acanthaceae	Leaf and Flower	10-20 gm of leaf or flower is boiled with 250 ml of water. When water is reduced to half of its volume, it is given to the patient to consume.
2	<i>Blumea odorata</i> DC	Kokronda/Barok uksima	Asteraceae	Leaf	Leaf juice is used.
3	<i>Evolvulus alsinoides</i>	ShyamKanta	Convolvulaceae	Whole plant	The whole plant is used..
4	<i>Phyllanthus nirui</i> L	Bhuiamla	Euphorbiaceae	whole plant Root	The whole plant is used. Root alone is equally effective.
5	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> L	Berela/Bariar	Malvaceae	Root	Root paste with sugar and milk taken empty Stomach.
6	<i>Saraca indica</i> L	Ashok	Caesalpiniaceae	Stem bark	Decoction of stem bark is Used Thrice daily
7	<i>Vinca rosa</i> L	SadabaharNaya ntara	Apocynaceae	Root	Decoction of root is useful.

5. For Malaria

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts	Mode of uses
1	<i>Achyranthus aspera</i> Linn.	Chirchiri/ Apang/Latjira	Amaranthaceae	Leaf	Leaf paste with black pepper and garlic is used.
2	<i>Clerodendron Infortunatum</i>	Ghetu/Bhant	Verbenaceae	Leaf	Leaf juice is used.
3	<i>Caesalpinia cristita</i> Linn. Roxb.	Gatayan	Caesalpiniaceae	Seed	Seed powder is used.
4	<i>Glycosmis pentaplylla/arborea</i>	Bannimbu/Ash/S haora/Daton.	Rutaceae	Leaf and Root	Decoction of Leaf and root bark is useful.
5	<i>Nyctanthes arbourtristis</i> Linn.	Harshingar/Sheoli	Oleaceae	Leaf	Decoction of leaf with ginger and honey is used.
6	<i>Streblus asper</i> Linn.	Shaora/Shehur	Moraceae	Stem bark	Decoction of stem bark is administered daily in morning for five days.
7	<i>Vernonia cinerea</i> Less	Shealmotra/Kuks ima/Sahadevi	Asteraceae	Leaf	One gram of leaf with Seven number of black pepper are mixed to
8	<i>Caesalpinia cristita</i> Linn. Roxb.	Gatayan	Caesalpiniaceae	Seed	Seed powder is used

6. Cough and Cold

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of uses
1	<i>Abrus precatorius</i> Linn.	Ghumchi	Fabaceae	Root	Root extract is prescribed
2	<i>Abutilon Indicum</i> Linn.	Kanghi	Malvaceae	Root	Root powder is used .
3	<i>Acoru calamus</i> Linn.	Bach	Araceae		The dried powdered rhizome with honey is used.

4	<i>Adhatoda asica</i> Nees.	Adusa	Acanthaceae	Leaves	Decoction of leaves is used
5	<i>Barleria prionitis</i> Linn.sp.	Bajradanti	katsariya	Leaf	Leaf juice is used

7. For Snake Bite

S.No.	Botanical Name	Local Name	Family	Parts Used	Mode of uses
1	<i>Plasmodium margaritifera</i>	Araceae	Jhuluia	Tuber	Fresh tuber juice is used thrice daily for 3-4 days.
2	<i>Cocculus hirsutus</i> Diels	Menispermaceae	Juljamni	Root	Fresh root juice is used thrice daily for 3-4 days.

Result and Discussion

Result obtained during this study is present in Table 1 to 7 Altogether 42 plants were taken into account and their scientific name, local name, family, and mode of administration is present in this table. The plants are classified on the basis of diseases they use in. Many plants are used in more than one disease but their major use is taken into consideration. 12 Plants use for treating Jaundice have been listed. In addition to that for the treatment of Dysmenorrhoea and leaukerioea system plants, each is used by the Baiga tribe. Is clearly depict that Baiga has a very sound system for the treatment of gynec problem. Malaria is another important disease and is very prevalent in the study area. Baiga is in the habit of managing malarial complications with the help of nearly 7 plants found in that area.

To locally available plants Kasunda and Shaora are used by this primitive tribe for treatment of fyleria. Further, they normally manage complication of cough and cold by properly administering five ethno medicine. As the Baigas live in proximity of forest, they often in counter the problem of snake bite. In absence of availability of hospital or health center near them they treat the cases of snake poisoning with help two locally available plant which they call Juljamni and Jhuluia.

As the Baigas live in proximity to the forest, they often encounter the problem of the snake bite. In the absence of availability of a hospital or health center near them, they treat the cases of snake poisoning with the help of two locally available plants which they call Juljamni and Jhuluia.

It is clear there for that the ethnomedicinal system among Baiga is not only reach but specific as well. It is there for arguent for everyone to conserve the knowledge of ethnomedicine which is presently confined to the Baigaa tribe. It is important to note that the Basic ethnic culture of Baiga depends upon their professional asperities of treating diseases and illness. It is a note that they use their ethnomedicinal wisdom for managing diseases of their own tribe but seek a person belonging to other tribes and non-tribe also approach them for treatment. Hence it is the moral responsibility of Anthropologist, Botanist, Policymaker, and administrator to conserve the ethnocultural paradigm of the Baiga. Proper documentation is also required to protect them from biopiracy.

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Asian Resonance



Alromaaugusta root



Sidacordifolia



Adhatodavisica



Achyranthus



Marsdenia tenacissima moon



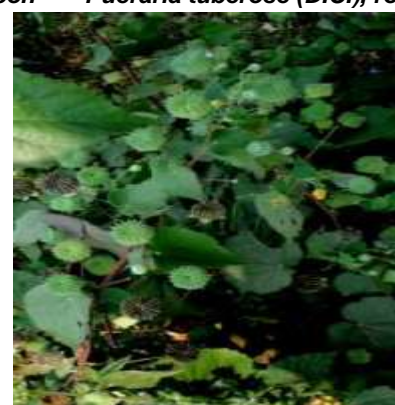
Pueraria tuberosa (D.C.), root.



Abrusprecatorius(Linn.).



Centellaasiatica(Linn.)



Abutilon indicum(Wall.)

Asian Resonance



Lawsonia inermis(Linn.)



Adhatoda vasica(Nees.)



Centella asiatica(Linn.)



Urban Terminalia arjuna(Roxb.)



Solenum indicum(Linn.)



Cardiospermum halicacabum(Linn.)