



**Ethno-Therapeutic Aspects of Four Different Species of *Cassia* from
Nandurbar District, Maharashtra : A Review**



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Abstract

Cassia is flowering and large genus of legume family having more than 600 species. Hot and dry climatic setup of Nandurbar district provides large opportunities to Cassia species to flourish as sustaining vegetation. Nowadays this draught tolerant species largely used in reforestation projects. Ethnic groups of Nandurbar are well-known to this species and used to make ethnomedicines. Many preparations made by local Bhagat and

Healers play an important role in curing tribals. The knowledge of ethnomedicines from Cassia species provide a good economical support to local people as it works on large number of diseases. Cassia species in Nandurbar is abundant and that's why its medicinal value is utilized again and again by the local healers. So use of Casia sp. is commonly practiced in Nandurbar.

Keywords

Cassia species, Ethnomedicin, Nandurbar district.

Research Paper

Introduction :

Vegetation surrounding Nandurbar district shows the presence of various blooming ornamental plants. Presence of Cassia species specially *Cassia fistula* which blooms in late spring means a lot for tribalism of Nandurbar. Early flowering of Bahava indicates trebles early rainy season as per their beliefs. So this Cassia species works as monsoon indicator. Many other uses are also related with this legume bearing family. India, with its glorious past of traditional medicinal system and use of different parts, is one of the eight major canters of origin and diversification of domesticated taxa. (Shiva, 2007). The sources of modern drugs have been plants used by indigenous people (Cotton 1996, Gilani and Rahman, 2005). Plants have always been the source of medicines and have many uses to mankind (Kritikar and Basu, 1999; Nadkarni, 2001). Local people

are habitual of this genus Cassia found in large numbers in Nandurbar district with many types of species related to their traditional knowledge and ethnic therapies. Many species of this genus serve as ethnomedicines. Different types of ethno drugs are prepared and used by local healers. Cassia, the fourth largest legume genus, comprises approximately 600 species. (Duke 1981). Many species of Genus Senna were largest part of Cassia. According to International Legume database and information service, the Genus Cassia is popularly known as Wastebasket taxon which having plants that did not fit well anywhere else. This is the reason to find many types of species habituating as weed to large related to their ethnic uses and associated phyllosphere fungi. Four plant species selected for study were as follows.

Table : Different types of Nomenclatures of Cassia species :

| Sr. No. | Botanical Name | Ayurvedic Name | Common Name | Ethnic Name |
|---------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | <i>Cassia angustifolia</i> Vahl. | Kalyani | Senna | Bhuitarwad |
| 2 | <i>Cassia auriculata</i> Linn. | Avartaki | Tarwada | Awali |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|
| | | | | |
| 3 | <i>Cassia fistula</i> Linn. | Aragvdho | Amaltas | Bahawa ,Bowa |
| 4 | <i>Cassia tora</i> Linn. | Cakramardah | Chakunda | Powadya |

Out of this four species *Cassia angustifolia* is a small perennial erect, under shrub. Commonly called as Senna and local healers called it as Bhuitarwad. In Ayurveda it is well-known as Kalyani. Second species *Cassia auriculata* is woody perennial shrub with large bright yellow flowers. Commonly called as Tarwada and healers called it as Awali. In Ayurveda it is known as Avartaki. Third species is *Cassia fistula*, a middle sized deciduous tree. It is commonly called as Amaltas. Ethnic people name it as Bahava or Bowa. In Ayurveda it is known as Aragvdho. It is present in abundant numbers in Nandurbar's com. In Ayurveda it is known as Avartaki. Third species is *Cassia fistula* mon vegetations. Last species studied is *Cassia tora*. It is commonly called as Chakunda. Ethnic group name is as Powadya. In Ayurveda it is known as Cakramardah.

MATERIALS AND METHODS :

For exploration of ethnomedicinal values of Cassia species.

Study Area:

Nandurbar is situated in the Northern part of the Maharashtra State, having area of 5034.23sq.Km. Satpuda mountain and Valley of Tapi river give the covering to the glorious Nandnagri. Six talukas and 935 villages are the sources full of ethnic knowledge bearing treasures such as Kokani, Gavit, Mauchi, Bhill, Vasave, Pawara's and Gaur banjaras. Average rainfall on area is 1074.90 mm and the climate is dry.

Data collection from study area :

Regular field visits with well prepared semi-structured questionnaire and proper execution of interviews with the help of dilect are main tools of data collection in present area. Field diary is maintained to record Habit, Habitat, Description of Morphological features, flowering and fruit bearing timing along with ethnomedicinal uses given by respondents.

Ethnomedicinal uses of Cassia species:

1) *Cassia angustifolia* (Senna) : Ethnomedicinal uses are as follows :

- Constipation cured using fresh pulp of leguminous fruit.

- Anemia and loss of appetite treated using decoction of leaves.
- Typhoid treated using tincture made up of leaves.
- Jaundice cure using infusion of leaves in the form of tea on empty stomach for three days early in the morning.
- Colic of infants cured using fruit pulp.
- Liver problems and Spleen enlargements treated with help of fresh pulp.

2) *Cassia auriculata* (Tarwada) :

- Inflammation and swellings cured using paste of young leaves applied externally.
- Boils treated using leaf paste simply made with mixing of water in small amount.
- Urinal infection cured taking bath added with flower extract.
- Diabetes treated eating fresh flowers mixed with honey.
- Cough cured using root powder orally.
- Eye infections cured washing with seed decoction.
- In case of rheumatism young leaves are collected specially after first rainy season and eaten as vegetable.

3) *Cassia fistula* (Amaltas) :

- Itching is cured taking vapour bath of the dry legume or smoke of the legume.
- Joint pain and muscular strains treated tiding worm leaves on affected area.
- Jaundice treated using one tablespoon of leaf powder added with cup of cow milk and taken on empty stomach for three days.
- Abortion done using stem bark powder added to one luke worm glass of water.
- Old constipation treated using decoction of stem bark.
- Diarrhoea and abdominal pain cure consuming fresh legume pulp in proper amount added with sugar and water.
- Typhoid and other type of fever treated using smoke bath of legume.

4) *Cassia tora* (Pawadya) :

- Worm from stomach of children removed using a leaf infusion taken orally.
- Scorpion sting and snake bite treated using root paste applied externally.
- Skin diseases cure rubbing young leaves on affected area.
- Skin diseases treated eating tender leaves as a vegetable.
- In case of abnormal delivery seed powder is used.
- All types of Eye diseases were treated washing with water mixed with seed powder.
- Ringworm treated using root paste mixed with lime juice and applied over affected

area.

Observation and Results :

It was firmly taken into consideration that Bhagat and Maharaj of Nandurbar district are possessing the knowledge of using various Cassia species in preparation of ethno medicines. A wide range of ailments treated using Cassia species found widely in nearby forests or vegetative growth surrounding there padas (village). Whole plant or plant parts like leaves, root powder, flowers, stem bark and powder and seeds were used. Mostly leaf and various types of leaf involving recepies are used on large scale like using of leaf decoction, leaf infusion, leaf extract, dry leaf powder, leaf juice, leaf poultice and worm leaf tiding as bandage is used. But most important and interesting fact is that tender leaves or young leaves of *Cassia auriculata* and *Cassia tora* were used as vegetables. It simply shows the integration of ethno medicines with local flora. It also emphasises the relationship between local conserved knowledge and its application based upon regular practice of ethnomedicine in day to day life. Though the used species of Cassia grown and used wild, there are chances of its commercial cultivation practices to be increased after its exploration of ethnomedicinal values.

The above studied four Cassia species on a large scale deals with a spectrum of diseases manily Diabetes, Urinal infection, Skin diseases, Scorpion sting and snake bite, Typhoid and other types of fever, Diarrhoea and abdominal pain, Jaundice, Old constipation, Rheumatism, Joint pain and muscular strains, Inflammation and swellings, Eye infections, and Itching etc. If we take a quick look over these types of diseases we came to know that some diseases and their Allopathic treatments means a simply economical jerk in life of poor villagers, to overcome such a condition related to health and life, ethnomedicines undoubtedly proved as a good remedy easily available and within range economically. It is also noticeable that Bhagat of Nandurbar were charging very less or nothing from the people and that is the reason to have great respect to Bhagat in the padas. Only calling as Bhagat insures identity to the person from padas to padas and within the area of their practice of Ethnomedicines.

Above mentioned Cassia species are also described in Ayurveda and named precisely indicating there medicinal value, for example, *Cassia angustifolia*, in Ayurveda it is well-known as Kalyani or Markandika which means plant with ability of curing. Second species is *Cassia auriculata*. In Ayurveda, it is known as Avartaki, which means plant controlling pitta. So it is also called as Pitapuspa. Third species is *Cassia fistula*. In Ayurveda, it is known as Aragydh, means used to cure Skin diseases. Last species studied is *Cassia tora*. In Ayurveda, it is known as Cakramardah, means specific for all types of Skin diseases. From

the Ayurvedic description and ethnic uses, we came to know that ethnic uses are the practical inferences described in Ayurveda. No doubt that Ayurvedic descriptions were made by eminent scholars and medicines practicing Vaidyas, but local healers also sustain on tiny but prestigious stage of wisdom of knowledge pertaining to health and life saving drugs. We must appreciate the conservative knowledge system of ethnobotany which is vital part of our indigenous culture.

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