



**AN ETHNOBOTANICAL SURVEY OF MEDICINAL PLANTS USED BY THE
GORBANJARA TRIBAL COMMUNITY INHIBITED IN AURANGABAD DISTRICT
MAHARASHTRA**



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ABSTRACT

The Aurangabad city is surrounded by mountainous regions. The mountainous regions or areas are inhabited by many Banjara Tandras. Tandra means a place where Banjara community use to live and follow their own rules and regulations set by Nayak, he is a main who is responsible person deciding many cultural and religious activities of the Banjara community. The word Banjara is said to be derived from Sanskrit word Vanachara (Wanderer in jungle). Gorbanjara tribal are followers of Saint. Sevalal Maharaj. He was a great Saint, Warrior, Trader, Social reformer and Medicinal Practitioner. His teaching about social, economical, political views and wisdom about medicinal plants were known as shikwadi i.e philosophy for Gorbanjara community. Logo of Gorshikwadi a social movement of Banjara community is also inspired from Nature; which says, "Wadlasu wadhalu, Limbadasu fulanu, Ghularasu ladaalu." means to grow like Banyan tree, to blossom like Neem tree and to be fruitful like Gular or Cluster fig tree. Present research try to explore ethnomedicinal wisdom of Banjara community of Aurangabad city and its territorial area.

RESEARCH PAPER

Introduction:

Gorbanjara community is spread all over in India. In different states of India they are known by different names, like in Maharashtra known as Banjara or Gor, in Karnataka known as Lamani, in Andhra known as Lambada, in Panjab known as Bazighar, in Uttar Pradesh known as Nayak etc. The Lambani or Lamani is derived from the Sanskrit word lavana (salt), which was the principal product they transported across the country.(4) Another meaning of Banjara for today's scenario is community of travelling pupils from one place to another, with a different set of culture, different clothing with a particular type of ornaments and rules and regulations. They use to live in tandas a place near to natural surrounding and far from main city. Women are carrying unique and beautiful set of cloths called phetya-phamadi and ornaments beautifully attached with hairs called Chotala, Zumaka and neck ornament Hasali and other like Kasotya, and Dandolya. Bajara women specialized in Lepo embroidery which involves stitching pieces of mirror, decorative beads and coins onto clothes.(8)

Women of Gorbanjara tribes used to work in farms. They used to collect wood, Honey, wild vegetables and fruits, fodder, tubers, gums and resins etc. Nature is the source for them to provide various things which they needed. Health care problems were solved with the help of ethno-medicinal plants. The wisdom of knowledge about the plants carried from one generation to another generation with the help of the medicinal practitioners of different tandas who were called as Bhagat or Maharaj. They use to travel from one place to other as per the emergency. Otherwise people prefer to visit particular tanda of the Bhagat which is known as 'kheties' or 'chaukies' for curing health problems in a week or in a month. For gynecological problems the gorbanjara women are consulted by experienced Dai. Now a day's Medical facilities were taken into consideration in the form of Multispecialty hospitals who has mushroom growth in a city. Though before approaching hospital facility, many ethnomedicinal plants and there uses were practiced by many peoples of tanda. Poverty and less resources of economical freedom are the important factor to limit their health care system based on ethnomedicinal plants.

Gaur banjara women used to express themselves through singing songs called as lengis, gide, laadi along with a beautiful and unique pattern of dance performed in groups. Their each and every moment of social life is connected with a melodious songs and celebration. If we tried to understand meaning of this lengis with the help of dialect we come to know that their songs were based on nature, especially plants were close to them. Morphological

characteristic of particular plant, their habit and habitat, flowering qualities, seasonal timing of flowering, medicinal uses and importance in religious activities becomes the theme of folk songs.

Methodology:

Survey method was adopted for the present research. Bhagat, Maharaj, Dai, Local medicinal practitioner were interviewed with help of semi structured questionnaire. Local dialect is used to make communication with the old Banjara Bhagat as they used to talk into Gorboli. Many respondents able to talk into Marathi language, so it becomes easy to collect information about ethnomedicinal uses, but naming of plant is in a local Gorboli, so dialect is recommended. On the basis of characteristic, feature, ethnomedicinal uses, actual field trips and identification of plants data is collected and listed as follows in a given table.

Table 1.1: Plants with Ethno-medicinal uses

Sr. no	Botanical name	Common name	Family	Diseases treated	Ethnogyaneo medicinal uses
1	<i>Abelmoshu s moschatus</i> .Medic.	Rani- bhinda	Malvaceae	Menorrhoea Diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excess bleeding during menstruation controlled by taking tea spoon of rootpaste orally for three days. Root paste is taken in extreme condition of Diarrhoea.
2	<i>Abrus precatoriu s</i>	Charmath adi	Fabaceae	Abortion Throat infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed powder is given orally as an abotifacient. Leaves chewed if there is infection in throat.
3	<i>Agel marmelos</i> (L.).Corr.	Billa	Rutaceae	Throat infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decoction of fruit made by boiling fruit mesocarp and fresh leaves and used to cure throat infection.
4	<i>Ailanthus excelsa</i> Roxb.	Maharukh	Simaroubace ae	Lice-killing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaf paste is applied externally to kill lice's in the hair.

5	<i>Aloe-vera</i> (L.) Burm.f.,	Kuwari	Liliaceae	Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh leaf juice taken in early morning to cure Constipation.
6	<i>Azadirachta indica</i> A.juss.	Neemada	Meliaceae	Irregular menstruation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of irregular menstruation cup of bark infusion given twice in a day.
7	<i>Balanites aegyptiaca</i> (L) Del.	Hingora	Balanitaceae	Contraceptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripen fruits powder orally taken as a contraceptive.
8	<i>Bambusa vulgaris</i>	Bamboo	Poaceae	Menorrhoea Throat swelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaf juice taken in case of excessive bleeding during menstruation cycle. Tender shoot boiled in water and eaten as vegetable to cure throat infection.
9	<i>Butea monosperma</i> (Lam.) Kuntze .	Kesula	Fabaceae	Lice-killing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried flowers are boiled in bathing water and after cooling bath taken to prevent heat stroke during summer.
9	<i>Calotropis procera</i> (Ait.)R.Br.	Aakh	Asclepiadaceae	Abortifacient. Spine uplifting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant juice is taken as abortifacient. Spines uplifted by applying milky latex .
10	<i>Carthamus tinctorius</i> L.	Kardi	Asparagaceae	Chronic rheumatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender leaves used as vegetable in chronic rheumatism.

11	<i>Cassia auriculata</i> L	Pamedya	Caesalpiniaceae	Chronic rheumatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender leaves used as vegetable in chronic rheumatism
12	<i>Cassia tora</i> L.	Walhanya	Caesalpiniaceae	Swelling Healing wound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm leaves kept on swelling for a night. Wounds bandaged with the help of leaves paste.
13	<i>Celosia argentea</i> (L)	Lamdi	Amaranthaceae	Painful micturition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender leaves used as vegetable in Painful micturition.
14	<i>Citrus limon</i>	Limboo	Rutaceae	Influenza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leafs were boiled with the tea to avoid influenza.
15	<i>Cordia dichotoma</i> Forst.f.	Gundi	Eheretaceae	Body pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cluster of buds before flowering used as vegetable , added with small fine cut pieces of <i>Alium cepa</i> with raw mango to avoid body pain.
16	<i>Diospyros peregrine</i> Gurke.	Tindu	Ebenaceae	Diarrhoea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mature fruit flesh eaten in case of diarrhoea.
17	<i>Dolichos biflorus</i> L.	Hulga	Fabaceae	Abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeds are finely cooked and eaten for seven days along with its watery remain for three days.
18	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	Nilgiri	Myrtaceae	Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaf added with goat lendi and steam bath taken in case of chronic fever.

19	<i>Ficus recemosa</i>	Gullar	Moraceae	Toothache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White milky latex is applied on the gum.
20	<i>Helicteres isora</i> L.	Gol weldi	Malvaceae	Stomachache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legume is rubbed with water and given to infants in case of stomach ache.
21	<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>	Kawalir-jad	Apocynaceae	Liver inflammation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root decoction taken in liver swelling and inflammation.
22	<i>Jatropha curcas</i> L.	Mangali arand	Euphorbiaceae	Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender shoot or branch of the tree used as brush in fever period.
23	<i>Madhuca indica</i> J.F.Gmel	Mohadda	Sapotaceae	Diabeties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ash of bark is taken with water early in the morning to cure diabeties.
24	<i>Luffa aegyptiaca</i> L.	Ghiya tori	Cucurbitaceae	Wound healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh leaf juice is applied on the site of wound then kept it for sun drying.
25	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	Sabja	Lamiaceae	Head ache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh leaves crushed and inhaled to cure headache.
26	<i>Sapindus emarginatus</i> Vahl.	Ritha	Sapindaceae	Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orally seed powder given to cause vomiting in case of poison intake.
27	<i>Semecarpus anacardium</i>	Bhalama	Anacardiaceae	Birth control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kokadi i.e dried flowers given to eat to kept check on reproduction.
28	<i>Synzigium</i>	Jambhu	Myrtaceae	Sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ripen fruit consumed to

	<i>cumini</i> (L.) Skeels			control	lower blood sugar.
29	<i>Solanum indicum</i> L.	Bhui-ringni	Solanaceae	Toothache	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smoke of whole fruit taken to the mouth to cure toothache.
30	<i>Tamarindus indica</i> L.	Khat-aamali	Casalpiniaceae	Scorpion sting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seed is rubbed with water and seed paste is applied over sting.

Result and discussion:

Nature is their inspiration to live and lead the life enthusiastically. ‘Teej’, celebrated by Banjara community in every Tandas by lead of respected Nayak during month of Shravana or in August. In this festival young unmarried Banjara girls pray for a good groom. Wheat seed sown in Bamboo bowls and watered three times for nine days. Seedling basket kept in middle and dance performed around it while singing beautiful songs. Thick, green seedling means prosperity to upcoming year or a good sign of favorable seasons for crops. When male child is born in tando a ceremony performed called ‘Dhund’ on the occasion of first Holy for giving blessings from relatives or bhavaki to the new born child. If the baby boy is born after holy the dhund will performed in next upcoming year. In this celebration peoples are drinking, singing and dancing a lot and performing rituals with enthusiasm. Each and every emotions of Banjara women were beautifully weaved around the nature and natural phenomenon. Many song, lengies and gide becomes their medium of expression and nature becomes inspiration to them. For example song such as “Zad zankya limbu ku kai todum nankya.” In these lines of a song newly married women ask her little brother-in-law how to take out lemons from thorny lemon tree. This also means that her little brother-in-law is close to her after marriage and she asked him about how to handle sour relationships of in-law’s family. She feels hesitated to ask him directly, so in this way with the help of using metaphor of lemon tree she expresses her situations. In one laddi unmarried girl says “Mkwuye pareri ye Bhui-ringani, m bapur laderi.” Which means, I am like a plant which depend on water of well to grow, likewise I am nourished by love and care of my father. So many songs are based on simile and Metaphor with natural entities.

Various diseases were treated with the help of ethnomedicinal plants present surrounding of the Gorbanjara community in Aurangabad. Common diseases like fever, throat infection,

Stomachache, Lice-killing, Body pain, Irregular menstruation, Influenza and Diarrhea etc treated with ethnomedicines. As well health treating diseases like Menorrhoea, Chronic rheumatism, Diabetics and Abortion etc. also treated with ethnomedicines. Due to lack of money and poverty they prefer to practice ethnomedicines. (6) Gorbanjara women for their gynecological problems choose to practice ethnomedicine because they have faith in nature and its potential to cure any kind of diseases. Many ethnomedicinal plants of the present research shows the references of contents; which will become the base for formation of many valuable drugs which were applied on severe diseases. Many life saving drugs will be derived from such phytochemicals contents of ethnomedicinal plants covered above in present survey. Ethnomedicinal wisdom coming from generation to generation will be a base of sustainable health care system of developing India. Building of health care system needs the empowerment of medicinal practitioner knowledge which must be authentic and scientific. So small initiative should be taken to join a medicinal practitioner as a respected profession in the main stream, it will help the Gorbanjara community to fight against health problems with the help of ethnomedicinal wisdom.



Figure 1.1: Lepo embroidery by Gorbanjara women



Figure 1.2: *Calotropis procera*



Figure 1.3: *Ocimum gratissimum*



Figure 1.4: *Abrus precatorius*



Figure 1.5: *Butea monosperma*

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